

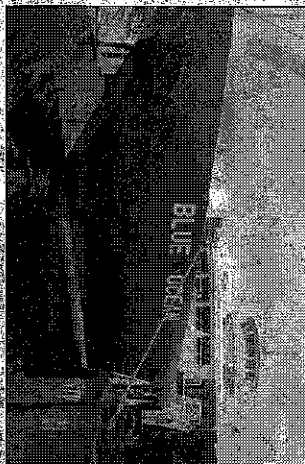
'Provide jetties for idle vessels'

Sohan Das

LABUAN: The Labuan Corporation is urged to provide jetty facilities for "out of job" passenger boats as these vessels deserved such facilities considering that they are providing an important maritime connection between the island and the coastal towns of Sabah and Sarawak.

Member of Parliament Datuk Rozman Isfi said he has spoken to CEO Dr Fary Armal Osman who is also a board member of the Labuan Port Authority on the dilemma of these boat operators hit by the Covid-19 pandemic and she promised to look into the matter.

Rozman said he brought the matter to the attention of the Government since it owned jetties and also due to an appeal by the Sarawak



Blue Ocean lying idle at Patau Patau based operator of the passenger boat "Ming Hai".

The boat has been prohibited from using the Liberty port for idle anchorage as under port security rules unapproved

vessels with no particular business could not do so as the port was a restricted area.

The boat was recently forced out of the port after refusing to do so for 10 months.

Rozman pointed out that the Sarawak-based company Double Power Sdn Bhd had been operating several boat services from here to Brunei, Limbang, Iawas and Kota Kinabalu and had served some sectors for almost 50 years.

"Their operations helped to boost the local economy by way of bringing visitors for business, holidays and also for transit from Labuan airport. Their contribution needed to be recognised and given the deserved treatment," said Rozman.

He also said that such facilities were

available in Kota Kinabalu but not Labuan. He said it was also ironic that Labuan is providing anchorage for jobless tankers and other vessels but not domestic boats.

The passenger boat is now parked in the harbour near a barge.

In the meantime, it was learnt that the former Labuan-Menuhok ro-ro ferry "Wawasan Perdana" which was recently renovated and refurbished in the hope of resuming the ro-ro service had been unable to do so for unknown reason.

The vessel now named "Blue Ocean" is anchored at the Patau-Patau waterfront. "Wawasan Perdana" was the pioneer in ro-ro service in the sector and dominated it for almost 15 years until new ferry licences were approved by the Government.