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50 years with the people

KOTA KINABALU: For the past 50 years, the iconic Yayasan Sabah, has brought about change and development for the betterment of the people and the State of Sabah. In 1965, Tun Datu Haji Mustapha Bin Datu Harun, proposed the establishment of Yayasan Sabah as an institution that will provide educational and social activities for the Malaysians in Sabah.

Its vision of a "Dynamic, People Oriented, Committed and Caring Organisation" accentuated by the mission 'To uplift the quality of life of Malaysians living in Sabah' have been pursued through various social activities since its inception in 1966. These areas are:

■ EDUCATION

According to the Director of Yayasan Sabah, Datuk Sapawi Bin Haji Ahmad, Yayasan Sabah's educational programmes supplement and complement the activities of the government in uplifting the quality of education and educational facilities in Sabah. He said, the core of the Yayasan Sabah's education development programmes is to provide financial assistance in the form of scholarships at the secondary and tertiary level and study loan for tertiary level. In an effort to uplift the socio economic standard of the people especially the students, Yayasan Sabah was also involved in the distribution scheme of school uniforms, stationeries, milk and shoes. Its educational programme starts from pre-school programme to higher learning institution.

Child Development

"With the objective to boost children's (1-12 years old) early education growth in Sabah, our Child Development Division offers preschool programmes through nurseries, kindergartens and transition classes besides pre schools in the rural areas. Currently, Yayasan Sabah has 22 pre school centres throughout the State that has benefitted a total of 11,507 students," he said.

In addition, Yayasan Sabah collaborates with the Sabah State Education Department and Universiti Sains Malaysia in the formation and implementation of the Integrated System of Programmed Instruction for Rural Environment (InSPIRE) project which is solely implemented in Sabah.

"With InSPIRE, teaching materials and modules are tailored specifically for the needs of primary school students in rural areas. The aim of the project is to improve the academic excellence of rural schools

in Sabah by providing teaching materials and modules that focus on student's education competencies. A total of 17,000 students have benefitted from this programme," he explained.

Further to that, since 2000, Yayasan Sabah has also published children books (words/images) with Dewan Bahasa & Pustaka (in Rumi, Jawi and Arabic translation) and in 2012, a Digital Video Disc (DVD) of Collection of Children's Songs was produced. A guidebook/manual on setting up a Preschool Centre was also published in 2013.

Scholarships and Study Loans

Touching on financial assistance, Datuk Sapawi said, Yayasan Sabah offers the Scholarships for Secondary Education to needy students to further their studies in the selected secondary schools in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah.

"Since 1968, a total of 45,056 students have benefitted from this programme which involved RM92.6 million," he said.

Under the higher education, scholarships and study loans are offered to students to continue their tertiary education on selected field of studies as determined from time to time based on the manpower needs of the State. To date, a total of 14,297 students have benefitted from such programme since launched in 1968, involving RM413.9 million.

In addition, he said on behalf of the State Government, Yayasan Sabah initiated the Sabah State Scholarship Award of Excellence for students who obtained excellent results in the SPM examination. According to him, this award is an accolade of their success and to spur other students to achieve excellent results in their SPM examination. Initiated in 1990, a total of 463 students have benefitted from this programme involving RM69.8 million.

"Overall, a total of RM577 million has been spent on scholarships and study loans for 71,352 secondary and tertiary students since 1968," he added.

Career and Counselling programmes

The career and counselling programmes are organised yearly through seminars, workshops and camps at various selected centres throughout the State. The target groups are students, teachers, parents and members of the public. Speakers from related agencies and higher educational institutions are invited to deliver talks, such as motivation, effective communication and decision making and choosing the right field of

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studies to the target groups.

Hostel

"Since 1972, Yayasan Sabah has also built 19 hostels in various districts throughout the State. This is slowly being phased out as rural infrastructures, especially the road system, improves and more schools are being built in the rural areas. Presently, there are three hostels in operation," he said.

