Museum hopes Johor will assist in lost city quest

KUALA LUMPUR: Museum officials are hoping that the Johor government will assist in efforts to verify the location of Kota Gelanggi.

Department of Museums and Antiquities director-general Datuk Dr Adi Taha said Johor would also be asked to preserve the area for research.

He said the National Museum would work with Raimy Che-Ross, an independent Malaysian researcher, to mobilise an expedition to verify the site of Kota Gelanggi.

According to Raimy, he was told that the museum had earlier sent teams to locate the site but had failed each time.

The most recent attempt saw their boat capsizing thrice, leading the team to abandon the mission.

Adi said his department would also work with the State Heritage Foundation on this, as it would have knowledge of the area, he said.

He said the search for Kota Gelanggi had been an ongoing endeavour for many scholars and researchers since the days of the British Empire.

“They never did find it as our history did not give any exact whereabouts of the city.

“Even Tun Seri Lanang (the Bendahara – equivalent to a modern day prime minister) did not state the location in Sejarah Melayu (Malay Annals),” he added.

He said archaeologists hoped to find evidence of physical structures and also a fairly advanced irrigation system, which used to exist in the city.

“A big city would have good infrastructure such as irrigation to sustain its inhabitants.

“We also expect and hope to find Sri Vijaya artefacts from the site similar to those found in Gua Chawas in Kelantan,” he added.
Adi said the public should not attempt to enter the site to look for artefacts and treasure as it was an offence under the Antiquities Act 1976.

“Anyone found doing so can be fined or jailed,” he said.

On the expedition, Adi said that due to the inaccessibility of the site, the team would have to plan very thoroughly before attempting to enter the dense jungles.

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