

# MyCenTHE launches cluster leader in Negeri Sembilan

**SEREMBAN:** In line with the nation's aspirations of attaining high-income status by 2020, the Malaysian Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) is stepping up efforts to reshape tourism and hospitality education on the local front by launching East West International College (EWIC) as its fourth cluster leader for Negeri Sembilan.

In line with this, EWIC has pledged 50 scholarships under the Diploma of Hotel Management to help deserving students build a career in tourism and hospitality.

The launch was graced by keynote speaker and Education and Higher Learning Minister II, Dato' Seri Mohd Idris Jusoh, who commended EWIC and MyCenTHE for their commitment to nurture more skilled tourism personnel in the industry.

"The Malaysian Centre for Tourism and Hospitality Education (MyCenTHE) is spearheading efforts to reshape tourism and hospitality education through a government initiative, namely, Entry Point Project 10 (EPP10)," said Idris.

"I greatly commend the Centre - and especially EPP10 champion, Dato' Peter Ng - for their commitment to nurture more skilled personnel for this industry."

Notably, MyCenTHE is part of Entry Point Project 10 (EPP10) - an initiative under the government's Economic Transformation Programme for the Education National Key Economic Area (NKEA).

This EPP plans to increase the annual output of hospitality workers to 50,000 people by 2020, more than double from 20,000 people in 2009.

With this, the share of graduates with diplomas and degrees needs to be lifted to 50 per cent from 13 per cent over the same period.

Other cluster leaders that have been launched are in Penang, headed by KDU University College; Sabah, managed by Inti College; and Sarawak, headed by UCSI University.

The tourism sector has grown rapidly over the years and according to the founder of UCSI University (EPP 10 champion), Dato' Peter Ng, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture Malaysia has reported a 7.9% growth in this year's January to June tourist arrivals - an increase of 920,253 in total - as compared to last year.

"This (growth) demands for quality hospitality and tourism personnel that are efficient and well-versed in industry know-how, which is why MyCenTHE has been aggressively promoting Work-based Learning (WBL)," explained Ng.

"Students will not be restricted to only theoretical lessons, but will have opportunities to be exposed to the real working world under the tutelage of industry experts, thereby bridging the gap between the industry and academia."

The WBL curriculum is a unique approach that MyCenTHE member institutions strongly

advocate to ensure that learners are exposed to real-life practices in the workplace.

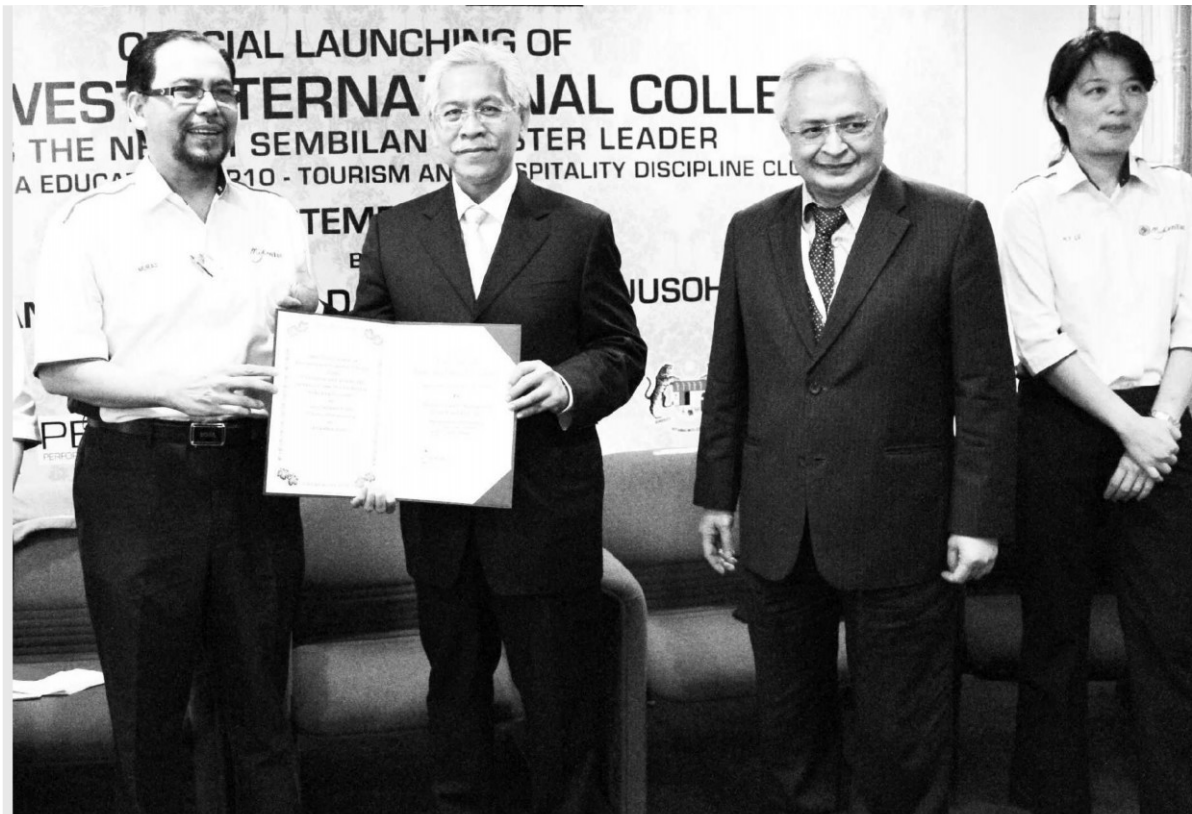
And by working hand-in-hand with key industry partners, learners will gain valuable hands-on experience in various areas including hotel management, event management and culinary arts, to name a few.

This view was echoed by EWIC CEO, Prof Dato' Abdul Murad, who emphasised the importance of higher learning institutions.

"Higher learning institutions need to ensure that graduates are not only well informed of the latest developments in the industry but are also equipped to adapt to the rapid changes in the workplace," he said.

"I believe this is the reason MyCenTHE plays such a significant role in the nation's plans to further develop tourism and hospitality," he added.

Among those present were PEMANDU Director, (Education and SRI Human Capital Development), Tengku Azian Shahrman, MyCenTHE's Acting President, Lu Huang Ying, UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President, Prof Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff; Inti College Sabah's Principal, Dr Alan Lim; Berjaya University College of Hospitality's Head (School of Tourism), Thong Lai Kit; and Politeknik Merlimau's Deputy Director (Academic), Mohd As'ri Bin Chik and Department Head (Tourism & Hospitality), Khaairuddin bin Khalil.



(FROM left): East West International College (EWIC) CEO, Prof Dato' Abdul Murad and Education and Higher Learning Minister II, Dato' Seri Mohd Idris Jusoh officiating the launch of EWIC as MyCenTHE's cluster leader for the state of Negeri Sembilan while UCSI University's Vice-Chancellor and President, Prof Dato' Dr Khalid Yusoff and MyCenTHE Acting President, Lu Huang Ying look on.