The Asrama Kinabalu in Universiti Malaya contributed towards the improvement of education at the tertiary level besides promoting national integration amongst students from all over Malaysia. The hostel which was handed over to Universiti Malaya in December 1987 caters for 600 students. In order to provide accommodations for Sabah students who are pursuing their studies in the Middle East, Yayasan Sabah has also acquired buildings in Alexandria and Cairo, Egypt, as hostels for the students.

Yayasan Sabah was also involved in the setting-up of the branch campus of MARA Institute of Technology (ITM) in August 1973. "It was established as a centre for intellectual development to meet the State's need for more trained Bumiputras at the sub-professional and managerial-level. It function as a feeder campus to the main at ITM, Shah Alam by providing off-campus programmes in Diploma in Public Administration and Diploma in Business Studies," he explained.

He added, the branch campus of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Sabah (UKMS) was established in September 1974 as a temporary campus at Limau-Limaun, Kinarut to enable Sabahans to pursue degree in related fields. In 1995, Yayasan Sabah built a 'fast track' college campus for the temporary use of Universiti Malaysia Sabah at Likas, adjacent to the Menara Tun Mustapha.

Kolej Teknikal Yayasan Sabah

In providing both educational opportunities and facilities, Yayasan Sabah also facilitates the establishment of its wholly-owned institution of higher learning, Kolej Teknikal Yayasan Sabah (KTYS), which offers a multitude of programmes for skills training, technical, vocational, professional and academic (Technical Vocational Education Training).

"Academic Programmes conducted at KTYS are approved and accredited by the Malaysia Qualification Agency (MQA), Ministry of Higher Education and the vocational skills programmes are run with the approval of the Department of Skills Development, Ministry of Human Resources," he elaborated.

More than 4,200 students have gradu-

ated from this college since its inception 25 years ago.

University College Sabah Foundation

The establishment of University College Sabah Foundation (UCSF) is another success of Yayasan Sabah in expanding its role in education. Branded as a 'Green University' UCSF subscribes that future generations must rely on a firm understanding of the interconnected green issues facing us today so as to be guided towards sustainable living.

"A total of 15 programmes are now opened for application in 2016 from its three distinctive faculties: Faculty of Business & Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Creative Arts & Multimedia, Faculty of Natural sciences & Sustainability. The programmes offered include foundation, diploma and degree programmes," he said.

Tun Haji Mohd. Fuad Stephens Borneo Research Library

On another note, the Tun Haji Mohd. Fuad Stephens Borneo Research Library which was officially opened on 6 June 1980 acts as a source of information, insti-

tutional archives besides repository of materials and documents. The library functions as a unique resource centre in Southeast Asia capable of disseminating information on various fields of studies especially topics on Borneo, both directly from its own resources or from other libraries.

"A regional cooperation, k@Borneo, was established with the aims for the development and sharing of information on Borneo with participating institutions from Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia. The library is also an active member of Librarian Associations of Malaysia," he said.

■ SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

In the health sector, the Paramedic Services Unit was established in 1981 until 2009 with the objective of providing an efficient and expedient 24-hours ambulance service in areas in Kota Kinabalu. Prior to that the Flying Doctor Services Unit was established in March 1975 until 1995 with the objective of improving the health of the target groups who live in inaccessible areas of Sabah. Its role is to supplement and complement the Flying Doctor Service programme of the Medical Services Department in providing essential health care for the target groups.

"Subsequent to that, the Rural Health Education Services Unit was started in September 1986 until 2003 with the objective of providing preventive and curative care to target groups who live in rural areas in Sabah," he said.

With the establishment of the Zone of-

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ices in 2003, Yayasan Sabah's Social Development programmes goal is to unlock the potentials of skilled people for the future development of the State. The Intellectual and Mind Development Programmes is channelled through three development stages starting from kindergarten and primary school to secondary and tertiary education, and life-long education. The Zone offices also conduct non-formal education in the form of educational talks for students, as well as organise short courses, motivational seminars, skills training and awareness programmes for diversified groups that include youths, parents, women and small entrepreneurs.

"On the other hand, the Socioeconomic Development programmes are aimed at reducing state of dependency to greater self-reliance among the communities. Programmes conducted by the Zone offices in collaboration with other government agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations include activities related to agriculture, fisheries, handicraft, homestay, branding and packaging of home-made products. These programmes are designed to help the people gain value-added experience to secure job placement as well as the ability to generate self-employment and economic growth," he explained.

