

# Labuan included in BIMP-EAGA meet

## Iffah Dilaney

LABUAN: Labuan BIMP-EAGA Malaysian Business Council (BEMBC) Chairman Datuk Rozman Hj Isli, has appointed Labuan Society (LS) President, Azhar Othman, as the island's first BEMBC representative to attend the 3<sup>rd</sup> BIMP-EAGA Socio-Cultural and Education (SCE) cluster meeting at Brunei Darussalam beginning Wednesday.

The SCE cluster meeting is to recognise the crucial roles of socio-cultural links and education in the promotion of greater understanding among diverse communities.



Azhar

Socio-cultural activities can contribute to building strong foundation for greater understanding, good neighbourliness, and a shared sense of responsibility.

This will be the first time Labuan is represented in any of the six clusters/strategic pillars of BIMP-EAGA after an absence of several years.

Rozman has high hopes that Labuan's active participation in BIMP-EAGA will bring in economic opportunities for Labuan and its people given the huge market presented by the regional trade bloc and the services that Labuan may render.

The main sectors that he foresees will benefit are tourism, financial services and logistics/distribution services. In addition, Labuan has a unique standing among the territories as the only duty free island and

an offshore financial centre with a modern, urban and educated population.

Azhar thanked Rozman for his confidence in selecting him.

"Perhaps, the selection is due to my active involvement in organising and participating in various programmes involving the people of BIMP region over the years especially on trade, investment and economy" said Azhar.

He hoped to identify areas where Labuan can participate or even take the lead and, where possible, to propose a few initiatives within the ambit of the cluster.

Among the initiatives to be proposed are making Labuan a regional training hub for certain sectors, sharing the island's successes in practising "Unity in Diversity" and promoting Labuan as a centre for arts in the BIMP-EAGA region.