

# A tough job scrapping sunken ferry

## Work on 'Pulau Kapas' still going on after two months

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**BUTTERWORTH:** Pedestrians and motorcyclists commuting by ferry between the island and the mainland have been getting a first-hand look at how difficult it is to salvage *Pulau Kapas*, the sunken ferry for scrap.

After two months, the arduous task is still ongoing, and it comes at a hefty cost.

The salvager, FIC Metal Industries Sdn Bhd, hired six specialised divers who were paid RM1,000 a day.

The rest of the cost added up to about RM20,000 for every working day.

The company's director Vincent David said the work now entailed cutting up the ferry's two decks

and then using air balloons to float the hull for salvaging.

He said he expected this to be completed within 10 days, barring bad weather.

"It is still a question mark whether the ferry can be lifted as we will have to continue using divers to cut beneath the waters if the effort is unsuccessful," he added.

The company was appointed in August to salvage *Pulau Kapas* and *Pulau Undan* at the Butterworth Wharf.

*Pulau Kapas* sank in July.

"We managed to dispose of *Pulau Undan* within 28 days as it was still floating.

"Although *Pulau Kapas* is now stuck deeply into the muddy seabed, we are confident of completing the operation within the dead-



**Arduous work:** A diver preparing to go underwater to cut up 'Pulau Kapas' at the Butterworth wharf.  
— CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

line," added Vincent.

Every time the divers cut out about 50 tonnes of metal and wood, the barges of scrap dealers would moor at the wharf to collect them.

It is estimated that more than 400 tonnes of scrap must be removed and the deadline has been extended to middle of November.

About two weeks ago, the ferry *Pulau Pinang*, which was meant to become the Penang Ferry Museum, sprang leaks after it was towed to Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal through the Bagan Dalam slipway on Oct 3.

It began keeling over at an extreme angle until workers managed to bail out water and plug the leaks.

*Pulau Pinang* was the last vehicular ferry to serve commuters, and it was repaired and refurbished at a cost RM1mil.

*Pulau Paya*, now docked at Pengkalan Raja Tun Uda, is also expected to be scrapped, leaving *Pulau Angsa* to be potentially used for tourism purposes while *Pulau Talang-Talang* is sitting at a dry dock in Lumut.