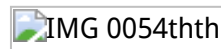


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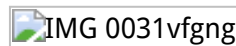
SUNGAI BATU ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE: SOUTH-EAST ASIA'S OLDEST CIVILISATION TO BE A TOURISM PRODUCT OF KEDAH



SUNGAI PETANI, November 2015 – The Director of Centre for Global Archaeological Research (CGAR), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), Professor Dato' Dr. Mokhtar Saidin said, the Kedah state government should introduce Sungai Batu and Sungai Merbok as the main attractions of the state of Kedah in the main agenda for promoting Visit Kedah Year 2016. Furthermore, the latest verified data on Sungai Batu has confirmed that this location is the oldest civilisation site of South-East Asia.

"Only two months earlier, we have confirmed the date of the site which is sixth century BC and this has indicated that Sungai Batu is the site of the oldest civilisation in South-East Asia and it is also the place where the civilisation had begun in this region," he explained.

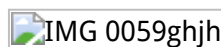
Added Mokhtar, USM is truly hoped that the Kedah state government will utilise this data to promote the site as a tourist attraction to benefit all people.



The Chief Executive Officer of Kedah Tourism, Dato' Zulkifli Mohamad said, the cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism Malaysia and the Kedah State Government is important to promote Sungai Batu Archaeological Site as one of the tourism products of Kedah state.

"Prior to this, tourists flocked to Langkawi when they came to Kedah whereas there are many other tourism products available on Kedah mainland," he said. According to Zulkifli, the state government is actively promoting Visit Kedah Year 2016 'Discover Kedah' as well as pushing for Gunung Jerai and Sungai Batu site to be the next tourism product after Langkawi.

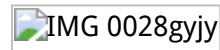
"The historical findings at Sungai Batu and Lembah Bujang as well as the extreme sports destination at Gunung Jerai are suitable to become new tourism products to attract more tourists to Kedah next year," added Zulkifli.



He explained that, this is the starting point in promoting Sungai Batu Archaeological Site which has been identified to have its own unique historical perspective as a tourism site not only to the foreign tourists, but also to the local community.

“There are people who are from this state are unaware of the existence of this historical site. I hope that by promoting this site, it would attract more locals as well as foreign tourists next year,” explained Zulkifli when met after the tour session for the media practitioners and foreign tour agencies here.

This programme was held under the Mega Familiarisation Programme organised by Tourism Malaysia, attended by participants from Australia, China, Korea, India, Indonesia and the United States of America to promote tourism packages offered in Malaysia.



The three-day visit took them to various tourist attractions in Kedah such as the Paddy/Rice Museum (Muzium Padi), Gunung Jerai and Langkawi as well as introducing them to the culture of the Indian community in conjunction with the national-level Deepavali Open House Celebrations 2015 at Padang Awam in Kulim, Kedah.

For the Editor of Medan Bisnis newspaper, Indonesia, Rizanul said, his trip here was different this time around as he was taken to the historic sites which have provided him with new information regarding the history of civilisation in South-East Asia.

“The Sungai Batu Archaeological Site can become a historical tourism attraction to foreign tourists. Furthermore, the government can upgrade the area to become more accommodating as a tourism site by providing the basic infrastructures to cater to the needs of the tourists,” he said further.

Meanwhile, for the tour agent from Beijing China, Su Lin said, this historical site would be one of the attractions for her tour agency to bring in tourists to this country in the future.

“For the past seven years I have been focusing on the marine tourism sites in Malaysia, such as Langkawi for tourists from Beijing, but now this historical site will be one of the new locations for the tourists to visit next time,” she explained.

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Translation: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin



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