



Photo: CHAN BOON KAI/The Star

## Sea-rious problem

The previously tilting Ferry Museum has now sunk to deeper depths, just months away from its grand opening at the end of the year. The Penang Port Commission has assured the public that there is no oil spill, but has yet to say if the vessel is salvageable. > See report on page 3

## A sinking feeling about Penang's ferry museum

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**GEORGE TOWN:** There is a sinking feeling about the Penang Ferry Museum: the *Pulau Pinang* ferry is becoming further submerged off the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal (SPCT) here as water further inundates the vessel, day by day.

Concerns are now mounting over whether its restoration will be completed before the planned year-end opening.

The ferry has tilted significantly and appears lopsided compared to images from last week. It also seems to be sinking deeper into the water, raising fears of an oil spill.

Last week, Penang Port Commission (PPC) chairman Datuk Yeoh Soon Hin had given his assurance that there would be no oil spills despite the ferry taking in water in its bilges.

The ferry was towed to a shallow area near the SPCT to undergo repairs.

However, the action did not seem to have helped.

Neither the PPC nor Printhero Sdn Bhd, the private company operating the ferry, could be reached for comment as at press time.

Built in 2002, *Pulau Pinang* was retired in 2019. Weighing 440 tonnes, it was the last Penang vehicular ferry to be commissioned.

Last Thursday, it was towed across the Penang Strait from the Bagan Dalam slipway on the mainland to Swettenham Pier by the island.

To be named "Penang Ferry Museum", it was reported that the ferry had undergone more than 70% in repair works and 90% in refurbishment.

Several museum exhibits were already spotted on board the ferry, including vintage cars.

In June 2021, *Pulau Pinang* was partially sunk when it was berthed in the Bagan Dalam slipway along Perai River. But a repair crew sealed the leak and floated the ferry again.

Penang's old ferries, some commissioned in the 1970s, were

retired by the end of 2020 and subsequently replaced with speed boats.

*Pulau Kapas* sank almost completely while docked at Butterworth Wharf in July and is in the process of being salvaged for scrap along with *Pulau Undan*.

*Pulau Paya* is now docked at Pengkalan Raja Tun Uda and is expected to be turned into a restaurant. *Pulau Angsa* is set to be used for tourism purposes while *Pulau Talang Talang* is at a dry dock in Lumut.

Penang's ferry service today is equipped with a fleet of four modern ferries brought in at a cost of RM100mil and have been plying the channel since August last year.