

# Bond with society, varsities urged

## Organise activities to involve society at large for friendship and understanding, says TYT

By Eve Sonary Heng

**KUCHING:** Head of State Tun Datuk Patinggi Abang Muhammad Salahuddin said universities and higher learning institutions should build a strong bond with society for understanding and meaningful co-existence.

Speaking to launch Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) Convocation Fest 2006 yesterday, Salahuddin, who is Unimas Chancellor, said these institutions must make society feel that they were a part of them by organising activities where people could gather and mingle.

Salahuddin said the convocation fest was one such activities and it certainly gave Unimas the opportunity to foster closer relationship with its neighbours.

He said activities like the convocation fest would also help to draw youngsters who might have been hoping to have an insight into

life within the gate of the university.

He said their brief experience of what went on inside could motivate them in their studies in the hope that they would one day further their education at the university.

He said the university came into being because of society's aspiration and it should help to develop not only its student but also other people.

"A university needs to understand the needs of society. It needs to help develop the society and this can only be done if the university gives itself the opportunity to get closer to the people. To me, this convo fest is one of the best ways (to get to know society better)," he said.

He hoped that more people would come to the fest as it also gave parents, private sector, students as well as members of the public the opportunity to celebrate an inaugural event. The convocation fest was held for the first time at the new Unimas campus.

Unimas will build an Islamic Centre as part of its permanent

campus for the convenience of students and staff as well as nearby residents.

Vice chancellor of the university, Professor Doctor Abdul Rashid Abdullah, said the centre could accommodate 3,000 people at any one time.

Rashid said the centre would include facilities such as a mosque, an administration office, a resource room and a seminar hall for learning and teaching.

He also said that buildings for the faculties of Social Science and Economy and Business would also be built soon. He pointed out that the campus, costing hundreds of millions of ringgit, showed the commitment of the government in providing modern facilities for higher learning in the State.

Among those present yesterday were the Head of State's wife Toh Puan Datuk Patinggi Norkiah and Unimas Board of Directors chairperson Tan Sri Datuk Amar Bujang Mohd Nor.



**RED CARPET WELCOME:** The Head of State arrives at the Unimas Convocation Fest.