

Economic boost for Johor

Ong: New ferry route will attract more tourists



Serious matter: Ong (left) and Marine Department director-general Datuk Kapt Ahmad Othman talking about the Tanjung Pengelih terminal in Johor Baru yesterday.

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PENGERANG: The opening of a new route from Tanjung Pengelih to Tanah Merah in Singapore will spur the economy in the state especially in the tourism sector.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Ong Tee Keat said the new ferry route, which started yesterday, would ensure more tourist traffic for the state.

"This new service will add to the existing bum-boats that carry passengers from Tanjung Pengelih to the Changi Ferry Terminal in Singapore and to Batam and Tanjung Pinang in Indonesia as well.

"It will also spur the state's economy based on the number of people utilising the jetty," he told reporters after launching the Tanjung Pengelih Jetty Complex and Public Marina yesterday.

When asked whether the opening of the new route would affect the ferry businesses in the nearby Tanjung Belungkor jetty, Ong said the additional route would actually bring in

more economic activities.

"During this challenging era, besides facing the economic challenges, we have to learn to use our facilities to maximum capacity.

"The Tanjung Pengelih jetty should not only be used by bum-boats," he said, adding that the new route would also boost existing tourism attractions such as homestay programmes.

He also announced that the Stulang Ferry Terminal in Johor Baru would also provide ferry services to Tanah Merah.

Ong explained that there was an increase in the number of passengers using the Tanjung Pengelih terminal to travel to and from the Changi Ferry Terminal.

"The number of passengers increased from 47,778 in 2007 to 48,689 in 2008," he said.

Ong was also the first passenger to use the ferry service from Tanah Merah Terminal to Tanjung Pengelih yesterday.

He added that the Tanjung Pengelih terminal that was completed last year cost RM39mil and was equipped with Customs, Immigration and Quarantine (CIQ) services.