Convocation

Thavirat, UMPSA-BJTU Dual Degree Programme pioneer student, excited to become Electrification System Engineer at MRL

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PEKAN, 14 February 2025 – Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah (UMPSA) student, Thavirat Supkhasin a/l Aran, 26, a pioneer graduate of the UMPSA-Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) Dual Degree Programme, is excited to begin his career as an Electrification System Engineer at Malaysia Rail Link Sdn. Bhd. (MRL), Dungun, Terengganu, starting on 5 March.

This Kelantane now holds a degree in Electrical Engineering in Automation from BJTU.

He is also set to graduate with other students at UMPSA's 20th Convocation Ceremony this year, where he will receive a degree in Electrical Engineering (Power Systems).

He expressed pride and disbelief in successfully completing his studies at two universities.

According to him, studying at UMPSA and BJTU gave him the opportunity to experience two vastly different education systems.

"At UMPSA, the approach focuses more on practical applications and applying theory within the Malaysian context, while at BJTU, I was exposed to more advanced technology and in-depth research, particularly in railway engineering.

"I learned to adapt to both systems, each with its own strengths," said Thavirat, who completed two years at UMPSA and two years at BJTU in China.

He noted that one of the main differences between the two institutions lies in curriculum structure and teaching approaches.

"At UMPSA, there were more group projects and case studies involving local industries, while at BJTU, the emphasis was more on theoretical learning and in-depth research.

"In China, the focus is more on academic achievements and examinations, whereas in Malaysia, there is a greater emphasis on practical elements and industry interaction," he said.

When asked about the main challenges he faced while adapting to the education system at BJTU, he stated that the biggest challenge was adjusting to the more formal learning culture and the pressure of frequent examinations.

"Additionally, language was also a challenge; even though most subjects were taught in English, I had to put in extra effort to understand the cultural context that influenced teaching and communication.

“The UMPSA Dual Degree Programme is truly special as it provides students with the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience from two renowned universities.

“This programme has given me an advantage, as I not only earned degrees from two prestigious universities but also gained international experience, which employers highly value,” he said.

He added that the programme enhanced his competitiveness, especially in the technical and engineering fields.

“It also allowed me to expand my professional network in both countries, adding extra credibility when applying for jobs in the global market.

“A degree from UMPSA and BJTU is a valuable credential from two strong engineering universities, opening up broader career opportunities.

“The biggest benefit is the ability to communicate effectively in a multicultural environment,” he explained.
Learning Mandarin was not only beneficial during his studies in China but also provided an advantage in the job market, particularly when dealing with companies linked to China.

He hopes that more students will take the opportunity to join this programme so that a greater number of students can benefit from the UMPSA Dual Degree Programme.

He also advised future students interested in this programme to be confident and prepared to step onto the international stage.

“There were countless memorable experiences, ups, and downs during my studies, especially since I was among the first batch of 45 pioneer students in this programme.

“The biggest challenge was adapting to cultural and language differences in China.

“I overcame this by actively learning Mandarin and interacting with local students to gain a better understanding of their culture,” he shared.

Additionally, he was never afraid to ask questions when he encountered difficulties in his studies.

Even more meaningful, this programme has broadened perspectives for him and his peers, opening their eyes to the importance of diversity, communication skills, and flexibility in problem-solving.

He added that he now has a deeper understanding of the importance of international collaboration and how global experiences can enrich both personal and professional growth.

UMPSA made history when the first batch of 45 graduates from the UMPSA-Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) collaboration programme successfully completed their studies in Railway Engineering on 9 January.

Among the graduates, 10 students completed their studies in Electrical and Electronics Engineering, 20 in Mechanical Engineering, and 15 in Civil Engineering.

UMPSA is also the only public university (UA) in Malaysia that has implemented eleven dual degree

programmes in collaboration with strategic partners, including Karlsruhe University of Applied Sciences (HKA) and Mannheim University of Applied Sciences (HMA) in Germany, Beijing Jiaotong University (BJTU) and Tianjin University in China, Kazakh National Agrarian Research University (KazNARU) in Kazakhstan, and most recently, Hanyang University Erica Campus in South Korea.

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