

Malaysia

## Mukhriz: Lembah Bujang proposal to be sent to Unesco by end 2014

DECEMBER 11, 2013



A candi located within private land at Sungai Batu that was left untouched and preserved by its landowner.

ALOR SETAR, Dec 11 — The Kedah government proposal to Unesco that Sungai Batu and Bujang Valley in Merbok be declared a world heritage site would be sent by end 2014.

Menteri Besar Datuk Mukhriz Mahathir said the proposal should be accompanied by archaeological studies and not mere assumptions.

Research to identify which civilisation Sungai Batu and Bujang Valley belonged to was being done by a team from Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM).

"Identification can only be done with academic studies including "carbon dating" to provide correct readings of the sites.

"This needs to be done before we give the dossier to Unesco," he told reporters after chairing the State Exco meeting, here today.

He said the state government would ensure that archaeological sites were not destroyed adding USM would help exploit the heritage site for development.

"I want to propose to the Ministry of Tourism and Culture that Sungai Batu and Bujang Valley be preserved and developed as world heritage site. This initiative is very important not only for Kedah and Malaysia but also for the world.

"We are amazed by what archaeologists found in Sungai Batu and Bujang Valley. It proves that the historical remnants are older than Angkor Wat or Borobudur.

"They are believed to date back to the 5th Century B.C. This proves that a Malay civilisation existed long before the arrival of any religion."

Mukhriz said USM has been asked to study the matter including the cost so that the state government could apply for allocation from the federal government. — Bernama

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