

Acute shortage of skilled manpower

BY NORNASHEILA ZAIDI

KUCHING: Sarawak needs to hire skilled manpower from Peninsular Malaysia and overseas to address shortage faced by the industries by the year 2015.

Chief Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud pointed out the state could only produce about 30,000 skilled manpower each year as compared to the needed figure of 226,493 two years from now, adding there would be an acute shortage.

"Even if the government and 84 higher learning and technical institutions fast track to produce more skilled manpower in the next few years, it would still be insufficient.

"The state then will be working very hard to meet the shortfall as the requirements of investments in Samalaju and Mukah under Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy (SCORE) are beyond expectations," said Taib.

He said this in his speech when opening the International Festival of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEMFEST) 2013 held at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS), in Kota Samarahan, near here yesterday.

According to Taib, the state needs to get many STEM students excited about science and the issue of STEM education will continue to be a top priority for Sarawak and Malaysia in general.

He pointed out that the talent power for global economic growth came from men and women armed with STEM skills, which have the advanced knowledge of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Many experts, he said, had raised the alarm to highlight looming shortages of such talent, raising the possibility of a diminished capacity for innovation and slower growth.

"Therefore, the state government will rapidly establish more technical institutions in rural and semi-urban areas and increase the enrolment in the existing institutions to attract more youngsters in the state to participate in technical field.

"The rural youngsters also have shown their greater interest towards the vocational and technical field and this will become the great opportunities for the state to produce skilled manpower for the industry," stressed Taib.



CHIEF Minister Pehin Sri Haji Abdul Taib Mahmud (3R) launching STEMFEST at UNIMAS, near Kuching yesterday. Looking on (from right) are Datu Len Talif Salleh, David Goncalves, Puan Sri Ragad Kurdi Taib, Dato' Prof. Dr Mohamad Kadim Suaidi, Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Alfred Jabu Numpang, Dato Sri Michael Manyin Jawong and other officials. PHOTO: JOHN CHAN

Valuable opportunity for teachers to learn STEM

THE six conferences which will be conducted in the STEMFEST like World Science, Technology and Education Conference, World Hybrid Technologies and Energy Conference, World Safety on Science, Industry and Education, International Conference on Transnational Collaboration in STEM Education, Forest Science Education Special Session, Borneo International Investment Conference showcase not just a conference but also a valuable opportunity for the teachers to learn STEM with success.

STEMFEST 2013 brings hundreds of STEM speakers, famous professors, STEM exhibitors from an Ipad application software organisation and higher learning institutions.

He believed that the festival would be able to encourage all of the local educators to look beyond the borders of comfort zone for opportunities and challenges.

Also present at the opening ceremony yesterday was Taib's wife Puan Sri Ragad Kurdi Taib, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Tan Sri Alfred Jabu Numpang, Minister of Infrastructure Development & Communication Dato Sri Michael Manyin Jawong, Assistant Minister of Environment and Technical Education Promotion Datu Len Talif Salleh and Vice Chancellor of UNIMAS Dato' Prof. Dr Mohamed Kadim Suaidi and Global STEM States Incorporated executive director David Goncalves.