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Guan Eng: SPCT set for major expansion in April [NSTTV]



By **Audrey Dermawan**
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GEORGE TOWN: The development of the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal (SPCT) over four phases at RM500 million will begin in April, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng said today.

He said it will commence with the most important component - the extension of the existing berth - to enable the terminal to berth two mega cruise vessels at any given time, carrying 10,000 passengers and crew members each along with a host of infrastructures.

He said the first phase, for RM150 million, was a collaboration between Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) and private investment.

Lim added that upon completion within 24 to 36 months, it would increase the foreign visitors to the state from the current 500,000 capacity annually to 3 million.

"This is a very important phase in efforts to woo more foreign visitors to the state. As it is, the port here is the top port in the whole of the country for last year used for international transits.

"With the development in place, this will further boost the state's cruising sector, which will see multiplier efforts," he said after a working visit to the SPCT here this afternoon.

Earlier, he was briefed on the port's development by Penang Port Commission (PPC) chairman Jeffrey Chew and PPSB chief executive officer Sasedharan Vasudevan.

Last year, Malaysia was in third place in Asia after Japan and mainland China in terms of cruise deployment and capacity.

The entire four-phase development, at a 2.83ha site, is expected to be completed by 2025.

Meanwhile, Lim said as part of the development, there would be two duty-free shops within the SPCT, with one already in operation selling chocolates and perfume.

He said this was in line with the announcement made during the tabling of the 2019 Budget.

"For now, PPSB is in the process of applying for the necessary licence from the Customs Department to enable more duty-free items to be sold.

"We are looking at turning the whole area into a free commercial zone in future," he said



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