The Sociocultural Development Programmes help shape a person's way of thinking, moral values and self-esteem. In the broader context, such efforts contribute towards attainment of Vision 2020, not just in the physical and economic sense, but also in the spiritual and psychological aspects.

"Programmes conducted include *gotong-royong*, sports carnival, breaking of fast during the month of Ramadan, blood donation drive as well as various types of religious activities. These help foster religious, tolerance and a caring society," he added.

Overall, from 2005, the six zone offices implemented a total of 3,242 core programmes involving RM7.4 million which reached 431,085 beneficiaries.

Program Desa Cemerlang dan Berinovasi

Another social programme is the *Program Desa Cemerlang dan Berinovasi* (PDCB), which is one of the programmes under Yayasan Sabah transformation initiatives (2013-2023). PDCB is a comprehensive rural development effort with an emphasis on the holistic development of human capital through empowerment of the rural communities.

Said Datuk Sapawi, six villages were adopted into this programme namely Kg.

Pandasani, Kota Belud; Kg. Lambidan, Kuala Penyu; Kg. Singgaron Baru, Ranau; Kg. Sebait, Sandakan; Kg. Sinaron; Keningau and Kg. Lormalong, Kunak. "To ensure the programmes are implemented successfully, Yayasan Sabah utilises internal resources optimally, collaborate with other government agencies and NGOs, development of local resources and human capital as well as creation of new economic activities," he elaborated.

Yayasan Sabah Bersama Rakyat (YSBR) Programme

Explaining on the Yayasan Sabah with the People Programme of in short YSBR, Datuk Sapawi said, through YSBR programme, Yayasan Sabah has implemented 590 projects / programmes since 2005.

"These projects include construction and repair of hard core poor houses, suspension bridges, walkways, jetties as well as gravity-feed pipes / wells. Programmes under the YSBR are aimed to uplift the quality of life of the people, especially the remote rural communities who lack services and are in dire need of help. Overall, these projects have benefitted 34,445 people throughout the State," he added.

Women Entrepreneurship Development

Another social development programme is the Women Entrepreneurship Development which aimed at providing skills training, technical help and knowledge empowerment to women throughout the six zones. The objective of the programme is to nurture and develop business potentials among women to become successful entrepreneurs.

Pusat Kraftangan Sabah

Pusat Kraftangan Sabah (PKS) which was the branch of the Chief Minister cum Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Yayasan Sabah, Datuk Seri Panglima Musa Haji Aman, was officiated by Prime Minister of Malaysia, Datuk Seri Panglima Mohd. Najib Bin Tun Haji Abdul Razak on 16 June 2012. PKS, located in Keningau is one of the high priority economic projects planned under the Sabah Development Corridor Plan.

"PKS serves as a centre of handicraft development of Sabah ethnic heritage, collection centres, training, marketing and research and development of handicrafts. PKS is also working with other agencies towards the development and promotion of handicrafts in and outside the country, in addition to support the Federal Government and the State Government in realising the concept of One District One Industry," said Datuk Sapawi.

Since 2011, Yayasan Sabah has received fund amounting to RM30.5 million from

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the Federal Government for the purpose of enhancing the development of the handicraft industry in Sabah. Three aspects of the development are being emphasised such as Handicraft Management and Entrepreneurial Leadership, Craft Design and Machine Applications and Arts Development. Yayasan Sabah through PKS and the Zones offices have trained more than 19,000 people in various handicraft making skills

■ CONSERVATION & ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

“Being an advocator of conservation and to ensure the perpetuity of the forest under our custody, we have set aside five conservation areas namely Danum Valley, Maliau Basin, Imbak Canyon, Silam Coast and Taliwas River in perpetuity as a legacy for future generation and for Research and Development as well as eco-tourism,” explained Datuk Sapawi on Yayasan Sabah’s commitment in conservation.

