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Weather, climate experts sought



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BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN

Wednesday, March 26, 2014

BRUNEI needs more youth to become weather and climate experts, the Minister of Communications said.

Yang Berhormat Pehin Orang Kaya Hamzah Pahlawan Dato Seri Setia Hj Abdullah Begawan Mudim Dato Paduka Hj Bakar said the newly-established Meteorological Department is seeking experts in the study of meteorology.

This includes experts in aviation meteorology, numerical weather prediction, radar and satellite meteorology, as well as meteorological engineers, he said.

The minister was speaking during an event to mark World Meteorological Day at the Royal Wharf yesterday.

He further said equally important was expertise in weather information communications technology.

"The Meteorological Department needs to increase its efforts and take proactive strategies to attract the interests of qualified youth to pursue careers in meteorological science," YB Pehin Dato Hj Abdullah added.

He went on to say that encouraging youth involvement is vital, considering the technology developments.

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Citing last year's population census, YB Pehin Dato Hj Abdullah said almost half of the population is aged 15 to 40.

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"The role of youth in a variety of issues, including weather and climate issues, needs to be optimised to achieve a wide impact," he added.

The minister noted that the use of the Internet through smartphones among youth, who are the so-called "digital natives", is undeniable.

Based on a study from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), digital natives are networked youth who are aged 15 to 24 with at least five years of online experience.

"The increase is significant as an estimated 30 per cent of the entire population of the world is digital natives. Within five years, the estimated digital native in developing countries is expected to double," he said.

With the ratio of 120 mobile phone users per 100 people, smartphone users are growing in the country and thus Brunei's youth are not exempted to be categorised as digital youth, he said.

However, he said there remains the challenge of how to promote prudent use of technology.

To commemorate the occasion, the minister also launched a new mobile app – The Mobile Weather Crowd – where the public can share their weather experiences by reporting the weather condition at their current location.

The app also allows its users to interact with others on current local weather conditions and receive notifications on weather alerts.

"With the use of smartphones and social media extensively, I believe this app will get positive responses and interaction from the users, especially the youth.

"These efforts, in turn, will hopefully encourage the youth on issues related to weather, climate and environmental protection. This will serve as an impetus for them to pursue careers in meteorology science," he added.

Themed "Weather and Climate: Engaging Youth", this year's World Meteorological Day was aimed to recognise the strong stake that young people have in their contributions to their nation's development in various fields, including weather and climate.

A video about the theme and introduction of the app was also presented during the event.

The Meteorological Department will be holding a public exhibition today and tomorrow at the Times Square Shopping Centre from 10am to 4pm. — *Joana Tan*

The Brunei Times

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