

Arrivals by sea to hit record high

More buses needed for 17,000 passengers coming in seven cruise liners

By N. TRISHA and GAYLE LIM
north@thestar.com.my

TOUR operators will have to charter additional buses from Kuala Lumpur for the estimated 17,000 visitors scheduled to visit Penang via seven cruise vessels on March 13.

State Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Law Heng Kiang said the tour operators did not have enough buses for such a large group of people.

"At the moment, buses will be chartered from Kuala Lumpur with tour guides to help out.

"We can cater to the crowd but transportation will need to be supplemented," he told a press conference at the Penang International Airport yesterday.

Law encouraged local entrepreneurs to invest in buses as Penang was fast becoming a hub for large-scale events.

"We will have meetings and dialogue sessions so locals involved in the tourism industry should invest more in transportation facilities.

"Local entrepreneurs who are keen can channel their efforts towards upcoming tourist-related projects which have plenty of potential," he said.

According to him, cruise vessel passengers who visit Penang island just for a day are usually big spenders.

"They spend far more than people who visit the island for a few days. They are also not budget travellers and shopping is easier for them as they need not lug their luggage along when they visit."



Liners cruising into Swettenham Pier's cruise terminal in Penang.

The seven cruise vessels arriving on March 13 include the Superstar Libra and the Amusement World, which has its home port in Penang.

Around 17,000 passengers are expected on that day alone, the most number of tourists from cruise ships in one day.

The five other cruise liners are Diamond Princess, Mein Schiff, Superstar Gemini, Star Clipper and

Leisure World.

Law had earlier said the Cruise Food and Cultural Fiesta 2017 would be held at Fort Cornwallis on that day to entertain the guests and the public.

He said the programme from 9am to 5pm was being finalised and would include chingay performances, traditional dances, local cuisines and handicraft stalls.

The Cruise Food and Cultural Fiesta 2017 will be held at Fort Cornwallis on that day to entertain the guests and the public.

Danny Law



Chef Rashidi receiving the halal certificate from Norhasni. Present are (from second right) Mohd Rashid, SuperStar Libra hotel manager Charlie Tiong and Master of SuperStar Libra Captain Juha Lukka. (Right) Guests helping themselves to the halal food on board the liner. —Photos: ZAINUDIN AHAD/The Star



Halal food assured on board SuperStar Libra

STAR Cruises has obtained halal certification for its two restaurants on SuperStar Libra to cater to its local and international guests.

Its sales vice-president Cynthia Lee said they had secured the certification from the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) for the third consecutive year. The two restaurants are Spices and Blue Lagoon.

"We'll continue to meet the growing demand of both local and international Muslim markets with halal-friendly options.

"Muslim travellers can look forward to a free and easy cruise vacation, with assurance that the food offered in Spices and Blue Lagoon are halal," she said.

"We have a dedicated group of chefs who have created a wide array of halal delights for the guests.

"The chefs at Spices have meticulously crafted new dishes, while reinventing old ones to offer over 30 mouth-watering halal dishes," she said on Thursday.

Penang Islamic Religious Affairs

Department's Halal Management Division assistant director Norhasni Othman gave the certificate to the cruise's Senior Sous Chef Rashidi Mohamad.

The presentation was witnessed by Penang Deputy Chief Minister I Datuk Mohd Rashid Hasnon at the liner's Stardust Lounge.

Both Spices and Blue Lagoon were certified by Jakim for complying with the kitchen equipment, staff, ingredient purchasing, food preparation and service guidelines provided by the department.

The cruise, which made its way back to Penang after being away for more than a year, features a fitness centre and spa, an outdoor golf-driving range, a sun deck, swimming pool, twin hot tubs and a sports deck featuring a basketball court and jogging track.

The 10-deck, 700-room cruise ship is home ported at the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal in Penang until Dec 31.

It offers one-night High Seas cruises and 4D/3N Penang-Phuket-Krabi cruises.