

Improving Sabah's political culture

Published on Daily Express: Saturday, April 19, 2025

By: David Thien

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Sabah Action Body Advocating Rights (Sabar) hopes to play a part through town hall sessions and podcasts, among others.

Sabar Chairman Datuk Zainie Aucasa officiated the first town hall session at the Kota Kinabalu Wetlands premises on April 12.

These sessions would be held all over the state before culminating in a grand town hall session in June at the Kota Kinabalu Community Hall where a People's Manifesto would be presented to the government and interested political parties.

In the morning session on education, the participants learnt that the factors for the decline in standard of education in Malaysia have been many.

These include frequent policy changes and political interference, corruption and mismanagement, socio-economic and rural-urban divide, quality of teachers and training, brain drain of talented educators and students, open certification and removal of UPSR, PMR, lack of critical thinking and creativity in curriculum, language policy and English proficiency decline, decline in STEM interest and quality, and higher education graduate unemployment.

The consensus is that there are six key attributes every student needs to be globally competitive. There are knowledge, thinking skills, leadership skills, bilingual proficiency, ethics and spirituality, and national identity aligned with the National Education Philosophy.

The Malaysia Education Blueprint 2013-2025 aspires to provide equal access to quality education of an international standard; ensure every child is proficient in Bahasa Malaysia and English; develop value-driven Malaysians; transform teaching into the profession of choice; ensure high-performance school leaders in every school; empower JPNs, PPDs, and schools to customise solutions based on need; leverage ICT to scale up quality learning across Malaysia; transform ministry delivery capabilities and capacities; partner with parents, community, and private sector at scale; maximise student outcomes for every ringgit; and increase transparency for direct public accountability.

The 6 "Cs" of education for the future are to "Think Critically", "Communicate Clearly", "Work Collaboratively", "Embrace Culture", "Utilize Connectivity" and "Develop Creativity".

Sabah was proposed to be an artificial intelligence (AI) hub. There were calls for a tailor-made comprehensive education plan for Sabah, including for drop-outs which is the highest in the country, and special needs children, teaching mathematics and science in English from pre-school level;

There should be a requirement for students to obtain at least a compulsory pass in their English subject, and calls for funding support from the government for pre-schools and kindergartens in Sabah, support teachers' salaries in order to reduce school fees;

Improve infrastructure facilities, provide 4X4 vehicles to teachers to access schools easier in the rural areas, to look into the undocumented populace education needs, support NGOs that are helpful to promoting education progress in Sabah.

Sabah Medical Association President Datuk Dr Christina Rundi led the afternoon session. The presentation included the lack of specialist doctors in Sabah, and those serving in Sabah face high air flight tickets, besides other career development impediments and burdens of work.

Sabah special burdens include diseases like T.B. etc., and the illegal migrants.

They sought scholarship assistance for further career development, preferably with training centres set up in Sabah. And there is always the brain drain issue that is a prolonged Sabah issue, compared to Sarawak which has more specialists serving in there.

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"Sabah Voices to Action - Shaping Sabah's Future Together" is a citizen-driven, non-partisan initiative running from March to June 2025, dedicated to amplifying Sabahans' voices, fostering meaningful discussions, and shaping policies on education, healthcare, public infrastructure, and good governance.

Join the Movement:

<https://www.sabar.org.my/action/#join-movement>

Podcast Channel:

<https://youtube.com/@kopitiamcouncil>

Contact and Follow Us:

Website: <https://sabar.org.my/action/>

Email: action@sabar.org.my

Facebook: facebook.com/sabar.org

Instagram: [@sabar.org.my](https://instagram.com/sabar.org.my)

TikTok: [@sabar.org.my](https://tiktok.com/@sabar.org.my)

Together, we can build a stronger, more inclusive Sabah!

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Zainie addressing the Sabar Town Hall session.

Thousands mark Good Friday

CATHOLICS throughout Sabah marked Good Friday in various churches in a solemn mood to remember Jesus Christ's crucifixion over 2,000 years ago. Part of the service included veneration of the Cross and readings from the Holy Week liturgy.

At St Simon Catholic Church Likas, Rector Rev Fr Cosmas Lee told the 4,500-strong congregation that "today is the best day" as he reminisced the same event four years ago, at the height of the lockdown, when everyone's movement was restricted by the Covid pandemic.

"I was quite sure that even if the churches were to open one day and people would go to church again, the number of people returning to church would be decimated. I was wrong. After Covid, there is a phenomenal increase of Catholics returning to church. We never had that kind of huge number for confessions during Lent even before the pandemic. Something strange is happening. But something is happening. People are coming back to church in greater numbers," he said.

Quoting scripture, Fr Cosmas said the true Christian hope is the way of the



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Man flees khalwat raid by jumping from hotel

Ibrahim Tabir

KUNAK: A man risked his life by jumping out of the hotel room window and escaping during a Khalwat (close Proximity) raid when he realised the presence of religious authorities.

However, three couples were not so lucky and were arrested in the Operasi Cegah Maksiat at two budget hotels in town carried out by the Kunak Islamic Religious Affairs Department (Jheains) with police assistance on Thursday.

According to a statement from the department, the operation ran from 10pm to 4.30am.

Various excuses were given by the couples in an attempt to avoid action. One couple claimed to have undergone a kampung wedding but failed to provide any legitimate marriage documents recognised by the religious authorities.

"Shocking, the woman was found to be married to someone else, while another couple claimed they were engaged," the statement said.

All those arrested would be investigated under the State Syariah Criminal Offences Enactment. Jheains said such operations would continue from time to time to address growing social problems among the Muslim community, particularly in Kunak.

"They are urged not to take matters of free mixing lightly and to adhere to the guidelines set by religion," the statement concluded.

Ex-Petronas exec charged with leaking internal report

KUALA LUMPUR: A former Petrolim Nasional Bhd (Petronas) manager was reportedly charged Friday with attempting to leak confidential company documents to