

LDA, UMS sign agreement to promote Labuan

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Baseri

By NIKKO FABIAN

KOTA KINABALU: The Labuan Development Authority (LDA) will intensify its efforts to promote the island not only as an International Offshore Financial Centre (IOFC) but also as an attractive tourist destination.

"With its strategic location and breathtaking views of the South China Sea, I am confident Labuan can become a popular international tourist destination," its General Manager Datuk Baseri Lamsah said.

Speaking to reporters after signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Labuan Development Board and University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) here Wednesday, he said it was important to change the image of the island.

To begin with, Baseri said LDA would promote sea activities such as scuba diving and deepsea fishing.

"Labuan offers ideal conditions all year round for

scuba diving, wreck diving, snorkelling, swimming, sun tanning, sailing, wind surfing, jet skiing and fishing among others," he added.

In addition, he said LDA would also organise international events to attract both local and foreign visitors.

According to him, plans are also under way to turn the island into a shopping haven since it is a thriving free port.

To achieve this, Baseri said Labuanites should also play their role by maintaining goods at cheap prices.

"Visitors will not come to Labuan if the prices there are not much different from those in other states."

Baseri also said LDA would look into the possibility of increasing commercial air flights and ferry services to Labuan.

"We are presently negotiating with Malaysia

Airlines (MAS) and two other commercial airlines to have additional cheaper flights to Labuan," he said.

On ferry services, he said many operators are willing to assist LDA in terms of increasing frequencies and reducing fares.

The MoU between LDA and UMS, among others, will allow the latter to conduct research on the social, educational, commercial, economic and tourism aspects of Labuan apart from organising development trainings on the island.

It was signed by Baseri who represented LDA and UMS Deputy Chancellor Datuk Dr Wan Rafai Abdul Rahman, at the UMS campus in Teluk Likas.

Under the MoU, both LDA and UMS will also work closely to organise seminars, talks and conferences on topics of mutual interest as well as improve and promote education and knowledge skills through social and community services in Labuan.