



Part of the old fleet of ferries that ply between the island and mainland Penang. (Left pic) An aerial view of the Pengkalan Sultan Abdul Halim ferry terminal next to the Penang Sentral transportation hub in Butterworth. — Filepic

# Eager to have ferry service upgraded

CM: State hoping new vessels would have provision for both vehicles and pedestrians

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PENANG is waiting for feedback from the Transport Ministry on the exact time of the ferry terminal upgrade and the new type of ferries to be introduced.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said while the terminal was not closed for now, it would be upgraded to accommodate the new ferries, of which their type is yet to

be determined. "The Federal Government had approved RM30mil to buy new ferries last December, which will be used by Penang Port Sdn Bhd to acquire the ferries," he said at a press conference in Komtar on Wednesday.

Chow was commenting on his meeting with Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong last week amid reports that the ferry terminal would be closed for three months for upgrading works.

He said it was still being studied if the new ferries would be similar to the current vehicle and pedestrian type mix or a pedestrian-only catamaran.

"An ideal one would be the current type of ferry, which carries cars, bikes and pedestrians that we think should be maintained."

A single ferry, which was plying between the island and mainland, broke down last week due to technical problems, with many

going to work caught off-guard. Rapid Ferry had to provide free shuttle service from Weld Quay on the island to Penang Sentral on the mainland and back after the ferry was down for a day.

Dr Wee announced last week that Penang would receive a new fleet of ferries to replace the old ones, some which were more than 40 years old and too costly to maintain.

PPSB officially took over the ferry service from Prasarana Malaysia Bhd on Aug 31.