DAILY EXPRESS – 28.07.2023 (FRIDAY)



The meeting between Esscom and POIC Sabah recently.

New Esscom chief Victor sees crucial investment dynamics

LAHAD DATU: The perception on Sabah security and its interplay with investment sentiments are getting an unprecedented in-depth look.

Eastern Sabah Security Command (Esscom) Commander DCP Victor Sanjos said Esscom is taking note of the Sabah Government's desire to develop the State's East coast, which makes up a large part of the Esscom territory.

Esscom was established in April 2013 soon after an armed intrusion of a coastal village about 100km from Lahad Datu by a band of rebels claiming allegiance to the defunct controversial Sulu sultanate with adherents in the South of Philippines.

Esscom covers a large swath of Sabah terrestrial and maritime territories from Kudat in the north along the eastern coast to Tawau in the south.

Victor, who was born in Keningau and has almost 30 years in the police force, took over as commander in a handover ceremony before Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor in Kota Kinabalu on June 7. He succeeded DCP Mohd Ali Tamby.

Victor said Esscom was aware of the strategic importance of eastern Sabah in the State's plans to act as an economic hub of BIMP-EAGA.

It is also aware of the travel advisory by governments of foreign countries (including Japan, Hong Kong and the US) cautioning their citizens against visiting Sabah and the impact of such advisory on investor sentiments.

Victor also said Esscom had noted points of concern raised by various quarters, including POIC Sabah Sdn Bhd whose POIC Lahad Datu Industrial Park is slated for a central role as the future logistics hub of the entire BIMP-EAGA of over 80 billion people.

He said as a Sabah-born, he looks to use his position to see that Esscom contributes to hastening the turning of the giant economic wheel of eastern Sabah and, by extension, that of BIMP-EAGA.

Echoing the conclusion of his predecessors, Victor said although the risk level is a distant memory from post-2013 and there's been hardly a noteworthy border incident, the geography, porous borders and vibrant trade and people movements in Esscom waters meant that it's prudent to keep watch.

On the continuing curfew in some stretches of Esscom waters and how certain Esscom communiques could convey fear rather than assurance, Victor said the so called "curfew" which is imposed on the sea, was to control water craft movement over a long coastline.

'We will improve on how we get our message across," he assured while on a visit to POIC Lahad Datu, recently.

Meanwhile, he revealed that Esscom had expressed desire to relocate from its rented premises in Lahad Datu Town to a permanent base within POIC Lahad Datu.

Not only is there a convenient residential cluster in POIC Lahad Datu, the intended new Esscom headquarters will be in close proximity to harbour logistics.

Esscom's intentions were conveyed to POIC Sabah Chairman Datuk Seri Yong Teck Lee and POIC Sabah Group CEO Datuk Fredian Gan during their meeting, which included senior managers of the company.