

Development of education now more flexible : Taib

By Kevin Tan

KUCHING - Malaysia has attracted some 210,000 foreign students who get the opportunity to interact across international boundaries, especially within Asian, before entering various professions in their home countries.

Chief Minister Danar Patinggi Taib Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud said this when declaring open INTI College Sarawak campus yesterday.

Taib noted that ever since the government allowed more liberal growth of education under the private sector, good progress had been made by the education system of the country.

"The development of education has become more flexible and suited to our manpower, and we have sufficient smart partnerships with prestigious universities abroad that culminate in twinning arrangements that allow a choice of courses suited to our country's needs.

"This flexibility has hastened the process of providing the right kind of qualification and on-the-job training to our people in a time of rapid change," Taib said.

He pointed out that this had enabled the country to run tertiary, professional and vocational education in more interesting ways than before.

The Chief Minister also noted that INTI College had achieved much success over the last decade in building a solid educational foundation for people within and outside the country.

A total of 5,000 students have passed through the gates of INTI which presently has an enrollment of 2,000 students, including those from abroad.

This development was healthy as it promised opportunities for expansion, Taib stressed.

He commended the educationists leading the programmes at INTI for giving the students a good well-rounded education both academically and in terms of their ability to relate socially with one another.

"I understand you have started a small research unit

in your college which will enable you to attract talents and spot them early. Such an initiative will also enable you to chart as early as possible the application of technology brought into your programme of education. I would like the overall perspective to be well-remembered by us - that our education system is geared for the era of globalisation," the Chief Minister said.

Taib admired INTI's impressive new building which he said reflected its confidence and mission in the development of education in the country.

Earlier, chairman of INTI's board of directors Datin Hajah Lillah Haji Mohd Salleh said more than RM20 million had been invested in the College in the last decade to provide cutting edge facilities to students.

She disclosed: "INTI now has over 2,000 students and 270 staff and provides a wide range of degree, diploma and certificate courses in business administration, information technology, engineering, applied science and liberal arts.

"In the 10 years of operation, we have seen the graduation of over 5,000 students of whom 2,000 are from overseas. At present, we are host to 317 students from Indonesia, Myanmar, Taiwan, Philippines, Korea, Brunei, China, Japan and Hong Kong.

"INTI College offers various 1-0 degrees and programmes to allow for huge savings in overseas tuition and living expenses. It also believes in holistic education whereby students are only provided with more than just information to pass their examinations but are also developed culturally, personally and spiritually. To this end, INTI provides students with motivation talks, college outings, social and sporting events," Lillah said.

She added that INTI's emphasis on new technology was given recognition when it became the first college in East Malaysia to be awarded the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) status in year 2000.



INTERESTING ... Taib taking a look at pictures on display at the exhibition. He is flanked by INTI managing director/chief executive Encik William Tan Tiong Liang (left) and Datin Lillah (partially hidden at right). PHOTOGRAPH: TH LU