

TAN SIN CHOW, R. SEKARAN, N. TRISHA and RENA LIM at the Penang State Assembly  
Photos by MUSTAFA AHMAD, GARY CHEN and CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

# Penang to get UTC next year

## One-stop centre may be located on the island or mainland, says CM

PLANS to build and establish the Urban Transformation Centre (UTC) in all capitals in Malaysia by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) is still underway in Penang, said Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

“The UTC for Penang next year, which is in the planning stage by the MoF, will focus on establishing the centres in cities with high numbers of residents.

“But this does not necessarily mean that the UTC will be built in George Town as we will also be considering Butterworth as one of the spots for the UTC.

“For now, nothing is certain yet as MoF is still planning and

researching for the UTC based on the cost and necessity for it.

“The location and building which will be established as UTC are also not determined yet so we are waiting for the MoF to complete their plans and research,” Chow said during a press conference after the state assembly meeting for the morning session on Wednesday.

Chow said at present, there is a Rural Transformation Centre (RTC) in Simpang Ampat, Nibong Tebal, which is open every day from 8.30am to 10am except on public holidays.

Chow said the state is also con-

sidering a submission for a shorter proposal on the water taxis so that it can be executed as soon as possible.

The project, which was mooted by the Penang Port Commission (PPC) and was approved during the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER) meeting back in 2009, was supposed to be implemented under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

“The idea for water taxis has been mooted and promoted since the Penang Transport Master Plan but until now there is no action taken.

“So I have directed one of our

officers to make a separate request which is shorter for us to push the idea.

“This will be a good project if Rapid Ferry can lead the effort but so far water transport has been given a low priority.

“Before this, PPC has also let go of the ferry service as part of its operations because the operating cost was higher than the profits, causing a loss of profit.

“This was why they let Prasarana take over the ferry service.

Prasarana is struggling to keep up as well so I think it is best to let Prasarana focus on improving the ferry services first,” Chow added.