

8,000-year-old girl found

Skeleton from Mesolithic period discovered in Kelantan cave

KUALA LUMPUR: Researchers stumbled upon a discovery of historic value – the skeleton of a teenage girl believed to be from the Mesolithic period – while excavating Gua Chawan in Kelantan.

The team from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, along with officers from the archaeology department at the National Heritage Department, estimated the remains to be around 6,000 to 8,000 years old.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Mohamadn Ketapi said the discovery was crucial in helping to understand ancient funerary rites and culture of prehistoric society, as well as the presence of early man in Malaysia.

"We believe this skeleton to be a teenage girl based on the pelvic bone.

"She was found buried with the feet and skull covered in limestone. She was also holding a food item resembling shellfish and a tool believed to be for cutting grass in her right hand," Mohamadn said, adding that other items such as stone grinders were placed at her feet. These are believed to have accompanied her to the afterlife.

Mohamadn said the skeleton, which was found on Nov 2 in the Nenggiri Valley in Ulu Kelantan, was removed from Gua Chawan on Nov 10, and placed at a laboratory.

The Heritage Department will take 60 days to conduct conservation works at the site for record and restoration purposes.

Teeth and shell samples will be sent to the Beta Lab in the United States for chronometric dating.

"The Heritage Department will be collecting all the artefacts for historical reference and the public will be



Historical value: Department of National Heritage senior museum assistant Khairil Amri Abd Ghani examining the skeleton found in Gua Chawan, Kelantan. — Bernama

able to view them as soon as conservation works have been completed," Mohamadn said.

Separately, Mohamadn said the ministry would consider making minor changes to the Visit Malaysia 2020 logo.

"If we were to change it, we would have to relaunch it and that would incur cost.

"The question now is, is it worth it? If it doesn't cost a lot to do so, then we will do it. We'll think about it," he said.

The Visit Malaysia 2020 logo was launched by former Tourism, Arts, and Culture minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz in Chiang Mai, Thailand, in January.

It received negative feedback from netizens.