

All set for **influx** of cruise visitors

> Penang Port ready to handle 17,000 passengers from five ships making call at pier

BY AARON NGUI
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Port is prepared for the logistics of ferrying some 17,000 passengers from five cruise ships which are scheduled to make a port call at the Swettenham Pier on March 13.

Cruise operators are expected to be using the "tandem-boat" method to let passengers disembark, a spokesman told *theSun*.

He said this meant the ships will be anchored in the middle of the Penang channel while smaller craft will ferry passengers who wish to disembark at the pier.

He said another disembarkation method is to let the cruise ships take turns letting passengers leave the vessel.

He said the ships would leave the pier and be anchored at sea until it is time to return to pick up their travellers.

He said this depended on the "window" as there might be passengers who would want to return to the ships earlier than the time allocated.

"The port is prepared," he said when contacted yesterday.

Penang is gearing up for a huge influx of visitors as *Superstar Gemini*, *Superstar Libra*, *Diamond Princess*, *Star Clipper* and *Mein Schiff 7* are scheduled to make their call that day.

The state is a popular tourist destination with the added attraction of the George Town Unesco World Heritage Site and being named the second top tourist destination for 2017 by CNN this month.

theSun understands that the Penang government will be holding discussions with the relevant authorities on traffic management on that day.

On Sunday, Jalan Tun Syed Sheh Barakbah, where the entrance and exit of the pier are located, was turned into a one-way street when some 5,000 passengers disembarked from the *Mariner of the Seas* and *AIDAblella*.

In welcoming the visitors, state Tourism Development Committee chairman Danny Law said the road would also be turned into a one-way street on March 13.

Usually, commuters can enter the road via Lebuhraya coming from George Town or from Weld Quay.



The *Diamond Princess* prides itself on the range of choices on offer.



The *Star Clipper* is a modern cruise ship created for luxury-loving passengers.