

PPC: Lease us the land!

Two sites at Swettenham Pier needed to extend cruise terminal

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Port Commission (PPC) has urged the state government to lease two sites at Swettenham Pier to the commission so that the cruise terminal could be expanded.

PPC chairman Datuk Tan Teik Cheng said it had planned to upgrade Swettenham Pier to cope with more cruise liners and tourists a long time ago but could not as the two sites belong to the state government.

"We applied for a 99-year lease for Lot 4 on March 23, 2009, and the state agreed on Jan 25, 2010. We then paid a RM4.087mil premium for the lease on April 20, 2010.

"However, approval was later cancelled and the premium was returned on May 12, 2010. We reapplied on July 8, 2010, but there was no feedback," he told a press conference yesterday.

He was responding to state Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Heng Kiang who urged the Federal Government to expand Swettenham Pier to handle more international cruise vessels.

Law said that now, only two cruise vessels were able to dock at the Swettenham Pier at any one time.

I hope the state will give its support and cooperation to PPC as the cruise terminal urgently needs upgrading.

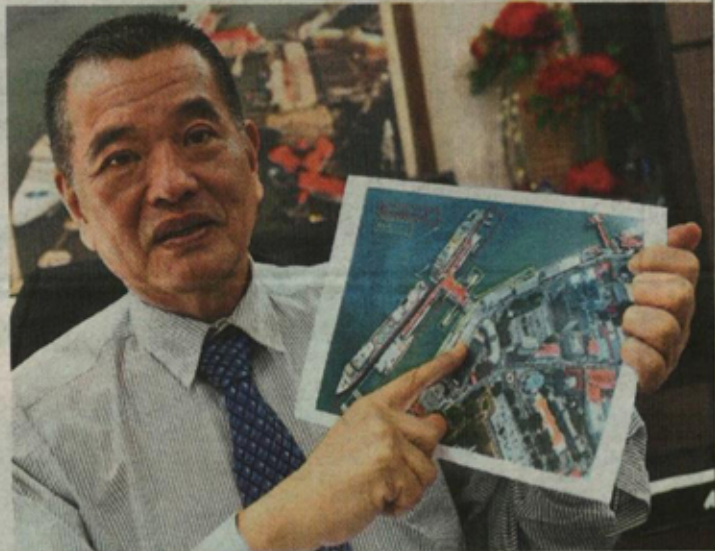
Datuk Tan Teik Cheng

Tan also said that PPC was offered a 60-year lease of Bersempadan Lot 4 in 2006 with a premium of RM9,479,115.

"We appealed for a 99-year lease and also asked for a reduction of the premium. This was rejected and the earlier 60-year lease offer was also withdrawn.

"After the change in the state government in 2008, we were asked to reapply after a meeting with the state land office. Tan added that the state approved PPC's application for a 99-year lease for Bersempadan Lot 4 on Jan 6, 2010.

"A RM10,493,227 premium was paid on April 20, 2010, but approval was cancelled and the premium returned on May 12, 2010.



It's expandable: Tan showing a map of Lot 4 and an adjoining lot of Swettenham Pier at the press conference.

"We reapplied on July 8 that year but there has been no response so far," he said.

Tan urged the state to issue permanent land titles for Lot 4 and Bersempadan Lot 4 to PPC as soon as possible.

"I hope the state will give its support and cooperation to PPC as the

cruise terminal urgently needs upgrading. Tourism is a key industry in Penang.

"Last year, the state received 806,921 Malaysian and 213,566 foreign visitors via cruises. We expect the number to reach between 1.3 million and 1.5 million this year," he said.