

5 cruise ships to come calling in a day

> Penang poised to welcome 17,000 tourists on March 13

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GEORGE TOWN: Five cruise ships with more than 17,000 passengers are scheduled to dock at Swettenham Pier here on March 13.

State Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Law said the arrival of cruise vessels clearly indicates that Penang is gaining popularity as a tourist destination, especially with the port having close proximity to the George Town Unesco heritage site.

He said there were very few ports in the world where passengers can disembark and walk into a heritage area or head to Penang Hill, Entopia (formerly the Penang Butterfly Farm) and to shopping complexes.

"We will discuss with the relevant authorities on managing the traffic and logistics of handling the number of passengers that day," he said in a press conference yesterday.

Checks on cruise monitoring websites showed the *Superstar Gemini*, *Superstar Libra*, *Diamond Princess*, *Star Clipper* and *Mein Schiff 1* are to make port call that day.

Law later welcomed passengers disembarking from the *Mariner of the Seas* and the *AIDAbella* with 3,114 passengers and 2,600 passengers respectively.

Both ships are making a one-day stop in



The *Mariner of the Seas* at the Swettenham Pier, Penang yesterday.

Penang while en route to Klang and Langkawi respectively.

Law also urged the federal government to expand the Penang Port and Pier to accommodate the expected increase in tourist arrivals.

He pointed to the CNN listing where Penang was named the second top tourist destination for 2017.

He said Penang remained a melting-pot of cultures and pointed out that very few places in the world had such a diverse ethnicity mix.

He said economic activities spurred by tourism also saw the younger generation taking over businesses as the older generation retired.