

Big increase in cruise passengers to Penang

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PENANG has recorded an increase of over 95,000 cruise passengers from 354,047 in 2018 to 449,885 in 2019.

The 27.1% increase in passenger arrivals was announced by Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow based on the statistics he received from Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) today.

Chow also said the number of vessels slightly increased from 185 in 2018 to 198 in 2019.

“Congratulations to Penang Port Sdn Bhd,” he told a press conference at the Sia Boey archaeological urban park before lighting up the colourful mini lanterns in the shape of hot air balloons there together with state Tourism Development, Arts, Culture and Heritage Committee chairman Yeoh Soon Hin tonight.

“The Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd, one of the world’s leading cruise companies, signed a joint venture with PPSB in September in 2018 to redevelop Swettenham Port Cruise Terminal (SPCT).

“When SPCT is redeveloped, it is anticipated to increase tourist arrivals and be a catalyst in creating jobs and spur Penang’s economy.”

According to Chow, the top 10 nationalities for arrivals via SPCT were from Singapore, India, Indonesia, China, Australia, West Germany, United Kingdom, United States of America, South Korea and Japan.

“The total passenger arrivals from each of these countries shows double digit growth from 2018, except only Indonesia that obtained an increase of 8.25%.

“The top five countries with highest increase (I.e. 2018 vs 2019) are from South Korea (75.82%), UK (68.1%), India (51.56%), China (50.80%) and Australia (44.90%).”



Chow says the state is expecting an increase in passenger arrivals when the Swettenham Port Cruise Terminal is redeveloped.

While the economic prospects in the world may look not so bright for some, Penang Port Commission chairman Jeffrey Chew remains optimistic that there would be many opportunities in 2020.

He said they were expecting to start expansion work at the terminal in the first quarter of this year.

“We may have challenges but we are optimistic of a stable year and a dynamic market. We intend to expand the length of SPCT by up to 400m to cater to bigger ships, which can bring in 4,000 to 5,000 passengers,” Chew said.

“We’re looking at how well the area is managed. We should have more exciting news coming up as we wait for regulatory approvals in a week or two.

“Not many are travelling to Europe but more are coming to Asia. Malacca and Port Dickson are also doing their own ports and I believe this is not a competition but will add value to the country.”

In 2019, there were a total of five cruise liners that made their maiden call to SPCT. They were Pacific Jewel (2,014 capacity) and Costa Luminosa (2,826 capacity) in March, Spectrum of the Seas (4,200 capacity) in May, Mein Schiff 6 (2,534 capacity) and Norwegian Jade (2,402 capacity) in December.

Among the huge liners that had called at SPCT were Quantum of the Seas and Ovation of the Seas by Royal Caribbean Cruisers and the luxury liner Queen Mary II.

Other notable cruise operators included Costa Crociere, Princess Cruises and Celebrity Cruises.

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