

# RM200m pier expansion plan **still** on hold

> Penang state govt needs to give green light to lease two plots of land

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GEORGE TOWN: A RM200 million plan by Penang Port Commission (PPC) to expand the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal is snagged by ongoing land issues with the state government.

PPC chairman Datuk Tan Teik Cheng said the plan is to expand the pier to accommodate more vessels but it cannot do so due to the dispute.

He said certain portions of the land are owned by the state and the PPC cannot do anything if the state does not give the green light.

Tan nonetheless said he had initiated talks with the state government to resolve the issue in November last year.

"I am seeing some positive developments from the discussions," he said in a press conference yesterday but added

he could not keep silent after Penang Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Law urged the PPC to expand the Pier on Sunday.

The PPC, a regulatory body under the Transport Ministry, was leasing the pier from the Penang government before the lease expired in 2013.

The PPC had applied to extend the lease to 99 years and paid a premium of over RM10 million for the terminal and another RM4 million for the adjoining complex in 2010.

The state government initially approved the application but later rejected the offer and returned the premiums.

The matter over the land has seen the PPC filing a suit against the Northeast District and Land Office and the State Land and Mines Office at the Penang High Court on May 17, 2013, for two plots of land. The two areas are a 0.22ha plot where the offices and



Tan showing the proposed Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal expansion plan at the media conference yesterday.

terminal sit and a 1.23ha plot where the docks and berths are.

The defendants – the Penang state government – had applied to

strike out the suit on Aug 22 the same year, with the Penang High Court finding in their favour on March 11, 2014.