

'Sabah can double oil production next three years'

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KOTA KINABALU: Sabah could double its oil production within the next three years, thanks to new developments in technologies, which will also make exploration cost effective.

Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) School of Engineering and Information Technology Dean Associate Professor Dr Rosalam Hj Sarbarty claimed most major oil firms said production could hit between 250,000 and 300,000 barrels a day, once deepwater exploration becomes fully-operational within the next two to three years.

Currently, he said the production fluctuates between 170,000 and 180,000 barrels at present.

"Thanks to evolving technologies oil firms can push production cost down to 20 per cent, making a massive profit from their contracts from the national oil firm," he said after the opening of the UMS First International Oil and Gas Symposium, here on Wednesday.

Taking the example of inland drilling in Klias in the past, Dr Rosalam said oil companies stopped the project as it was expensive, but if it was reopened today the process would be viable in spite it being just a small oil reserve, that stretches from Klias up to Beaufort.

"At the time most companies would rather drill offshore especially in shallow waters, but since technology evolved the cost is viable apart from the higher prices of oil prices," said Dr Rosalam, adding that firms could still tap into the Klias reserve in the next 30 years.

However, Dr Rosalam noted in most



Dr Rosalam



Dr Duduku

of his discussion with major oil firms – Shell, Petronas and Talisman Energy – and the Industrial Development Ministry, all quarters still could not lock down the number of skilled workers needed to meet the task.

Still, he said early figures have it that 50,000 workers are needed for Sabah to catch up with other major players in the world.

"The matter still depends on the growing economy," he said.

Meanwhile, more than a hundred experts and academicians convened for the three-day symposium that aims to share the latest information and research and development in the oil and gas industry.

A total of 125 papers are to be presented by experts that focus on challenges in the field.

According to the symposium organising director Professor Dr. Duduku Krishnaiah said a Journal of Applied Sciences will be published including all the papers presented in the symposium.

"The comments of reviewers will be sent through our website," he said.