



Some of the books donated to UNISSA

Acting High Commissioner of Pakistan donates books to UNISSA

| SYAZWANI HJ ROSLI |

THE Acting High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Brunei Darussalam, Ahmed Ali Sirohey, donated 113 books to the Universiti Islam Sultan Sharif Ali (UNISSA) library in a ceremony yesterday.

On hand to receive the contribution was the Rector of UNISSA, Dr Haji Norarfan bin Haji Zainal.

The books encompass a wide range of topics including Islamic studies, international relations, and political economy, as well as the history of Pakistan and its place in the contemporary world.

In his welcoming remarks, Dr Haji Norarfan expressed his appreciation for the gift as a further addition to UNISSA's library collection.

"Undoubtedly, this will be useful to the university's students. It would also serve as a medium in enriching and expanding the knowledge of the people of Brunei Darussalam on the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," he said.

"This is part of the continuous efforts in strengthening the ties between Brunei Darussalam and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan," said Dr Haji Norarfan, who hoped for more endeavours that further bolsters the relations between the two countries.

Ahmed Ali Sirohey, meanwhile, thanked UNISSA for its cooperation, saying that he believed that the level of Islamic education at the institution could be further reinforced with more research-oriented books and new avenues of research.



The Rector of UNISSA, Dr Haji Norarfan bin Haji Zainal, and Acting High Commissioner of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Brunei Darussalam, Ahmed Ali Sirohey at the ceremony yesterday

PHOTOS: AZROL AZMI

International expo provides boost for local SMEs

| HAKIM HAYAT |

SMALL and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Brunei should step out of their comfort zones and explore all available opportunities in order to maximise their potential for an overseas market, said some entrepreneurs following the success of their recent participation at an international trade fair in Sabah.

Sponsored by several government agencies, around 16 Brunei-registered companies were selected to showcase their products and services at the Sabah International Expo 2016 (SIE 2016) that was held towards the end of September.

Representatives from local businesses, including some first-timers on the international circuit, shared the results of their participation with the Bulletin, and expressed their hope to see more local entrepreneurs joining such ventures to help expand their market portfolios and build networks for potential partnerships.

Sarina Taib, the owner of the popular Sweet as Sara bakery, said that she felt that it was time to try out her luck in an overseas market, after enjoying some measure of success on the home front. "Apart from our work in gauging the local market, we didn't want to overlook the opportunities available outside, such as the potential of exporting and setting up of base... and this expo in Sabah was a good start for us to expand beyond the Brunei market due to its proximity to Brunei," she said.

Hajah Sapurahbee binti Haji Ibrahim, the Managing Director of local pizzeria, Tasconi's International, which has already ventured outside of the Brunei market, said that the recent participation provided them with good exposure, and that they managed to capture the interest of a third party that will function as their food products distributor in Sabah.

"We invited them to come over to look at our operations, rather than just giving them the idea," she said. "It is better for them to come and have a look and see what kind of investment that they can be involved in."

She also said that international trade fairs

provide more exposure for home-grown companies and local products that are of export-quality. "We would like to prove that in Brunei, we do have these products and that we can export... this is why we must have the courage," she added.

Waste management specialist DD-Pykes Waste Management Services Sdn Bhd, which focusses on landfill management and engineering, also had the opportunity to join its first-ever international expo, which it said has brought plenty of networking opportunities for expanding its business.

According to Operations Manager Ishak bin Haji Taha, the expo allowed them to meet potential customers and business partners, both regionally and internationally, as well as exchanging views with other experts in the same industry on new technologies.

He also said that there was a lot of interest from the Sabah government and its private sector during the expo.

"Sabah's Deputy Chief Minister was interested to meet with us. Hopefully he will set a date to meet us soon and one of the leading corporate leaders also expressed their interest. We hope to follow up on the opportunities from all the interested parties," he disclosed, adding that this will be their first step towards business expansion beyond Brunei's borders.

The company's Managing Director, Qaini Adnan, is of the view that although government support is essential for local businesses to expand overseas, it is also important for companies to do their own research on presentation and marketing.

"You really can't just expect the government to give all the support... The opportunity is there, so we should make use of it," she said.

Meanwhile, representatives from pharmaceutical products and health supplements manufacturer Simpor Pharma Sdn Bhd, said that their participation was done with the intent of scouting for distributors to help them penetrate the Malaysian market, which they said required a lengthy registration process.



Sabah's Deputy Chief Minister touring the Brunei pavilion at the SIE 2016

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