

Immigration officers attend Mandarin class at UMS

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KOTA KINABALU: Fifty-three immigration officers are among students who participated in Mandarin class at Confucius Institute, Universiti Malaysia Sabah (CI@UMS).

The programme, Sino-Sabah Friendly Mandarin Class was launched recently through an online platform, Cisco Webex.

UMS vice chancellor Prof Datuk ChM. Ts. Dr Taufiq Yap Yun Hin when launching the event, said the class is important for the immigration officers to help them communicating with tourists and business people from China.

"Since CI@UMS was launched on 12 December 2019, its two objectives - teaching Chinese and introducing Chinese culture - have been worked on.

"Although the rest of the world is facing various constraints due to the Covid-19 pandemic, CI@UMS has been embarking on an online learning mode since last year, with Level 1 and Level 2 Mandarin classes having started in April this year.

"We hope that this effort can open the participation of more staff in government departments, Kota Kinabalu International Airport, Sabah Tourism Board and related agencies, resort and hotel operators and also other private companies," said Taufiq.

If the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the world improves and after inter-country visits are allowed, Taufiq said that CI@UMS

students will have the opportunity to visit two cities in China to participate in the "Summer Camp" program to improve the quality of Mandarin and their knowledge of Chinese culture.

"The students involved only have to pay their ticket fares while other expenses for two weeks are borne by the Confucius Institute headquarters," he added.

Meanwhile, Chinese Consul-General in Kota Kinabalu, Liang Caide, said the Chinese Consul-General's office in Kota Kinabalu, which sponsored the program, would continue to provide support and assistance to efforts to promote cooperation and exchange as well as strengthen friendly relations between China and Sabah through language learning.

He said every year more companies come to Sabah to invest and start businesses, and more tourists have chosen Sabah as a tourist destination.

"The Chinese Consul-General's Office greatly appreciates the role of the Immigration Department in providing high quality services in facilitating the entry of people from China into the state, and we are very pleased to maintain the close cooperation with CI@UMS and the Immigration Department.

"The efforts of immigration officers to join this class is a good example for government officials from other departments to also learn Mandarin systematically," he said.