“We worked closely with international bodies such as The Royal Society of United Kingdom and the Nordic Rainforest Research Network (NRRN) to facilitate rainforest research and training programmes; and carry out rehabilitation programmes of logged over forest with Face the Future, The Netherlands and IKEA of Sweden,” he said.

Locally, Yayasan Sabah works closely with the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia, Forest Research Centre, Sepilok, Academy of Sciences Malaysia, Universiti Malaysia Sabah, Petronas, Shell and other organisations.

Much applied research is conducted on natural resource management and conservation of protected areas and rehabilitated areas as well as plant improvement and utilisation. The main areas include the Innoprise-Face Foundation Rainforest

Rehabilitation Project (INFAPRO) which was initiated in 1992 with the FACE (Forests Absorbing Carbon Dioxide Emissions) Foundation of the Netherlands, (now known as Face the Future). Another conservation project is the Innoprise-IKEA Tropical Forest Rehabilitation Project (INIKEA), a jointly funded project initiated in 1998 with the Sow-A-Seed foundation, a foundation established by furniture giant IKEA of Sweden.

Touching on the conservation area, Datuk Sapawi said, the Danum Valley Conservation Area (DVCA) is one of Sabah’s last strongholds of undisturbed lowland dipterocarp forest. With the richness and abundance of its flora and fauna, it is an ideal

natural “laboratory” for researchers in tropical forest ecology and conservation.

“Among the inhabitants of DVCA are more than 125 species of mammals including 10 species of primates including the endangered Bornean Orang Utan. Other large mammals include the Bornean Pygmy Elephant, Banteng, Malayan Sun Bear, Clouded Leopard, Bearded Pig and many species of deer. It is also home to the critically endangered Sumatran Rhinoceros. Over 300 species of birds have been recorded including the Red-Crowned Barbet, seven species of Pitta, and all eight species of Hornbills found in Borneo,” he elaborated.

The Southeast Asia Rainforest Research and Training Programme (SEARRP), between The Royal Society, United Kingdom and DVMC has generated over 340 studies by local and foreign students, and generated over 400 publications. This makes Danum Valley a leading rainforest research centre in the tropics.

Another area is the Maliau Basin Conservation Area (MBCA) also known as Sabah’s Lost World, a 588.4 sq km Class I (Protection) Forest Reserve and one of Malaysia’s finest wilderness areas with outstanding natural features such as the majestic 7-tier Maliau Falls, splendid Takob-Akob and Giluk Falls and numerous smaller waterfalls.

“Maliau’s unusual forest types include rare montane heath forest and lowland and hill dipterocarp forest. The flora of Maliau is a distinct and diverse, including at least six species of pitcher plants and 150 species of orchids, several of which are new records for Sabah. Along with the surrounding forests, it is home to rare mammals such as the Banteng, Clouded Leopard and Malayan Sun Bear and more than 290 species of birds,” he explained.

Imbak Canyon Conservation Area (ICCA), situated north of Maliau Basin, in the centre of Sabah, is a 300 sq km area encompassing a sweeping 25 km long valley, probably the largest contiguous lowland dipterocarp forest left in Sabah, flanked by high sandstone ridges. Numerous scenic waterfalls are found in Imbak Canyon. According to Datuk Sapawi, the area is rich in flora and fauna species, including medicinal plants, and is an important botanical gene bank for future forest rehabilitation. As a pristine area of forest, it also forms a vital component in the biodiversity corridor linking Maliau Basin to the south and Danum Valley to the east.

The Yayasan Sabah-PETRONAS Imbak Canyon Conservation Partnership, which started in 2010 aims to promote ICCA as a

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centre of learning for indigenous community in biodiversity conservation and for gene bank conservation and the exploration of pharmaceutical and biotechnological potentials. The Petronas funded Imbak Canyon Studies Centre is expected to be ready in 2016.

Silam Coast Conservation Area (SCCA) lies within the Coral Triangle and Sulu Sea; its coastal forest fringes Darvel Bay which is one of the world's richest marine areas in term of biodiversity and is part of a Priority Conservation Area of the Sulu - Sulawesi Eco-region.

