Traditional Malay goldsmiths a dying breed

KUALA TERENGGANU: Traditional Malay goldsmiths are a dying breed in Terengganu.

Famed for their exquisite and mostly handmade filigree jewellery, many of the artisans – whose families have been involved in the trade for generations – have quit the business due to its unattractive returns.

According to Tuan Azmi Tuan Muning, 55, who is among the remaining traditional goldsmith in the district of Kuala Terengganu, the number of goldsmiths used to ply their trade in Kuala Terengganu and Kuala Perak but now the number has dwindled to 15.

"Most of those who survived have been in the trade for a long time," he told Bernama.

Tuan Azmi, who learnt the craft of making gold jewellery from his late father Tuan Muning Tuan Endut, reckoned that one of the reasons for the lack of interest and experience. As a novice craftsman, I first learnt to make bangles out of silver. I only started making gold articles after I became more skilful," he said.

It used to take three or four days to make a gold bangle or chain but as his expertise grew, he could complete an ornament within a day.

"If I were to notice any flaw in an ornament I had just made, I won't hesitate to melt the gold and reshape it," said Tuan Azmi, for whom customer satisfaction was of paramount importance.

Traditional craftsmanship is the unique selling point of his gold jewellery and it keeps his customers returning to his shop for more.

The traditional way of making gold items is the best way to shape gold into high-quality and long-lasting filigree ornaments," he said, adding that the requisites for a traditional goldsmith are precision, focus and skill.

Seminar on gender and literacy in Sabah Thursday

KOTA KINABALU: The Institute for Development Studies (Sabah), in partnership with Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) and in collaboration with Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) is organising a seminar on "Gender and Literacy in Sabah: Eliminating the Gaps" in The Pacific Sutera, on Thursday.

Assistant Minister of Law and Native Affairs Jannie Lasimbang is the guest of honour.

Chief Executive Officer of IDS, Datuk Dr Johan Ariffin Abd. Samad said this seminar aims to tackle Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 which seeks to provide quality education, SDG 8 which promotes gender equality, and SDG 10 which purports to reduce inequalities.

"It is a widely known fact that disparity in gender is largely due to lack of access to education which ultimately affects level of literacy.

"Even though in Malaysia, youth literacy as well as adult literacy has significantly improved over the years, there are still concerns on literacy in legal, social and cultural issues," said Dr Johan.

Johan elaborated that awareness of rights should also include literacy. Lack of knowledge or literacy in legal, social and cultural issues would ultimately lead to disparity in achievement between genders.

Therefore, he said, we need to find ways to eliminate or reduce these inequalities as this is crucial for Malaysia to achieve the status of a developed nation.

The seminar will start with a keynote speech on the theme of Gender Mainstreaming. The key panelists include Jannie, Tan Sri Simon Sipaun, Chairman of Institute for Development Studies (Sabah), Wolfgang Hirschka, Representative of Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Office Malaysia and Dr Dayang Suria Mulla, Senior Lecturer of Faculty of Humanities, Arts and Heritage, UMS. IDS CEO, Johan will be the moderator.

150 to receive food package assistance in Tambunan

Johan Aziz
TAMBUNAN: A total of 150 qualified and selected people in the group of low income family (B40) in the district will receive food package assistance in conjunction with the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) hospitality programme with the community to be held on Feb 21 at Pompurun Square here.

Assistant District Officer, Henry Awit said they comprise single parents, senior citizens and disabled people from around the district.

"The programme, which was also jointly organised by UMS Hospital, the National Food Aid Foundation, District Office and District Health Office, among others, is aimed at raising awareness on the importance of healthcare and healthcare sharing between UMS doctors and the community," he said after chairing the programme's coordinating meeting here.

Henry, representing District Officer, Jumaini Abdul Ghani, said various activities will be held throughout the programme that will include health checks, exhibitions, blood donation, health talks and stop smoking clinics.

"The programme that will be officiated by UMS Vice Chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr D Kamarudin M Daud is indeed beneficial because participants will be exposed to health issues," he said.

He said the people in the district are welcomed to attend the programme.

Also present at the meeting were Assistant Registrar of UMS Hospital, Hamin Chiam; Tah Kiong, Assistant District Development Officer, Elvina Jane Justin, heads and representatives of the federal and state government departments of the district.