

# Penang solar farm plan being floated

## Port operator mulls green energy at sea to attract cruise ships

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**GEORGE TOWN:** A floating solar farm – one large enough to power 6,000 homes – is being considered for Penang's harbour.

Its primary purpose is to supply cruise ships with renewable energy, making Penang Port appealing for international cruise lines eager to use sustainably produced electricity.

*The Star* has learnt that this entails creating a solar farm that floats on a sheltered quarter of Penang's harbour stretching over 4ha, the size of three World Cup football fields.

On a sunny day, it is expected to churn out 30 megawatts of electricity, which theoretically will be enough for 6,000 homes.

Tentatively, the potential site is between North Butterworth Container Terminal and Dermaga Dalam off mainland Penang.

This effort to produce electricity at sea is because come 2030, cruise ships may not call on ports without renewable energy (RE).

"The year 2030 is not a deadline but a goal proposed for the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) to seriously look into RE, or cruise ships may not call on our ports unless certain measures are in place to reduce pollution,"



**Offshore power:** An artist's impression of the proposed solar energy farm in Penang's harbour. – LIM BENG TATT/The Star

said Penang Port Sdn Bhd (PPSB) chief executive officer Datuk Sasedharan Vasudevan.

Planning ahead, Sasedharan said preliminary feasibility studies are being conducted on using solar photovoltaic offshore floating farm system, which is a large-scale installation of solar panels.

"They float on water, such as oceans, lakes or reservoirs and the system harnesses the power of the sun to generate electricity.

"This system proposes to fur-

ther increase the use of solar electricity in the PPSB terminal," he said.

Sasedharan said the project focused on generating solar energy for consumption of the North Butterworth Container Terminal (NBCT) as there is no land or rooftop space at the container yard.

"Since we have proposed shore power at the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal, the RE can be used to power the terminal and cruise ships," he said.

*The Star* reported in February

that RM50mil will be spent on this project.

"There are areas in Penang's harbour calm enough for floating solar farm, but we need to ensure it is feasible.

"It makes sense to use RE for shore power rather than relying on the national power grid.

"The latest cruise lines are all pursuing RE as a major step in reducing pollution because a big cruise ship produces carbon equivalent to 20,000 cars," added Sasedharan.