

MICE centre on the cards

World-class facility under Penang Times Square project to be ready in 2015

PENANG will have its own world-class meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition (MICE) centre when the RM1.1bil Penang Times Square development is fully completed by 2015.

Work on the proposed MICE centre, which can be expanded to 150,000sqft from its originally planned 80,000sqft, will start in 2012, Ivory Properties Group executive director Datuk Seri Nazir Ariff (pic) said.

He told this at a press conference to announce the official opening of Phase 1 of the four-phased Penang Times Square by Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng on Feb 6.



"Penang is yet to have a MICE centre which offers the complete package. The proposed centre in Penang Times Square will provide not just facilities for meeting, incentive, conference and exhibition, but also shopping and accommodation," he said.

Phase 1 of Penang Times Square, named Birch The Plaza, was completed in 2008. The certificate of fitness was obtained early last year. It comprises 395 condominium units, 22 penthouse units and 211 retail lots.

The shopping mall is already 65% occupied with Sunshine City lifestyle concept store and supermarket as the anchor tenant.



A new happening place: The Penang Times Square is set to feature a world-class MICE centre in 2015.

Nazir said the proposed MICE centre would be linked to a proposed four or five-star boutique hotel which would be constructed at about the same time.

"We are currently talking to several interested parties and we are looking for an investor to buy up the hotel or to engage a long term hotel operator to run it," he said.

Nazir said the Penang Times Square would help the state government revive the George Town inner city and make it more vibrant place for city dwellers and tourists.

He said an open public square adjacent to Phase 1 would be named Chin Ho Plaza after the late Lee Chin Ho, a successful tycoon who established tin smelting at this site in 1898.

Apart from the anchor tenant, he said, the shopping mall would have a Maybank branch office, Swensens and Marrybrown among others.

"We have a variety of products from apparel and electrical appliances to household items and our target market are people with young families, tourists and also

local people in the surrounding area," he said.

Phase 2 is the Birch Regency which is still under construction and expected to be completed by end of this year. There will be 341 condominium units and 18 penthouses with 159 retail lots.

Phase 3 will be the luxury condominium with a four-storey shopping mall offering mix dining, retail and service establishments.

The MICE centre will be built under this phase together with a cineplex. The phase, which will only begin construction by 2012, is

expected to be completed within three years.

The buildings of the three phases will be interlinked with one another by covered bridges and extra wide corridors and beautifully landscaped walkways with sophisticated water features. The entire site will be under 24-hour security surveillance.

Phase 4 will be a 352-room exclusive boutique hotel with resort and spa facilities to be built on a 0.97ha of land. Construction work will start in 2012 and is expected to complete in 2015.