

CM: Make us a partner and we'll lease out the land

GEORGE TOWN: The state government will lease out the two sites requested by Penang Port Commission (PPC) if it becomes a partner in the expansion of the cruise terminal project.

Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said the other condition that must be met is that an open tender be called for the expansion works.

"We have informed former PPC chairman Datuk Seri Chua Soi Lek many times (on the conditions) and chairman Datuk Tan Teik Cheng is now asking for the land again.

"The state government is all for the expansion of the cruise terminal but the conditions have to be met before the land is leased out," said Lim during a press conference

at Komtar yesterday.

Lim claimed that PPC is aware of the prerequisite for the land to be leased for the cruise terminal expansion works.

On Tuesday, Tan urged the state government to issue PPC permanent titles to the two sites - Lot 4 and Bersempadan Lot 4 - at Swettenham Pier to enable PPC to

expand the cruise terminal.

PPC is currently operating at the pier with temporary Occupancy Certificate that has to be renewed every six months.

He said that after the state agreed on Jan 25, 2010 to PPC's application for a 99-year lease for the land, PPC paid a premium of RM4.087mil on April 20, 2010, for the lease.

"However, approval was later cancelled and the premium returned on May 12, 2010," Tan told a press conference after state Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Law Heng Kiang urged the Federal Government a day earlier to expand Swettenham Pier to handle more international cruise vessels.