

# SeMAMPAN ORGANISED A FORUM RARE EARTH



**M**ore than 300 Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) undergraduates attended a forum titled, 'Rare Earth Technology: Perception and Fact' to know more about the mineral including the processing and developing aspects as well as issues relating to the construction of a rare earth refinery plant by Lynas Corporation Sdn. Bhd. in Gebeng.

The forum was organised by UMP's Pahang Undergraduates Council (SeMAMPAN) Secretariat, with the cooperation of Student Affairs & Alumni Department (Saffad), at Block W's main lecture hall in UMP Gambang campus on April 19, 2012.

The panelists were Deputy

Vice-Chancellor (Academic & International), Professor Dr Badhrulhisham Abdul Aziz, Lynas Malaysia General Manager, Mohd Khairul Salleh Jais, Malaysia Investment Development Malaysia (MIDA) Pahang Director, Hajjah Rosidah Mazlan and Atomic Energy Licensing Board (AELB) Technical Support Division Director, Yassin Haji Sudin.

The moderator was Pahang GPMS Chairman and former Pahang MAMPAN President, Wan Emril Wan Embong.

According to Programme Director and UMP SeMampan Chairman, Nor Adila Said, the event provided an opportunity for undergraduates to get clarification

on the issues from the academic point of view as well as from the experts' views on rare earth applications.

"The explanation is important for undergraduates with engineering and technology background to have better understand, in view of the current situation involving rare earth among the society," said Nor Adila who is a fourth-year chemical engineering student in plant design.

She added that the forum would allow undergraduates to freely give ideas and pose questions and in fact, as an educated lot, it was only right for them to present accurate facts or information to the society.

Professor Dr. Badhrulhisham, when discussing about the operations of Lynas plant, said operations in all plants had their risks.

However, the question was whether the risks could be managed or minimized by not compromising the safety and health aspects of the public and environment, he said.

He added that it must be looked at all aspects.

"Risk management must look at the various aspects - technical, economy, environment, social and others before a decision on an



investment can be made.

"The Lynas plant is no exception and based on the aspects stated, it is categorised as a low-risk plant with all safety conditions, monitoring measures and enforcement steps taken accordingly," said Professor Dr. Badhrulhisham, who has more than 15 years of experience in the industry including plant construction.

Professor Dr. Badhrulhisham is also UMP Rare Earth Research Committee Chairman and sits in Malaysia Science Academy's Rare Earth Committee.

Mohd Khairul also said Lynas plant was a normal plant that processed rare earth concentrates, producing rare earth metal after undergoing physical and chemical processes to separate the mineral's elements.

"Rare earth is a sought-after material used in electronic appliances, aerospace, medical, military, automotive and communication including hand phones. The industry is expected to continue to grow," he added.

He said the operations of Lynas plant in Malaysia was not something that was unique for to date, there were 36 rare earth processing companies running in 14 countries.

Faculty of Electrical & Electronics Engineering undergraduate, Norliana Che Nora@Norazmi, 21, said the programme was an eye-opener with a lot of information gained on the needs of rare earth in the technology world today.



Norliana was among the 100 undergraduates who visited Lynas plant in Gebeng and she was really excited to be able to see the site herself.

A civil engineering student, Sim Sin Yee, 22, said the forum gave a clear picture on what rare earth was all about and how the plant was operated.

Also present at the forum were UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr Daing Nasir Ibrahim, Lynas Corporation Ltd Human Resource (Community and Administration) Senior Manager and AELB officials.



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