

# Establishment of higher learning institutions proactive approach by Sabah govt

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The establishment of higher learning institutions by Sabah government is one of the proactive approaches to meet the increasing needs of skilled workers.

According to Minister in the Chief Minister Office, Datuk Nasir Tun Sakaran, the Sandakan education hub located at Batu 10, Jalan Sungai Batang has the capacity to accommodate 5,000 students.

To date, the hub has a total of 497 students studying at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Sandakan branch and Sandakan Polytechnic.

He said, UMS Sandakan branch started operation on Sept 12 focusing on the field of modern agriculture. Since its establishment, the number of students has increased to 371 from 253 last year, he said at the State Legislative Assembly sitting here yesterday. Nasir was replying to a question from Elopura assemblyman Au Kam Wah.

Furthermore, three programmes are offered by the Sustainable Agriculture School such as plant and farm productions, and horticulture, he said.

He added some 126 students are in Sandakan Polytechnic and the number is expected to increase with the new intake in December. Besides, diploma courses offered by the polytechnic focused on skills training in the agricultural and aquaculture sector.

Additionally, Nasir disclosed that the construction of Maktab Rendah Sains Mara (MRSM) which can accommodate 1,050 students has been completed and is waiting for the Occupational Certificate (OC). MRSM is expected to begin operation next year.

Several other institutions are planning to expand their branches in the Sandakan Education hub. At this point, Tunku Abdul Rahman College and Yayasan Sabah College have appealed for financial allocation and are waiting for the final decision to set up their branch there.

Nasir also added that five institutions are still in the planning stage to decide on building more branches in the hub and they consisted of Residential College, Kolej Aminudin Bakri, Asian Tourism Institute College, Kolej Pusat Teknologi and Advanced Management as well as Sandakan Matriculation College.

Nasir said the State government wants to assure there would be excellence and quality as the state prepares for better human resource.

Meanwhile, Assistant Community Development and Consumers Affairs Minister, Datuk Herbert Timbun Lagadan said that providing pre-schools for disabled is one of the government concerns as stated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak recently.

According to Herbert, the government is concerned about helping parents with disabled children by providing early education in special pre-schools, in line with the government's efforts to produce an inclusive and progressive society.

He also said that so far, a total of 27 community rehabilitation centers (PDK) was established in Sabah. These centers were built to increase the involvement of parents and community in the rehabilitation and the development of disabled people.