

Sabah to increase student involvement in STEM — CM

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KOTA KINABALU: Cultivation of Science, Technology, Innovation and Economics (STIE) among students in the state will continue to be strengthened in efforts to increase their interest in these fields, said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Hajji Noor.

This is because the rate of student involvement in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM), especially pure sciences, is decreasing in the country.

The state government, he said, takes this situation seriously because of the need to provide a skilled workforce in technical, scientific and technological fields to meet the future industry's needs.

To achieve this, the state government is targeting a 60:40 ratio, with 60 per cent in the Science stream and 40 per cent in the Arts stream. This is because the current student involvement in STEM is only at 28 per cent.

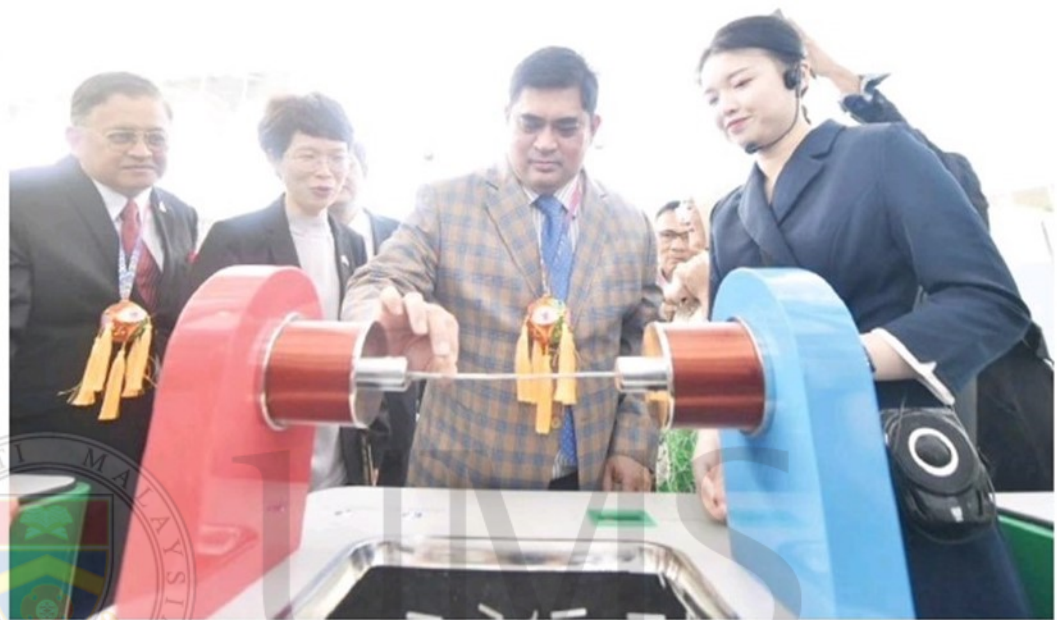
"Therefore, various strategies are being implemented to ensure that this target is achieved," he said during the launch of the "Experiencing Science: Enlightening Innovation" Tour in Sabah, mobile exhibition at the Sabah State Library, Tanjung Aru branch on Wednesday.

His speech was delivered by Deputy Chief Minister cum Works Minister Datuk Shahelmei Yahya.

According to Hajji, the State Science, Technology, and Innovation Ministry has formulated the 2022-2025 Strategic Plan as a guide for implementing various programs and initiatives to strengthen the STIE ecosystem in Sabah.

Among the programs implemented were the STEM Fiesta Program with 24 District Education Offices, the Sabah Science Carnival, the Borneo Science Expedition, and the Sabah Science Awards Ceremony.

So far, all 1,296 schools have benefited from the programs



Shahelmei trying his hand on one of the interactive exhibits on Thursday. Looking on are Consul General of the People's Republic of China in Kota Kinabalu, Dr Huang Shi Fang and Science, Technology, and Innovation Minister cum State Education Exco Datuk Dr Afrifin Arif.

that have been implemented, he said.

"I hope that the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, state Education Department, and all related agencies can achieve the goal of at least 40 per cent of students pursuing science-related fields by 2025 in this state," Hajji said.

According to him, Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) has been identified as a crucial driver for socio-economic development in the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP) and the Sabah Maju Jaya Development Plan (SMJ).

The emphasis on STI as a critical driver of more strategic and dynamic socio-economic development in line with global trends will enhance knowledge, innovation, quality of life, and the well-being of the people, he pointed out.

"The state government, through the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, is committed to raising awareness among the public about

the importance of STI and strengthening it from time to time in Sabah.

"Several collaborations have been established with federal ministries such as the Science, Technology and Innovation, Communications and Digital, Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives, Human Resources, in addition to strategic collaborations with public educational institutions such as the University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Universiti Teknologi Mara (UITM), as well as private institutions," he said.

Touching on the "Experiencing Science: Enlightening Innovation" Tour in Sabah mobile exhibition, Hajji said that Sabah is the first state in Malaysia and the third in Asia to implement the interactive science exhibition program.

The state Science, Technology, and Innovation Ministry, in collaboration with the China Science Technology Museum and Guangxi Science Technology

Museum, will conduct a series of interactive science exhibition tours in 14 selected districts, he said, adding that the collaboration will last for three years until September 26, 2026.

"This exhibition is significant because the People's Republic of China has implemented various new efforts and initiatives in the field of STI and is ranked 11th in the Global Innovation Index 2022.

"This positions them as a major world leader in science and technology," he said, adding that the exhibition is also one of the state Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry's initiatives to foster students' interest in STEM in the state, and it is one of the core elements of the Sabah Maju Jaya agenda.

"I also want to expand cooperation opportunities with China, especially in the field of Education, Technical and Vocational Training (TVET), and other technologies in the future," he said.