

Need to upgrade Perak's archaeological attractions

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IPOH: The recognition of Lenggong Valley as a World Heritage site is a gift to the people of Perak.

There are, however, areas which need to be looked into to ensure that it continues to retain its archaeological attractions for the research community and tourists, said state Heritage Society president Mohd Taib Mohamed.

He said the areas which needed urgent attention was connectivity, professional guides, interpretation centre, signages and local community involvement.

Taib said it was common knowledge that public transport links with the archaeological site, located 100km from here, was poor.

"The authorities must think how to get people to the area, considering the fact that Lenggong is a rural area and the heritage site is not just made up of one spot but several areas which are between several kilometres apart.

"Not only do we need punctual buses and cheaper taxis, we need to connect the surrounding towns of Kuala Kangsar, Taiping, Ipoh, Grik and even Sungai Siput to Lenggong through a reliable public transportation system."

The other pertinent issue is the need for proper signages which at the moment is lacking.

This was despite the Lenggong archaeological museum having operated in the area for some time now.

"As a tourist, you can see so many signages guiding you to the Pasir Salak Historical Complex, but when it comes to Lenggong Valley, you can count the signages with your fingers.

"The signages should be everywhere reminding people that they should not give Lenggong a miss."



The replica of the Perak Man in Lenggong, Perak. There is a lack of signages in Lenggong Valley's archaeological sites, including the site where the Perak Man, Peninsular Malaysia's oldest inhabitant, was found. Pic by L. Manimaran

He said tour guides authorised by the Tourism Department though taught about the site's archaeological importance, their knowledge however needed to be further strengthened in view of Lenggong Valley's status now as a World Heritage site.

"We need tour guides who know the ins and outs of the valley and can generate interest among tourists to explore the valley more.

"At the same time, I believe the tourism department can add value to

Lenggong if it comes up with an archaeology package, which includes Kedah's Bujang Valley and Perak's Gangga Negara in Beruas."

Taib also said there was a need to set up an interpretation centre which would double up as information centre, to disseminate knowledge of natural and cultural heritage of the site.

He said there is also need for locals to be involved and benefit from the site being listed as a World Heritage site.