

Smooth sailing first day for ferries

Commuters in Penang impressed by 'clean, fast and efficient' service

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GEORGE TOWN: Commuters are impressed with the "clean, fast and efficient" service of the new ferries.

Among those who took the new vessels to cross the channel from the island to the mainland and vice versa was Nor Fadzil Amir Shah, 34.

The executive said he could arrive at work while still looking fresh thanks to the air-conditioned cabin, adding that it was a smooth ride.

"Now, we are assured of reaching the other side on time. With the old ferries, the arrival time was irregular.

"This ferry service is efficient and we can now plan our journey well," said Nor Fadzil.

Sales executive Cynthia Chong, 29, said she liked the bright new look of the ferries, which made their debut yesterday.

"It's clean and I hope the cleanliness is maintained," she added.

Vietnamese Nguyen Thi Huong, who travelled in the old ferries before the service was discontinued, enjoyed the 10-minute ride.

"I used to take the fast boats which were crowded at times.

"This boat is comfortable with better seating arrangements.

"I'll bring my friends along when they return from Vietnam next week."



More comfortable ride: Commuters on board one of the new ferries. — LIM BENG TATT/The Star

Motorcyclist Zarif Zarfan Ahmad, 33, said the interior was spacious enough for some 50 motorcycles on board.

"It is compact. There is enough room for those on motorbikes or bicycles to travel comfortably.

"I can now look forward to a pleasant trip to work every day," said the production supervisor.

Earlier, *Teluk Kampi* made its maiden trip at 6.35am, from the Sultan Abdul Halim ferry terminal on the mainland to the Raja Tun Uda ferry terminal on the island yesterday.

Accompanying the commuters were caretaker Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, Tanjong MP and Deputy Education Minister Lim Hui Ying, Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) chief executive officer Datuk Sasedharan Vasudevan, Penang Port Commission (PPC) general manager V. Vijayaindaran and senior port officials.

On hand to greet them were PPSB chairman Datuk Syed Mohamed Syed Murtaza.

At a press conference, Chow said the new boats were an ideal mode of transport for commuters

as they were fast and efficient compared to the old iconic ferries.

"We are looking at a seamless travel of sea and land with commuters able to plan their trip with Rapid Penang buses waiting outside the terminal."

He added that for the first month until Sept 6, PPSB would absorb the cost of the fare, enabling commuters to travel free during the period.

The fares will be announced at a later date.

The service begins from 6.30am

to 9.30pm, with 68 trips (both ways) a day and a frequency of 20 minutes during peak hours.

Chow said both PPC and PPSB had held discussions with other public transport companies to synchronise the ferry schedule with other services for the people's convenience.

He said both the terminals on the island and mainland were equipped with air-conditioning, free WiFi facilities, closed-circuit television cameras and disabled-friendly lifts, as well as retail and food outlets.

Besides *Teluk Kampi*, the other three are *Teluk Bahang*, *Teluk Duyung* and *Teluk Kumbar*. Each vessel costs RM18mil.

Three ferries will be plying the channel every day with one on stand-by on rotational basis.

Each vessel can accommodate 150 passengers and 50 motorcycles and bicycles (only two-wheelers) in a one-way trip of 10 minutes, half that of the old ferries.

All the old Penang ferries have been retired, with the last one decommissioned in December 2022.

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WEATHER

	GEORGE TOWN	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KOTA BARU	K. KINABALU	KUCHING
AM	Rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain

PRAYER TIMES

	ALOR SETAR	PENANG	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KUANTAN	KOTA BARU
Subuh	6:02	6:04	6:01	5:55	5:56	5:55
Zohor	1:26	1:27	1:22	1:13	1:16	1:19
Asar	4:44	4:45	4:41	4:33	4:36	4:37
Masah	7:26	7:25	7:22	7:13	7:22	7:20