

Melaka International Cruise Terminal project to be completed next year

MELAKA, June 11 — The RM682 million Melaka International Cruise Terminal, which is part of the Melaka Gateway project, is expected to be completed by September next year.

Datuk Michelle Ong, chief executive officer of the deep-sea port project's developer KAJ Development Sdn Bhd, said piling works started yesterday and this was critical because three test piles — measuring 53m, 45m and 43m in length — would identify the design of the entire terminal.

"The piling project is expected to take three days. Once piling works are completed, the design of the terminal will be completed and the project can take off. The sea depth is 13 to 15m, which forms a natural harbour, and therefore no further dredging is required," she said in a statement.

Last year, KAJ Development's port operating licence for the Melaka Gateway and cruise terminal jetty was cancelled, but the company appealed against the government's decision.

Ong said the company regained its operating licence last month, getting the support of the central government and the state government.

"The terminal project will accelerate from now," she said, adding that the international cruise terminal would be completed in September 2020 or earlier.

The piling project for the Melaka International Cruise Terminal was officially launched yesterday by Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry secretary-general Datuk Isham Ishak. Ong said KAJ Development expected tourists arriving at the state by cruise ships to spend a minimum of US\$200 (RM835) each, which would enhance the state's revenue and even that of the country.

"We have also requested the state government to set up an agency to register local vendors who are keen in bunkering facilities at the port," she said.

According to her, the company aims to become the leader in the domestic maritime industry and plans to open a maritime university for the benefit of local students.

She said on its completion, the Melaka Gateway project would create 45,000 to 60,000 jobs. — Bernama