

UMS students lead “Bhat & Beyond” programme in Bangkok

pass **alistair** - April 15, 2026

By KONG

LABUAN: In line with Malaysia’s higher education transformation agenda, Universiti Malaysia Sabah Labuan International Campus (UMSKAL) continues to strengthen its commitment to developing future-ready graduates through the “Bhat & Beyond: A Finance Student Journey” international mobility programme in Bangkok.

The initiative reflects a comprehensive alignment with the national strategic priorities of digital transformation, industry integration, community empowerment, and internationalisation, integrating academic excellence with real-world exposure, sustainability practices, and global collaboration. Through a series of academic, industry, and community-based engagements, the programme demonstrates UMS’s proactive role in advancing holistic, values-driven education that responds to evolving global economic and societal needs.

The programme was organised by the International Finance Club of Labuan Faculty of International Finance (FKAL), led by Dr. Aminah Shari, Senior Lecturer in Investment at the Labuan Faculty of International Finance, and coordinated by Laiba Ijaz Khan, Programme Director. The delegation comprised 15 students from Year 2 and Year 3 of the Bachelor of International Business (International Finance) programme, Labuan Faculty of International Finance (FKAL), demonstrating strong engagement in experiential and globally oriented learning.

As part of the programme, students participated in a series of structured academic and industry visits, beginning with the Bank of Thailand Learning Center. This visit provided exposure to the evolution of Thailand’s financial system, the role of central banking institutions, and the implementation of monetary policy in ensuring economic stability. Interactive learning environments further enhanced students’ understanding of financial literacy and economic development within a real-world policy context.

The programme continued with an academic engagement at the Faculty of Economics, Kasetsart University, where discussions focused on strengthening bilateral collaboration and expanding opportunities for academic exchange. The delegation was warmly received by Associate Professor Dr. Kulapa Kuldilok, Dean of the Faculty of Economics, together with Associate Professor Dr. Thanasin Tanompongphandh, Associate Dean for International Affairs, and Wanida Kammani, Foreign Relations Officer. The meeting was held at Meeting Room EC5628, Economic Laboratory Building, Faculty of Economics.

The session was conducted as a hybrid meeting (physical and virtual), with Associate Professor Dr. Geoffrey Harvey Tanakinjal, Dean of Labuan Faculty of International Finance, joining virtually. The discussion covered strategic initiatives including faculty exchange programmes, student mobility, visiting lecturers, and the development of collaborative academic programmes with credit transfer arrangements.

The meeting also served as a platform for preliminary discussions aimed at exploring new avenues for joint academic initiatives. In-depth discussions are ongoing to ensure that the initiatives outlined in the Letter of Intent (LOI) and Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) are effectively implemented and mutually beneficial, supporting meaningful learning experiences for all. Key areas discussed included faculty exchange programmes, student mobility, visiting lecturer engagements, and the development of collaborative academic programmes with credit transfer arrangements between both institutions.

Recognised for its strong academic standing, Kasetsart University is ranked 5th in Thailand out of 42 higher education institutions in the SCImago Institutions Rankings (SIR) 2026, reinforcing the strategic value of this partnership. The engagement also included an official invitation for Kasetsart University to participate in the upcoming 8th Stock Trading Competition (STC), further strengthening academic-industry linkages and regional collaboration. Delegates were also given the opportunity to explore the campus environment and visit the Kasetsart University Dairy Center, gaining insights into research, education, and innovation initiatives.

In advancing industry integration and digital transformation, students were exposed to real-world financial environments through a visit to the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET). Bridging the gap between theory and real-world practice, students stepped beyond the classroom into the dynamic environment of the Stock Exchange of Thailand (SET), gaining firsthand experience of capital market operations.

The experience provided immersive exposure to capital market operations through interactive platforms, financial simulations, and digital learning tools. Students participated in live trading simulations, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge in practical settings while enhancing analytical thinking and decision-making skills.

The visit also highlighted the transformation of financial markets through technology, reinforcing the importance of digital competencies in navigating modern financial ecosystems. Exposure to both historical and contemporary trading systems enabled students to appreciate the evolution of financial markets and the role of innovation in driving economic growth.

Complementing academic and industry exposure, the programme emphasised community engagement and sustainability through the Green Legacy Project on 28 March 2026, marking the first international environmental conservation initiative spearheaded by the International Finance Club, UMSKAL, held at the Khao Khiao Nature and Wildlife Education Center, Thailand.

The project was conducted in collaboration with Chulalongkorn University, which is ranked 1st in Thailand and 3rd in ASEAN in the QS World University Rankings: Sustainability 2026. This initiative reflects the integration of sustainability principles into higher education and reinforces the importance of environmental responsibility among future graduates.

The programme was organised through a collaboration between the International Finance Club and the Rotaract Club of Chulalongkorn University. The initiative aimed to promote environmental sustainability, strengthen cross-cultural engagement, and encourage collaborative learning among university students. Students participated in hands-on conservation activities including tree planting, seasonal seed planting, and mineral lick repair, contributing to biodiversity preservation and ecosystem restoration.

These activities provided meaningful experiential learning opportunities aligned with Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) principles and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Participants also engaged in buddy-matching sessions, team-building activities, and cross-cultural interactions between Malaysian and Thai students. These engagements strengthened communication skills, global awareness, and collaborative capabilities, which are essential attributes for graduates in an interconnected world.

In addition to environmental initiatives, students participated in group activities and a symbolic gift exchange session, creating memorable experiences and reinforcing the spirit of international friendship and collaboration. Importantly, the initiative embodies values-based learning, integrating ethical values such as responsibility, integrity, teamwork, and environmental stewardship into real-world experiences.

This reflects Malaysia’s aspiration to develop holistic graduates who are not only academically competent but also socially responsible and ethically grounded. Overall, the “Bhat & Beyond” programme demonstrates a holistic approach to higher education transformation by integrating digital innovation, industry relevance, community impact, and international collaboration. It reinforces Universiti Malaysia Sabah’s role as a forward-looking institution committed to producing globally competent, future-ready, and socially responsible graduates. This initiative also strengthens strategic academic partnerships within the ASEAN region, positioning UMS as an active contributor to regional collaboration and global knowledge exchange, in line with national aspirations for higher education excellence.



Dr Aminah (fifth from right), with participants at the Investment Discovery Museum.