

Labuan-Menumbok passenger boat services resume

LABUAN: The passenger boat services for Labuan-Menumbok route which have been suspended following the implementation of the movement control order (MCO) on March 18, resumed operations Monday but only limited to scheduled boats.

Bernama's check at the Labuan International Ferry Terminal found that passengers observed social distancing while boarding the 36-seater and 40-seater capacity boats to Menumbok.

Terminal management company, LDA Holdings Sdn Bhd chief operating officer Eddy Herman said the Labuan Marine Department and the Sabah Ports and

Harbour Department had given the approval for the services to resume operations.

He said the approved route was only for Labuan-Menumbok-Labuan while other destinations to Sipitang, Sabah and Limbang, Sarawak are still not allowed to operate.

"Permission has been granted for large boats only, not the 14-seater passenger speed boats," he said.

Eddy said the speed boat operators have been instructed to ferry only half the capacity and to comply with the Ministry of Health's standard operating procedure (SOP) for the sea transport service.

"All passengers are required to undergo health screening both at the Labuan ferry terminal and upon arrival at the Menumbok jetty," he said.

On May 9, the Sabah state government allowed retail, food, public transport and public parks to reopen as it began to ease economic activities under Phase 5 of the MCO.

All types of public and logistics land and sea transportation services including buses, e-hailing services, public and private jetties, ferries, boats for hire, as well as supporting services were also allowed to reopen. - Bernama

Fifth vessel to offer ro-ro services

Sohan Das

LABUAN: A total of five ships will be offering sea links between Menumbok and Brunei when the Sarawak-built "Joy Star" starts ro-ro services.

The new vessel would be operated by Labuan Mainland Link Sdn Bhd, which also manages three other vessels namely 'Putra Jaya', 'Goodwill Star' and 'Kimanis'. The joint load capacity of the vessels is about 280 vehicles. Chairman of the company, Datuk Chin Hong Vui (pic), said the vessel is in the harbour but the official date of operation is subject to trial runs and clearance from the Marine authorities.

He said "Joy Star" would replace "Goodwill Star" which serves the route.

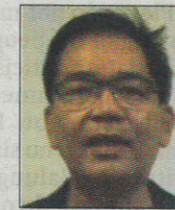
"Goodwill Star" has a bigger capacity of 100 vehicles and the traffic between here and Brunei is usually low and not economical.

"The new ship Joy Star which can carry a maximum of about 50 vehicles is more suitable," he said. Traffic between here and Menumbok had been on the rise over the last two years based on Marine statistics.

In 2017, the number of cars ferried in was 132,190 and out was 133,499 while for 2018 the number of cars in was 138,681 and out 135,054.

According to some, though the traffic to Menumbok had been on the increase, the future could not be predicted. They feel the operator may have a challenging time this year with the Covid-19 outbreak and Movement Control Order (MCO) in place.

Nevertheless, consumers are happy there is an additional vessel as this would assure



The Sarawak-built 'Joy Star'.

that when another vessel goes under maintenance there would be enough vessels to serve.

Though more ships are operating on the route to Menumbok the second ramp in Menumbok is not ready yet. The Sabah Marine and Harbour Department had said before it planned to build one this year subject to availability of funds. Labuan had a second ramp built at a cost RM3.85 million.