



Windfall for three-wheelers:

Rows of trishaws picking up cruise ship passengers at Swettenham Pier in George Town as the Mein Schiff I berths for the day in the background. Another liner, Superstar Gemini, also sails in from Singapore. The two vessels disgorge a total of some 4,000 passengers and crew members. — GEORGE CHEAH/ The Star

It's a cruise for trishawmen

It is raining tourists in Penang and the trishaws reign as one after another cruise ship dock at Swettenham Pier, bringing with them a flood of passengers and crew members. This month alone the island will see an astounding 22 cruise liners with some 80,000 to 100,000 visitors and it has become a common sight for fleets of trishaws to rule the city streets.

> See Page 3 for report



Iconic draw: Tourists walking to board rows of trishaws lining the Swettenham Pier entrance as a cruise ship berths for the day in the background.

Trishaws reign as liners call

By **ARNOLD LOH**
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GEORGE TOWN: The modernity of planes and cars has not rendered obsolete that old port city feel of Penang.

People still love to visit by ship and when they get here, they still want to use the trishaws, an icon of the island.

A whopping 22 cruise ships will be calling on Swettenham Pier this month alone and it has become almost a daily sight to fleets of trishaws lining the pier entrance.

Trishaw fleet owner Saw Chin Choon said tour companies organising day trips for the passengers would book up to about 100 trishaw trips from him when the ships arrive. And he's just one fleet operator.

"We take the passengers to Khoo Kongsi or

the Peranakan Mansion, anywhere in the heritage hub that the tour companies organise.

"It is usually a two-hour excursion. We take the passengers out three times a day," he said.

Saw added that his riders are booked all the way until March.

A Penang Port Sdn Bhd spokesman said the pier would see between 80,000 to 100,000 cruise ship passengers and crew members in December alone.

He said yesterday, *Mein Schiff I* and *Superstar Gemini* came from Singapore with a total of almost 4,000 passengers and crew.

"Every week, four to five cruise ships are calling and this doesn't include *Superstar Libra* and *Amusement World*, which home-port here."