"To date, at least 130 species of plants have been recorded, including 50 species of mangrove and mangrove associated species. Preliminary findings revealed that the flora in this area included 81 species of plants comprising coastal and inland vegetation. Among the wildlife species identified were birds (White-bellied Sea Eagle, Pacific Swallow) and mammals (Proboscis Monkey, Long-tailed Macaque, Barking Deer, Sambar Deer)," he said.

Taliwas River Conservation Area (TRCA), in Lahad Datu covers an area of about 9,700 ha of which 5,000 ha had been treated either by agroforestry technique or silvicultural treatments through girdling and enrichment planting in mid 1970s to 1980s by Sabah Forestry Department. TRCA is one of the earliest silviculturally treated areas, enriched with Dipterocarps.

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Innovator of growth

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"The presence of the natural logged over forest, fragrance of beautiful lianas and tree flowers maxing with soothing, refreshing clean jungle fresh air, crystal clear and clean water and fishes in the river coupled with basic recreational infrastructure make TRCA as an attraction for outdoor recreation such as picnicking and camping. TRCA also boasts a beautiful, serene natural lake which is frequented by several birds, mammals and reptiles," he said.

"Overall, a total of 487 research projects by individuals have completed their Post Doctorate, Ph.D, Master in Science, Bachelor in Science and others on their research in Danum Valley, Maliau Basin and Imbak Canyon," he explained.

COMMERCIAL

The contributions of Yayasan Sabah to the State and its people are not limited to education and social development. In the commercial and industrial sectors, it is acknowledged as a pioneer, leader, inno-

vator and facilitator of growth. Over the years, Yayasan Sabah has diversified its activities to meet the needs of the day and to keep the forest under its custody in perpetuity. From simply harvesting to downstream processing of timber, Yayasan Sabah ventured further away from mainstream forestry.

"To diversify our income-generating base and also in line with the State Government's direction, we have ventured into Agro Plantation, Hospitality and Tourism, and Oil and Gas. In addition, we are also focusing on Biotechnology and Horticulture, Real Estate Development, Fisheries and Food Industries, besides Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) industries," said Datuk Sapawi in explaining Yayasan Sabah strategic planning in the commercial aspect.

Agro Plantation

Sabah Softwoods Berhad's (SSB) core business is in timber and oil palm plantation, while its downstream activities include oil palm milling and woodchip production. "With its land bank spreading over 60,600 hectares along Yayasan Sabah Timber Concession belt of Brumas (41,500 hectares) and Kalabakan (19,100 hectares) in Tawau, SSB has paved a commercially viable business in both timber and oil palm operations," he said

SSB's first CPO mill at Dumpas currently operates 60 metric tonnes Fresh Fruit Bunch (FFB) per hour. With this capacity, the mill produces an annual output of 72,000 metric tonnes of CPO. "SSB's second CPO mill, Kapilit which began its full operations in June 2010, has a processing capacity of 45 metric tonnes per hour. The Kapilit mill is the first of its kind in Sabah and second in Malaysia using Compact Modular Concept Technology," he said.

Through another subsidiary, Benta Wawasan Sdn. Bhd. (BWSB), the company has planted an area of 28,000 hectares of oil palm plantation out of 45,601 hectares of land. The company has also commissioned its first Crude Palm Oil (CPO) mill with a capacity of 45 metric tonnes per hour (upgradeable to 90 metric tonnes per hour).

Another subsidiary, YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd., evolved from a research and development joint pilot project known as the Plant Biotechnology Laboratory in 1992 with the Centre of International Cooperation for Agronomic Research for Development (CIRAD-Forêt).

"After more than a decade of research on genetic improvement and micro propagation of economically important forest

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tree species, with particular emphasis on the world's most valuable timber species, Teak (*Tectona grandis*) and fast growing Acacia species, the successful results from YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd. has evolved into a commercial undertaking. The lab is now located in Kota Kinabalu and has the capacity of producing up to two million plants annually," he explained.

Today, YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd. is positioned among the leading professional groups in the world in the tissue culturing of superior quality teak for the plantation industry. YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd. possesses the *in vitro* technology to introduce and mass multiply any selected genotypes, regardless of octet age, by tissue culture propagation.

