

KERATAN AKHBAR



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Repair work in progress

Perak govt aware of Lenggong Valley's heritage importance

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LENGGONG: The Perak government has acknowledged the deplorable conditions at the Lenggong Valley archaeological site in Hulu Perak, saying that work to repair the area is in progress.

Since Lenggong Valley was accorded Unesco heritage status in 2012, it was parked under the care and management of the National Heritage Department (NHD).

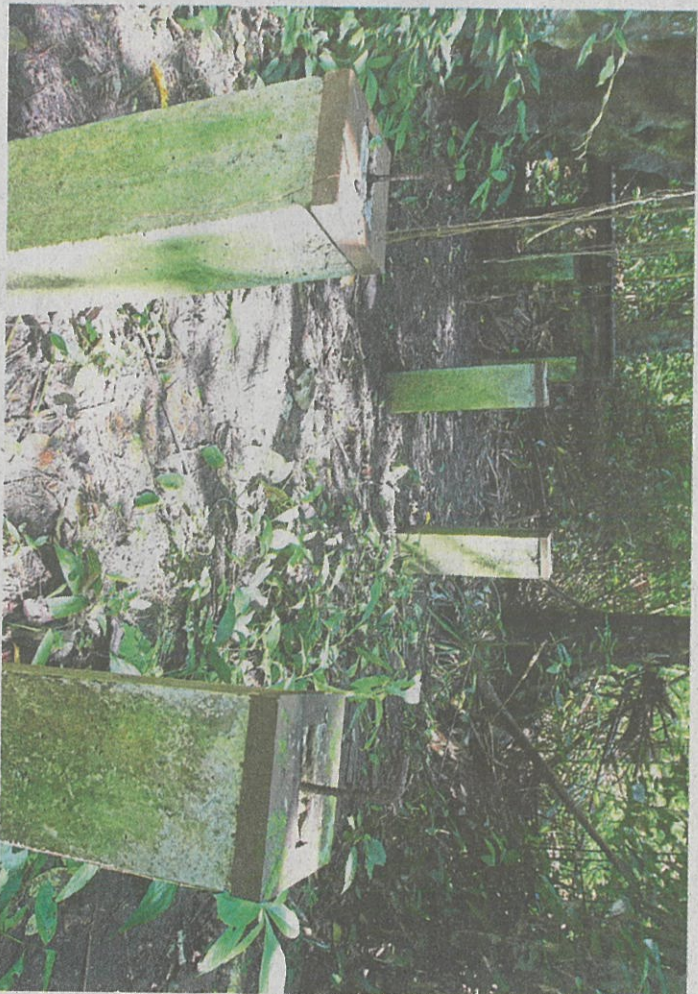
Perak tourism committee chairman Tan Kar Hing explained that after the Pakatan Harapan government took over Perak last year, the state, on the suggestion of NHD, decided to take over the management of the World Heritage Office and Lenggong Valley's Unesco site, but that this would only happen in 2021.

At the same time, the state has been in discussion with NHD to ensure that the transition process moves smoothly as per the Conservation Management Plan and Special Area Plan for the archaeological site of Lenggong. Tan said the state Budget 2020 had allocated RM5m to facilitate the takeover.

In fact, Tan said that under Budget 2020, a special allocation was given for Lenggong as they were aware of the importance of the heritage site.

"So the allegations that the state government failed to promote Lenggong Valley are unfounded," he added.

The Star reported on Saturday that the archaeological sites of Lenggong Valley could be in danger of losing the Unesco World Heritage



Wear and tear:
Parts of the wooden boardwalk that connects Lenggong Valley's attractions have already come apart, leaving only the concrete supports.

status as they were not properly maintained.

Tourism Perak has been promoting Lenggong as one of the top 10 sights in the state.

Since 2017, Tourism Perak has been working with the NHD to organise the Lenggong carnival with the community's participation, as well as creating awareness to preserve the area's historical site.

But the Lenggong Archaeological Gallery was closed from 2016 to 2018 to make way for upgrading work and this was a dampener on the state's Visit Perak Year campaign in 2017.

"And it has come to our attention now that the gallery will be closed

again in March next year until October and that will severely impact Visit Malaysia Year 2020," Tan said.

"To be fair to us, the state and the Lenggong district council have carried out several upgrading works for the Lenggong site."

To uplift the Lenggong gallery, he said the district council, with an allocation of RM500,000 from the National Landscape Department, had upgraded the main entrance in 2016.

The council also, from time to time, made sure that all the facilities such as toilets, food premises and walk paths are in good condition. A total of RM50,000 was spent to

upgrade the Lenggong bus station toilets and another RM1350,000 was spent to upgrade the station's roofs.

On top of that, the state also sought funds amounting to RM250,000 from the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry to put up signposts all over Lenggong Valley next year.

"We are aware of the weaknesses in the current management of the heritage site and we hope that once the site is surrendered to the Perak government in 2021 things will improve for the better," he added.

"And we hope the ministry and NHD will continue to work together even after 2021, for the best of Lenggong."