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USM TO PROPOSE DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR KEDAH ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

SUNGAI BATU, KEDAH, 17 May 2017 – Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), through the Centre for Global Archaeological Research (CGAR), will be forwarding a proposal on the development plan of the Kedah archaeological site in Sungai Batu, near Sungai Petani.



The proposal is part of a plan laid out by the Bujang Valley Foundation, representing the Kedah State Government, to turn the site into a major tourist attraction.

This was mentioned by the Director of CGAR, Professor Dato' Dr. Mokhtar Saidin in conjunction with the visit by HRH the Raja Muda Kedah to the site earlier.

"Being an older civilisation than Borobudur in Indonesia and Angkor Wat in Cambodia, Sungai Batu has the potential to complete the Golden Triangle of archaeotourism in South-East Asia. It is the earliest and oldest civilisation in South-East Asia, dating back as far as 535 B.C.," said Mokhtar.



The USM Vice-Chancellor, Professor Datuk Dr. Asma Ismail, said, "USM is proposing a new model of governance, conservation and preservation of this ancient site towards ensuring its sustainability. We are looking at a very old civilization, older than Borobudur and Angkor Wat. We will be working closely with Bujang Valley Foundation in making it the pride of Kedah and the country."

During the visit which lasted almost 3 hours, the Raja Muda of Kedah, Tan Sri Tunku Sallehuddin Ibni Almarhum Sultan Badlishah was given a briefing and taken for a tour of the site by Mokhtar, accompanied by the USM Vice-Chancellor; Kedah State Tourism, Religion and Heritage Committee chairman Datuk Mohd Rawi Abd Hamid; representatives from the Bujang Valley Foundation; and other related parties.



USM will play a prominent role in realising this initiative. Among others, USM will be lending its expertise in areas relating to:

1. conducting research and consultancy on the 1000 km square site,
2. establishing an archaeotourism attraction,
3. setting up of a living culture gallery, and
4. ensuring that it achieves the standards as a World Icon Tourism product.



Other initiatives include the supporting packages, promotion, infrastructure and products made by the local communities.

The Sungai Batu archaeology site is located close to the Merbok mangroves and Gunung Jerai or Kedah Peak, both being well-known natural attractions to locals and foreigners alike.

Text: Mazlan Hanafi Basharudin & Tan Ewe Hoe/Photo: Muhammad Firdaus Khiruddin



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