



CORPORATE BACKING: Jamil (second right) receiving a mock cheque from Celcom's general manager (planning and sales) Norrida Yusof after the press conference.

# Universities to fight it out in dance festival

By Samuel Aubrey

**KOTA SAMARAHAN:** Indonesian universities will be among the competing teams in the 2008 Borneo Universities Dance Festival which offers the grand prize of Sarawak Chief Minister's Challenge Trophy.

Universitas Tanjung Pura, Pontianak, Kalimantan Barat, the overall champion of the inaugural competition held in 2006, will again compete along with Universitas Mulawarman, Samarinda and several more expected to confirm their participation before the start of the competition proper on Aug 27.

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Sarawak will again play host.

This year the two corporate sponsors are Celcom (Malaysia) Berhad and Sarawak Shell while throwing their support behind the sponsors are Yayasan Sarawak, the Ministry of Social Development and Urbanisation and Culture and National Unity Department.

As of yesterday, eight institutions of higher learning, including the two Indonesian universities, have confirmed their participation. The other confirmed participants are UiTM Sarawak, UiTM Sabah, Universiti Putra Malaysia Bintulu Campus, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) and Universiti Tun Abdul Razak (Unitar) Sarawak.

Invitations have also been extended to Curtin University of Technology Sarawak, Swinburne University of Technology Sarawak, Universiti Brunei Darussalam and Indonesia's Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Banjarmasin and Universitas Palangkaraya.

The competition, organised biennially since 2006, had opened the doors to greater working relationships between the universities in Borneo.

Prof Madya Dr Jamil Hamali, organising chairperson

Preview shows will begin tonight at Dewan Jubli UiTM Sarawak. There will also be dance workshops and a seminar to be held concurrently with the competition.

Organising chairperson Prof Madya Dr Jamil Hamali said yesterday the competition, organised biennially since 2006, had opened the doors to greater working relationships between the universities in Borneo.

"Universities have important role to play in the growth of Borneo's unique arts and culture. This competition is not just for universities to compete but also a platform for art and culture lovers and supporters to meet, exchange views and work on new ideas.

"This is also the best way for the current generation of students to learn and love the traditional arts and cultures of Borneo," he said.

The competition will be divided into two categories - traditional and creative dances. Each team is required to perform traditional songs that represent their respective areas.

For each category, the first place winner will get RM5,000 and trophy, second RM3,000 and trophy and third RM1,000 and trophy. The best choreographer for each category will get RM1,000 while best costume RM2,000.

The overall winners will bring home the Sarawak Chief Minister's Challenge Trophy.

Jamil said each university

will be sending a team of 20 including choreographers for the competition.

"As for the Indonesian teams, the organisers will assist them in their expenses," he said.

On another note, Jamil, who is also UiTM Sarawak director, said Minister of Social Development and Urbanisation Dato Sri William Ikom will be officiating at the festival's opening on Aug 27.

"This year's competition is also part of the state's 45th anniversary of independence celebration. As such, we are happy that the Chief Minister Pehin Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud himself will officiate at the closing on Aug 29," he said.

He added that the name, Sarawak Chief Minister Challenge Trophy, would be unchanged even if the competition is held outside Sarawak in the future.

"UiTM Sarawak, as the prime mover of this event, hopes that this event will continue to be held in the future and hosted by other universities," he said, adding that Sabah would be the host for 2010 and that the venue could be either UiTM Sabah or UMS.

According to Jamil, the universities are also contemplating a sports festival in UPM Bintulu and a leadership seminar in UiTM Sabah.

"These are the spinoffs from the dance festival and we hope to have more joint collaborations amongst ourselves," he said.