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Vidyamritam scholarship programme

Express News Service

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KOCHI: As many as 10,000 children in the 9-16 age group from the State will attend the grand finale of cultural events that are being organised for the beneficiaries of the Mata Amritanandamayi Math's (MAM) Vidyamritam scholarship programme in the evening of September 24 at Amritapuri.

MAM started Vidyamritam in 2007 in order to provide scholarships to children from impoverished agricultural families throughout the country.

So far, 30,000 children have been enrolled in the programme.

Another 2,000 more students are being added in the scheme at Amritapuri on September 26. The new batch of beneficiaries, not only includes children from agricultural families, but also children with parents who have HIV/AIDS and orphans.

This academic year, beneficiaries have been encouraged to participate in a series of literary and cultural competitions. On September 6, around 3,000 Vidyamritam beneficiaries took part in competitions held at 22 centres in the state.

The events included poetry, elocution, painting and pencil sketching.

The competitions were arranged by the volunteers from Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, MAM's deemed university.

For junior students, the theme was 'Nature, My Mother' and 'Through loving and contented family life, one can achieve peace in society.' For senior students, it was 'By protecting nature, we protect mankind' and 'World peace can be achieved by developing human values in individuals.' The students and their parents were provided transportation facility to and from the competition centres by MAM. Meals were provided, as were the necessary materials in order to compete.

Each child was also given a pen, a pencil and a box of water colours.

The works of the top 25 or so competitors have been sent to eminent Malayalam writers and artists for selection of prize winners.

The semi-finals and final round of elocution are slated for September 25 and 26 at Amritapuri. The judges for the finals are also eminent figures in Kerala's literature scene.

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