



Dani Shamsuddin (middle) showing his TAS Academy Excellence Student Award to fellow graduates.

# First batch of 45 oil and gas graduates snapped up

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By Sandra Sokial

**KOTA KINABALU:** "All the 45 students from this first batch have already been snapped up (by oil and gas companies)... jobs are just waiting for them and future students," said Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah.

The former Head of State was referring to the first batch of graduates from Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah Oil and Gas Academy (TAS Academy) and UMS Link Centre for Professional Development (UCPD).

The graduates who received Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas in a ceremony yesterday were "very marketable", said Ahmadshah, who is the patron of TAS Academy.

"Some were getting offers even before they completed their courses. The courses offered are tough, and for them to complete the Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas means they are good," he said.

Ahmadshah said some parents have asked the academy to increase its intake.

"We understand the demand and may increase the numbers in the future when everything is in place," he said.

He urged private higher learning institutions to offer similar courses to meet the increasing demand for skilled oil and gas manpower.

With the Sabah Oil and Gas Terminal in Kimanis and discovery of new oil fields off

Sabah, he said the industry's potential was enormous.

Ahmadshah lauded the move to provide skill training for the youth in Sabah, especially with the RM45 billion investment by Petronas rolling in to develop the downstream and upstream oil and gas industries here.

He said people are beginning to realise that the impact that the oil and gas industry would have in Sabah, especially in providing great job opportunities to the locals.

"I believe with the rapid development of the state's oil, gas and energy industry, the training role of the TAS Academy as well as the UCPD will be even more important," he said.

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# Discovery of oil fields will drive economy of Sabah

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TAS Academy, which opened on Aug 16, 2008, and UCPD are managed by UMS Link Holdings Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned company and investment arm of Universiti Malaysia Sabah.

To date, they have 183 students.

TAS Academy is the state's first training centre for oil and gas technical operations, and fills a need in Sabah's oil and gas industry, he said.

The discovery of several oil fields offshore Sabah is expected to help drive the state's economy and create job opportunities for Sabahans, Ahmadshah said.

On another matter, Ahmadshah praised UMS Link's effort in introducing the Diploma in Executive Mosque Management, saying that it would train people to be creative when managing mosques and suraus in the state.

"I know how the situation is (on surau and mosque management) because I was attached to the Sabah Islamic Council for eight years in the 1980s.

"The people appointed to handle mosque management works are those appointed by the residents in the areas... they are untrained, therefore there are very limited programmes organised," he said.

"Some mosques are very well managed such as Masjid Bandaraya and Masjid Bukit Padang because they are headed by corporate people.

"These mosques are very well managed, lots of activities are carried out, including organising training where the money collected is channeled towards the maintenance of the mosque," he said.