

International students drawn to UMS' excellence, Sabah's charm

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KOTA KINABALU: Two of the 21 newly registered international students at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) for the 2025/2026 academic intake said they chose the university for its academic reputation and were captivated by the natural beauty of Sabah, the Land Below the Wind.

Liu Tong Shuo, 23, from Beijing, China, said UMS was his top choice to pursue Conservation Biology after receiving strong recommendations from several entomologists.

"Sabah has vast rainforests and incredible biodiversity, quite similar to the southern part of America. As an insect enthusiast, I feel extremely fortunate to have been accepted into UMS, where I can deepen my understanding of entomology," he said.

Liu's interest in Sabah began years ago. He first visited the state in 2016 with his family, and later joined an entomology camp at Mount Trusmadi alongside Chinese experts in the field.

"I already knew then that Sabah would be the perfect place for me to further my studies. Some Singaporean and Malaysian

entomologists recommended UMS to me, and I'm very excited to finally be here. Sabah holds a special place in my heart," he added.

He also appreciated Sabah's multilingual community, noting that many locals could converse in Mandarin, while expressing eagerness to improve his Bahasa Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Nafis Bin Hanif, 24, from Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh, arrived in Sabah for the first time to pursue a degree in Industrial Chemistry — a decision inspired by his late father's dream of building an eco-friendly factory.

"My father was a chemist. He dreamed of building an eco-friendly factory in our hometown, but he passed away before he could make it happen. That's why I want to become a chemist — to continue what he started," he said.

Nafis explained that his choice of UMS was influenced by the warmth of Sabahans he met online through the game League of Legends.

"One of my closest friends is from Sabah, and I learned about studying at UMS from them. The hospitality here has been incredible — everyone is so kind



Nafis and Liu are among 21 newly registered international students at Universiti Malaysia Sabah for the 2025/2026 academic intake.

and welcoming. I'm very excited to start this new chapter and pursue my dream," he said after UMS's Lafaz Ikrar dan Aku Janji pledge ceremony for the new

intake on Tuesday.

Like Liu, Nafis is also eager to master Bahasa Malaysia to better connect with the community and navigate his academic journey.