

American Corner in UMS to boost ties

David Thien DE 25.5.2017 4 people of Sabah.

KOTA KINABALU: The setting up of the American Corner in UMS Library will further boost educational and people-to-people ties between Sabah and the United States.

United States Ambassador to Malaysia, Kamala Shirin Lakhdhir, and Universiti Malaysia Sabah's (UMS) Prof. Dr Sharifudin Md. Shaarani co-officiated at the soft launch of the Corner in UMS Library on Wednesday.

Lakhdhir called on UMS students who are potentially tomorrow's leaders of the country to travel, if possible, not only to the US for education but also other places to "broaden your worldviews from meeting others around the world which would make you better as understanding leaders, knowledgeable and experienced."

She said likewise, libraries are very important as depositories of knowledge, ideas and different opinions where people can gather to learn, to exchange ideas and to debate, safely and civilly for mutual understanding and to deepen relationships.

Following the launch, Lakhdhir delivered a talk to students and faculty at the university on her career and relationship between Malaysia and the US.

She called on the male students to study harder as women are getting better academic results globally, and men are losing physically demanding jobs that fewer women can do, to robots and computer chips and as even vehicles can drive themselves in future, male jobs will likely get reduced.

"In Malaysia, the US Embassy works with partner institutions to offer programmes at 10 American Corners. The American Corner in Sabah is our newest.

"The American Corner is one example of the US Embassy's investment in the

The embassy will work together with UMS staff to offer engaging and informative programmes at the American Corner," Lakhdhir said.

UMS Vice-Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr Mohd Harun Abdullah, in his address read out by Prof. Dr Sharifudin, thanked the US Embassy for the partnership and said he was grateful about the selection of UMS Library to have the American Corner.

"I am very grateful that our UMS Library was chosen to become the first academic library in the country to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the US Embassy's Public Affairs Section, to establish the American Corner.

"Since the signing of the MoU between UMS and the US Embassy on Sept 23, 2016, various activities have been organised by the American Corner.

Some of them were the Scuba Diving Programme, Meet and Greet with 'Break of Reality' cello band and recently, "Depression and Anxiety" talk in conjunction with World Health Day with several other exhibitions held by the American Corner.

"It's my hope that through this Corner, our UMS community can gain more information and knowledge about the United States, especially its society, culture and values," said Dr Mohd Harun in his message.

The American Corner in Sabah is also a resource centre providing high quality American library materials, including books, periodicals, DVDs, iPads with information on American society, culture and politics.

Lakhdhir said the US Embassy intends to send US government officials, Foreign Service officers and other American citizens to the American Corner Sabah to meet students and share their stories of

the United States.

"The embassy also plans to work together with UMS to offer programmes at the Corner led by talented Sabahans to offer hands-on experience with the latest technology and to share information about environment conservation, entrepreneurship, higher education, civil society and other important topics.

"We continue to promote education exchanges as well. The Fulbright English Teaching programme brings over 100 Americans to Malaysia each year, including 15 American teachers, to secondary schools in Sabah," she said.

Lakhdhir lauded the participation of young Sabahans in the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative or YSEALI which afforded them the opportunity to travel to the US and form strong ties with Americans and other Asean leaders.

"The US Embassy partners with the Sabah Forestry Department, Sabah Parks and the Sabah Wildlife Department to promote people-to-people ties between Americans and Sabahans.

We are very proud of the Sister City Initiative between Portland, Oregon and Kota Kinabalu, established in 2014.

"The initiative has fostered engagements between the two cities, including university, government and business exchanges," she said.

American Corner Sabah at UMS joins a network of nine American Corners currently operating in Perak, Penang (Georgetown and Seberang Jaya) Kedah, Kelantan, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka, Johor and Sarawak.

Visitors can access a wide-range of multimedia information, read magazines and periodicals from National Geographic to Oprah, borrow latest New York Times best sellers, view DVDs, and have hands-on experience with 'maker' tools and gadgets.



Lakhdhir (left) viewing books at the American Corner with UMS Librarian Dg. Rubiah Ag. Amit