General

Professional Talk discusses lifelines for contractors

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KUANTAN, 16 August 2021 - Aligned with the role of liaison between the university, society and industry, the Centre of Industry and Community Network (ICoN), Graduate Development Department, Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) in collaboration with UMP Holdings, Malaysian Malay Contractors Association (PKMM), Pahang Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), Pahang (CIDB) and Pahang Contractor Services Centre (PKK) organised the Professional Talk Series Webinar Forum - COVID-19 Lifeline for Contractors.

The panel consists of Pahang CIDB Director, Rozaiman Haji Hassan, PKMM Vice President, Datuk Haji Mohd Rosdi Haji Ab. Aziz cum the President of Kelantan PKMM, Vice President PKMM, Abd. Gapar Lambak cum the President of Pahang PKMM and Director of the Pahang PKK Branch, Saiful Bakhtiar Haji Ibrahim.

According to Datuk Haji Mohd Rosdi, the organisation of this forum was timely and helped contractors face the uncertain economic situation due to the pandemic.

“This forum will also identify issues and problems faced by contractors due to the COVID-19 pandemic and suggest appropriate solutions to help them.

“The impact of the implementation of PKP 3.0 on the economy and the construction sector was also raised regarding the initiatives given by the government to assist contractors.

“Among the government’s actions is to simplify the government procurement procedures in the National People’s Well-Being and Economic Recovery Package (PEMULIH) which is seen as key to help revive the construction sector affected by increased building material prices due to the COVID-19 pandemic,” he said.

Meanwhile Abd. Gapar said the government also allowed variation of price (VOP) which is the permission of price changes that is very helpful to contractors in construction projects, especially to streamline the process of supply and demand.

“Another assistance initiative is the extension of contract (EOT) under the PEMULIH package which will allow contractors to reschedule work to ensure it can be completed.

“This is a win-win initiative between contractors, customers and the government,” he said.

Meanwhile, for Saiful Bakhtiar, scheduling free online courses is among the initiatives to empower Bumiputera contractors, especially young contractors.

“Previously, many of the courses were conducted face-to-face, especially for those who want to renew their Bumiputera Working Status Certificate,” he said.

Among the other issues raised by the participants were surplus of contractors and the existence of monopoly cartels of large-scale projects.

The closing ceremony was officiated by the Chairman of the Pahang Public Works, Transport and Health Committee, Dato' Sri Norol Azali Sulaiman.

He encouraged the regular organisation of such discourses to enable the discussion to revise government packages such as PEMULIH to be practically enjoyed by on-site contractors.

In addition, he also believed that planning alone is not enough, but good communication between all parties is an important key to continued development and prosperity in our beloved country.

The session was concluded by the President of PKMM, Datuk Seri Mohamed Fadzill Hassan.

He expressed relief over the initiative of this webinar organised by UMP which successfully connected the contractor community with CIDB, PKK and the state government in line with PKMM's efforts implemented since the Movement Control Order (PKP) came into effect on 18 March 2020.

According to the Assistant Vice-Chancellor, Graduate Development Department, Associate Professor Ir. Dr. Nurul Hazlina Noordin, who was present on behalf of the UMP Vice-Chancellor, she said that this pandemic had adverse effects on the construction industry—workers, contractors and the people—and they deserved to enjoy more comfortable and safe facilities and services.

"Until today, 15,000 Malay contractors across Malaysia are severely affected by this situation.

"The bad situation in the construction sector will definitely have a short- and long-term impact on other industries that usually offer employment opportunities to graduates," she said.

The programme, which lasted for more than two hours, managed to attract 220 participants and 413 viewers through the ICON UMP Facebook page which consisted of contractors from all over Malaysia.

The programme was moderated by the Dean of Commercialisation of UMP, Associate Professor Dr. Ahmad Tarmizi Haron.

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