

Horizons Broaden with TAR UMT

Hajiji: Varsity branch expansion bodes well for Sabah's aspirations



KOTA KINABALU: The expansion of the Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) branch here fits in well with Sabah's aspiration to develop a quality human capital pool, says Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor. The Chief Minister said the state welcomed the university expanding its wings here.

"The opening of the TAR UMT branch creates opportunities and opens up choices for Sabahans to further their studies at the university level locally," he said at the launch of the university branch expansion at Alam Mesra near here yesterday. Also present was TAR Education Foundation Board chairman Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, who is also MCA president.

Hajiji said TAR UMT's "Beyond Education" philosophy that emphasises academic excellence, nurtures important competencies, and develops civic values in its students, is holistic and empowering. Dr Wee said the expansion TAR UMT Sabah branch provided more options for prospective students.

"From having just four programmes at the diploma and certificate levels in 2002, students can now opt to study in one of the three undergraduate and eight diploma programmes. "Certainly, we would not have achieved these significant milestones without the support and assistance from the Sabah government," he said in his speech.

The Sabah campus, he said, began operations in 2002 with just 22 students at the Kian Kok Middle School. It later relocated to Penampang in 2009 and finally settled at Alam Mesra in 2020, with its campus equipped with modern academic spaces, recreational and state-of-the-art facilities and laboratories.

Over the years, the student body has expanded to over 500 individuals enrolled in courses offered by departments such as Computing and Information Technology, Accountancy, Finance, Business, as well as Social Science and Humanities. Dr Wee said that the Sabah campus has received approval to admit international students. Additionally, it is actively forging strategic partnerships with industry players and academic institutions in the region to create networking opportunities that foster the growth and development of its students.

"TAR UMT Sabah branch is a testament to the university's commitment to support the state government's efforts in developing this region, particularly in nurturing highly skilled professionals who are capable of driving Sabah's economy and further propelling this region's development," Dr Wee added.

Meanwhile, on providing quality tertiary education to Sabah youth, Hajiji said it is important as a substantial part of the student population in Sabah are into STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education. He said education serves as the cornerstone of progress and development, highlighting the collective responsibility to ensure children in Sabah receive top-notch education.

"This is why human capital is one of the three main thrusts of our development roadmap – the Hala Tuju Sabah Maju Jaya (Sabah Maju Jaya Seven-Way Development Plan)." Hajiji said this year, the state government allocated RM475mil to strengthen human capital development. He said, in line with Sabah's Youth Policy, the state has also set aside RM16.89mil to implement a Youth Leadership Development Programme this year which includes voluntarism and social unity activities.

"We will continue to channel resources to implement various programmes for our youth, including leadership, skills, and entrepreneurial activities." "Youth development initiatives like the Sabah Youth Entrepreneurs Success Scheme will persist in offering support to young entrepreneurs in initiating and enhancing their entrepreneurial endeavours."

Hajiji said the state government has introduced several programs and initiatives for youth, including the Student Consultative Council. This council engages students from public and private higher-learning institutions nationwide, including universities, polytechnics, community and skills institutes, as well as secondary schools. "It is a strategic platform for youth in Sabah to get involved in the development of the state while studying. As such, we will continue to further strengthen this initiative to instil excellence in our future leaders," he said.