

Cruise terminal upgrade to start soon

GEORGE TOWN: The state government will accelerate the necessary approvals for the long-awaited RM155mil expansion of the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal (SPCT) within a month.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow says the lease on the land, which belongs to the state government, will be extended for work to commence on the terminal.

"The land could remain under Penang Port Commission or come under Chief Minister Incorporated and we will make a decision on this soon," Chow said during a press conference by Transport Minister Anthony Loke after a joint venture signing agreement between Penang Port Sdn Bhd and Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd for the terminal's expansion here yesterday.

Under the expansion plans, the existing

400m berth would be extended by 220m with an additional 118m-long "dolphin".

Work is set to begin before the end of 2018 and once completed SPCT would be able to handle two mega-sized cruise ships simultaneously on the outer berths along with one small and one medium-sized ships on the inner berths by end 2019.

It would also enable Oasis-class ships, the largest in the world, to berth at the terminal.

On the issue of a new chairman for Penang Port Commission, Loke said no decision had been made yet on the appointment, as Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad would vet any candidate for the post.

"One thing for sure is that we will nominate a professional and it will not be a political appointment as done previously," he said.

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