Lost city believed found in Johor

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PETALING JAYA: A 1,000-year-old lost city, possibly older than Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur in Indonesia, is believed to have been located in the dense jungles of Johor.

The discovery of what is thought to be the site of Kota Gelanggi or Perbendaharaan Permata (Treasury of Jewels) by an independent Malaysian researcher has prompted museum officials to plan an expedition to confirm the finding.

If indeed the site is that of the lost city, it is set to transform the historical landscape of the region, said Raimy Che-Ross, who spent 12 years researching Malay manuscripts all over the world and conducting aerial searches of the area before locating the site.

He said the discovery of “unusual formations” from the air had led him to believe that the site could be the first capital of the Sri Vijaya Malay empire dating back to 650AD.

“If the city is what we suspect it to be, then the Malacca Sultanate can no longer be considered as the start of modern Malay history.

“Once verified, the honour will go to Johor, as one thousand years ago Malacca had not even been established,” he said.

Raimy had tried to enter the site in early 2003 but failed, managing to get only as far as
to the formations which are believed to be trenches and embankments of the outer city.

Department of Museum and Antiquities director-general Datuk Adi Taha said an archaeological expedition would be mounted this year to verify the location of the lost city, with Raimy’s assistance.

Funds for the expedition would be sought under the 9th Malaysia Plan.

Adi said he and the department were very enthusiastic about Raimy’s research findings and would work with him to verify the location of the lost city, which could be spread out over a few hundred square kilometres.

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