

CM: PREPARING WORKFORCE AS WE MOVE TO A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY

KOTA KINABALU: The state government is fully committed to encouraging the development of e-learning to eventually provide the local workforce with up-to-date and cost effective programmes.

Such programmes will help motivate the people and turn them into skilled-knowledge workers.

"This is the kind of workforce we will need as we move from being a production-based economy to a knowledge-based economy by year 2020," Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman (pictured) said when opening the Sabah Institute of Arts (SIA) e-learning faculty here yesterday.

Musa who is also the Finance Minister said the state government was totally committed to playing its part in making Malaysia a fully developed country by year 2020, and education being the cornerstone of development, would receive all support and assistance necessary to meet this objective.

"Since the Barisan Nasional took over the state's administration in 1994, the state has witnessed tremendous progress in the development of its education system where numerous private institutions of higher learning are now well established apart from the Universiti Malaysia Sabah and Universiti Institut

Teknologi Mara," he said.

He such a tremendous development has contributed towards the idea of turning Sabah into a regional centre of education excellence. "Knowledge is now considered the most valuable asset for companies, organisations and the nation as a whole."

"In our efforts to make Sabah a centre of excellence for education, we must realise that education and training will determine economic success and this

makes it also necessary for us to encourage non-traditional approaches towards life-long education," he said.

Musa also said that there were many factors and new developments that make e-learning essential in this new millennium and they included social development, demographic factors and technological progress.

"In today's fast-paced culture, organisations that have implemented e-learning will enhance their work-

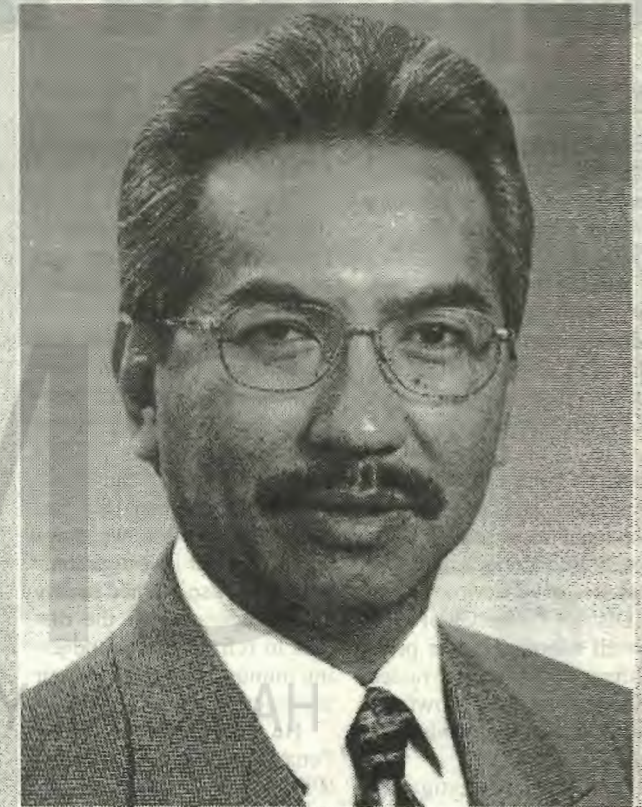
force greatly and the need for e-learning, so to speak, will continue to increase as the demand for skilled and highly knowledgeable workers also increases," he said.

The Chief Minister added that today, people were talking about the k-economy that was already emerging on the global scene and the era of production economy where reliance on commodities and exports of raw materials was coming to an end.

"And the k-economy will

place a premium on brain-power and the ability to effectively acquire, deliver and process information speedily, he said. "Those who are effectively educated and trained will be the ones to economically survive and advance in the k-economy and those who fail to do so will be rendered irrelevant."

Musa also commended the efforts by the SIA in taking up such an excellent initiative to spearhead the start-up of the e-learning pro-



Government
pledges full
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in e-learning
development

gramme in Sabah.

Meanwhile, the president of the SIA, Prof Dato Dr Wilson Wong in his welcoming remarks said that SIA working in collaboration with their 63 universities and colleges in China and three others in Peninsula Malaysia, saw the need to address the current education development.

"We found that it is consistently dependent on computer technology for dissemination of vital information and found it necessary and

also timely to embark on the adoption of e-learning paradigms as an alternative medium of providing continued top quality of art and design," he said.

Dr Wilson said the advent of this e-learning initiative as an extension to SIA's current program was coherent and objectively in keeping with the government's aspiration to grooming a knowledge-based manpower resources to meet the challenges of this century. — *By Wati Andi Samsiar*