

Tawi-Tawi delegation eyes POIC LD

LAHAD DATU: The business delegation from the Tawi-Tawi Province of the Philippines is looking at using Palm Oil Industrial Cluster (POIC) Lahad Datu as a place to consolidate seaweed and process tuna and other marine resources.

The delegation, led by Tawi-Tawi Governor Ysmael Sali, arrived in Sabah on Oct 11 for a five-day visit.

Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) Business Council Chairman Carl Mosoom said the delegation is also considering producing downstream products for exports.

“Seaweed and tuna processing are being considered here as the parties in Sabah and the Philippines explore the aggregation of raw materials from surround-

ing territories,” he told reporters after the delegation’s visit to POIC Lahad Datu, here, Wednesday.

Furthermore, he said the delegation has also expressed interests in barter trade, import of edible oil, and possibly the introduction of ferry and air services between Lahad Datu and Bongao, the capital city of Tawi-Tawi. POIC Sabah Chairman Datuk Yong Teck Lee said he sees the dawning of a new era in ties between Sabah and the southern Philippines.

“I always held the view that both sides can support each other in addressing issues along our common border. We are BIMP-EAGA partners and neighbours and the governor’s visit will cement and strengthen our ties on the basis of ‘win-

win’ and smart partnership,” he said.

He said BIMP-EAGA has been in POIC Sabah’s plan from the beginning as a source for all sorts of raw materials from palm oil, cocoa and seafood.

“We recently also broached the idea of developing an international maritime centre at POIC Lahad Datu and a new airport to improve sea and air connectivity,” he said.

Tawi-Tawi delegation spokesman Benjamin T Loong said the visit at POIC Lahad Datu is to evaluate the investment potential that could be undertaken there.

“We also hope the barter trade within Sulu, Tawi-Tawi and Bangsamoro can be reopened,” he added.

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