

Permits for four ferry operators

By Adrian Nandu

LABUAN: The Sabah Ports and Harbour Department has granted berthing rights at Menumbok to four ferry operators here, according to Datuk Abdul Rahim Bakri.

The Deputy Minister of Transport told reporters at the Marine Department here yesterday that the four operators who were given the approval in the middle of this month are Labuan Ferry Corporation Sdn Bhd, Labuan Mainland Link Sdn Bhd, Jutabonus Sdn Bhd (ro ro ferry) and Isro Shipping Sdn Bhd (passenger ferry). "All of them must comply

with the requirements set by Sabah State government, including the fare rates," he said.

"Regarding the complaint about the increase in ferry charges imposed by Labuan Ferry Corporation, my ministry has been informed by Sabah State Government that the operator did not get any approval from the Government to increase the charges and we are monitoring this issue," he said.

Labuan Ferry Corporation had previously said that its charges had not been revised by the Sabah State government for a long

time.

Abdul Rahim said the decision to revise the charges rests with Sabah Finance Ministry and before any revision is made, the relevant operator needs to comply with the regulations.

He said that with the permit for Isro Shipping's ferry to dock at Menumbok, the travellers from both sides would have another option with greater comfort and better schedule.

Asked about a joint venture between Labuan Ferry Corporation and Isro Shipping, said to have entered several days ago, he



Rahim

had yet to be informed whether they will buy another ro-ro ferry.

"The issue right now is their berthing rights at Menumbok will help them in their ro-ro ferry operating permit application," he said.

On concern over the passengers' safety in using the speed boat service between Labuan and Menumbok, given that all those using the boats are not insured, he said he had discussed the matter with the Director of Marine Department here.

"We have identified the right insurance company to insure all the speedboats, for it is our concern to protect the passengers," he

said.

"Even in Kuching, the boats over there are insured. I hope this decision will be accepted by the people, for we are going to implement it here.

"Previously, we were worried our decision to insure the passengers will result in an increase in the speed boat charges, which will burden the passengers.

"But now the people have asked for the insurance regardless of the possibility of an increase in speedboat charges," he said.

He urged the speed boat operators to comply with the rules set for them by not

overloading their boats.

Abdul Rahim was here to visit the Labuan International Airport project which was completed months ago at the cost of RM350 million and the ongoing construction of the RM4.5 million Labuan Ro-Ro Ferry Terminal.

He also disclosed a proposal on the dredging work of the channel to shorten the route from here to Menumbok.

"The matter needs to be approved by the Economic Planning Unit after the study or survey has been made," he said.

aware that the current tariff had not been revised for some time, however the company needed to adhere to the agreement signed with the government.

On the Ro-Ro Ferry Terminal, Abdul Rahim said it would begin operations in mid-February after the upgrading project costing

With more students in Labuan, the airline Corporation and the Tourism Ministry should be doubled, he added.

He said the Labuan Corporation and the Tourism Ministry should work together to come up

He said police will celebrate at Meruntum Road here yesterday.

Sikap XXIII in conjunction with the Chinese New Year activities, that is through posters that promote message services.

Datuk Abdul Rahman Yee who served from 1983 to 1985, activities, that is through posters that promote message services.