

At the Penang State Assembly

Don't cry for ageing Penang ferries

Catamarans being considered to replace state's iconic vessel, says exco man

THE iconic Penang ferries could be a thing of the past if a proposal to use catamaran ferries to ply between Weld Quay and Butterworth materialises.

State exco member Lim Hock Seng (DAP-Bagan Jermal) said Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) is considering such a service to replace the ageing ferries.

"They are currently doing a feasibility study which is still in the preliminary stage. But, there's no decision on whether the catamarans will replace the ferries," he said.

A catamaran is a multi-hulled watercraft featuring two parallel hulls of equal size.

Lim was replying to a question from R.S.N. Rayer (DAP-Seri

Delima) who asked if the present ferries were safe and still sea-worthy as they were old.

"We have seen reports of water spouting out in the middle of the deck recently," said Rayer referring to the recent case of water spout on the deck.

However, PPSB clarified that the water came from the freshwater tank used to cool off the engine, restrooms and general purposes.

Lim said the safety aspect would be given utmost priority to any new ferry service while stressing the present ferries were safe as they have been undergoing safety maintenance regularly and the vessels were still in good condition.

On the issue of the state taking

over the ferry service, Lim said discussions were still ongoing.

"We want a company with a clean slate and no interference from any party when we take over, for smooth ferry operations," he added.

State exco member Chong Eng (DAP-Padang Lalang), in her winding-up speech, said the Gender Responsive Participatory Budgeting (GRPB) approach had received international recognition as the 'Penang model'.

"Under the GRPB Programme, a Cleaning Community Contract in the Jalan Sungai and Ampangan PPR community was initiated as part of a pilot project between 2012 and 2014."

The assembly adjourned *sine die*.



Speedy watercraft: Filepic of a catamaran ferry. Penang Port Sdn Bhd is looking at possibly replacing its old ferries with catamarans similar to this one.