"The successful application of this technology has allowed the export of teak plantlets from YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd. to buyer countries such as Australia, Indonesia, Africa and countries in Central and South America without phytosanitary

constraints. As a pioneer exporter of tissue culture teak plants, YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd. can be credited for paving the way for other suppliers from other countries," he said.

According to him, YSG Biotech Sdn. Bhd. obtained a BioNexus Status from the Biotechnology Corporation, under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, Malaysia on 28 May 2008, which offers special tax incentives from the government in addition to other benefits.

"The trademark "Top Teak", a brand name designated for the company's superior teak materials is now a registered trademark both in Australia and Malaysia. This exerts a degree of control in terms of quality and exclusive right for the product in international markets," he said.

Tourism

Yayasan Sabah through its investment arm, Innoprise Corporation Sdn. Bhd. holds 60% equity in Shangri-La's Tanjung Aru Resort & Spa (STAR), a five-star resort set amidst 25 acres of landscape garden and a private cove overlooking the sweeping bay of the South China Sea. Located just 10 minutes away from the city centre and Kota Kinabalu International Airport, STAR is a luxurious, tranquil retreat that provides the perfect setting for an amazing tropical getaway. The resort, according to Datuk Sapawi is a winner of several prestigious accolades at the state, national and international level. Meanwhile, Borneo Rainforest Lodge (BRL), is a unique facility for nature tourism, 40 minutes drive away from the world-renowned Danum Valley Field Centre.

"To reduce environmental footprint,

the Lodge has implemented several green practices that focus on significant environmental effects such as Waste Management, Zero Chemical, Wastewater Treatment by Effective Microorganism, Reduce Energy Consumption, Reduced Noise and supporting local products to stimulate local economy," he said.

It has attracted many nature lovers and tourists from all over the world. Situated in a deep virgin tropical rainforest, these 30 individual chalets with fans and ensuite bathroom can accommodate up to about 60 guests on any one day. Every chalet has a private balcony and the Deluxe Chalet has an outdoor bathtub.

"BRL is a recipient of many awards from state, national and international organisations such as Sabah Tourism Awards, Malaysia Tourism Awards, TripAdvisor and PATA," he said.

Oil and Gas

Yayasan Sabah is also involved in the Oil and Gas industry through participation of equity or wholly-owned companies. Through Shell Timur Sdn. Bhd. (STSB) Yayasan Sabah owns a 15pc equity stake in STSB whose main activities are to market petroleum products for Shell throughout Sabah (including Federal Territory of Labuan) and Sarawak. It operates 11 petroleum depots and manages 166 retail petrol stations in both states.

Another subsidiary, Petrosab Sdn. Bhd. (PSB) is involved in providing crew change services and other logistic support to oil majors and its sub-contractors at Usukan, manpower supply of technical manpower to PETRONAS Technical Services Sdn. Bhd. and other oil and gas companies/operations besides providing other related works in the field of civil and construction to oil and gas industry in Sabah.

NRG Consortium (Sabah) Sdn. Bhd. (NRG) has formed two JV Companies namely, Kimanis Power Sdn. Bhd. and Kimanis O & M Sdn. Bhd. with PETRONAS Gas Berhad (PGB) to jointly develop and operate a 300MW combined cycle gas-fired power plant in Kimanis. The power supplied to Sabah Electricity Sdn. Bhd.'s state grid was fully commissioned on 7 November 2014. Kimanis O & M Sdn. Bhd. was established to provide operation and maintenance services for Kimanis Power Plant in Kimanis.

CONCLUSION

From a humble beginning, Yayasan Sabah has jumped by leaps and bounds into the global business arena and continues to compete with the best. "We will continue to play an active role in ensuring that Yayasan Sabah is able to participate effectively in the mainstream of

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development and contribute meaning- in Vision 2020 besides supplementing
fully to the State's development and the and complementing the government's ef-
progress of nation building as envisioned forts to bring socioeconomic progress of
the people.," Datuk Sapawi.

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Borneo Rainforest Lodge – recipient of many awards from state, national and international organisations.



Moving forward through transformation programme.



Handicraft industry: Developing the capacity of people through PKS.

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