

# Historian: Transport plan contains ferry replacement

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**GEORGE TOWN:** The Penang Pakatan Harapan government has been reminded that they were the ones who wanted ferries to be replaced with catamarans as stated in its Penang Transport Master Plan (PTMP).

Penang historian Khoo Salma Nasution said the state leadership had apparently forgotten that they proposed to replace the ferries with catamarans.

"It says so in the PTMP or perhaps they haven't read the document themselves," she said in a Facebook post on Wednesday.

Khoo Salma said most of the post-2015 version of the PTMP was objectionable as it consisted mainly of environmentally-destructive highways and reclamation and the state government wanted to bulldoze it through despite objections from the rakyat.

"But the introduction of efficient, modern vessels together with the expansion of water transport is one of the things I do agree with in principle.

"This is not forgetting that the iconic Penang heritage ferries should be conserved and used for recreational ferry trips across the channel," said Khoo Slama, who is also Penang Heritage Trust vice-president.

Starting today, Penang's ferry service is seeing a new era of efficiency and reliability.

From 6.30am to 11pm, there is a fast boat trip every 20 to 30 minutes, up to 27 round trips per day.

This is the interim phase until June 30, 2022, while the ferry terminals are being upgraded and high-tech water buses and vehicular ferries are being built.

One of the iconic ferries will still be retained to ferry two-wheelers until the refurbishment of the terminals is completed.

At the Raja Tun Uda ferry terminal in Weld Quay yesterday, several DAP leaders and state officials led by Lim Guan Eng took the ferry to the mainland in a show of support for the iconic ferries.

The DAP secretary-general said the Pakatan



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Zurina Abdul Manaf



state government had proposed the catamarans be operated in parallel with the ferries.

Meanwhile, passenger Zurina Abdul Manaf, 23, and her two friends, Norlizah Kamaruzaman, 22, and Faridah Abdul Hamid, 23, were excited to make the trip to Butterworth.

She said since yesterday was the last day the ferry would take foot passengers, they could not miss the opportunity to take the "last ride" on the iconic transporter.

"I last boarded the ferry with my parents when I was 10 years old and I have never travelled on it since. It is hard to imagine Penang without the ferries.

"But with the fast boats that ply across the channel in less than 10 minutes, it'll really be a boon for working commuters.

"We can now be on time to work as it was really frustrating to wait for the ferry which has frequent breakdowns," she said.

Mohd Rashid Abdul Rahman, 42, and his wife Haslina Shamsuddin, 39, took a day off to travel with their two children on the ferry to remember the last day of 2020.

"I was born in Penang and the ferry is part of our life.

"But my children who are 12 and nine haven't been on the ferry.

"We felt that we should at least let them experience the ride once in their lifetime," he said.