

Museum defends upgrade

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By REENA RAJ

MUZIAM Negara defended its decision to renovate and upgrade its premises during Visit Malaysia Year.

Describing the move as "necessary", Museums Department deputy director Paiman Keromo said the plans were in the works since 2005.

He told a Press conference yesterday that renovation and upgrading works began last year after the museum was allocated RM20 million under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

"Since the museum opened its doors on Aug 31, 1963, there has not been any upgrading works or extensive renovations done to the premises," he said.

This, he said, had led to criticism by culture and heritage scholars, who described Muzium Negara as a "third class" museum with outdated methods of presentation.

"We realise that the way we present information and artifacts needs to change to suit today's generation," he said.

The department's response came about following a special report by TV3's *Buletin Utama*, aired on Monday, which criticised the timing of the upgrade.



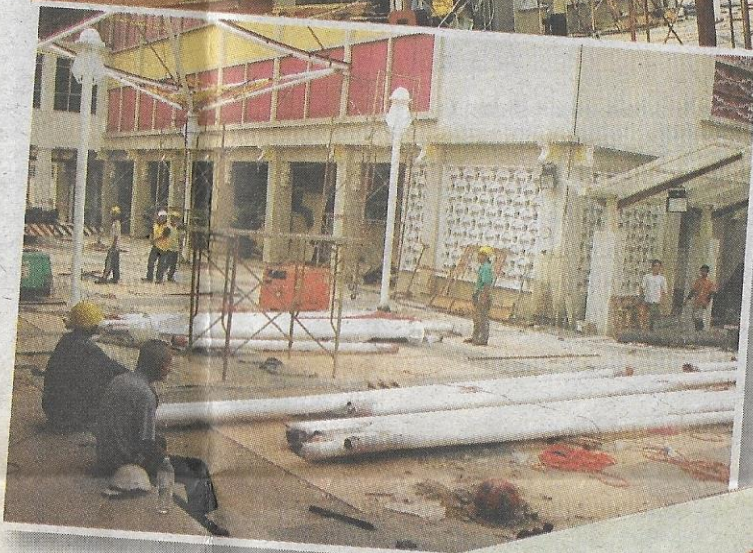
PAIMAN: Temporary exhibitions are being held

temporarily relocated.

Paiman conceded that Muzium Negara had seen a drop in visitors. It only receives about 500,000 visitors yearly compared to an average of three million visitors in the past.

"Museums have to do something to attract more visitors, and I'm sure the upgrade is the answer."

He expressed concern over the inconvenience the renovation works posed to visitors, but said it was unavoidable.



ON SCHEDULE:
Renovations outside
the museum will be
completed before Aug 18



WORK IN PROGRESS

The report claimed that the move was not timely, due to the expected stream of visitors during Visit Malaysia Year and the Merdeka celebrations.

Muzium Negara, the report added, was not cited as a favourite tourist spot due to the closure of two of its galleries.

Paiman clarified that the closure of the galleries was done in stages and did not affect the presentation of artifacts.

He also gave an assurance that the two galleries, which display information and artifacts on the Malacca Malay Sultanate, would open on schedule on Aug 18.

Those who wish to view the displays in the two galleries can do so at the Museum of National History at Dataran Merdeka, where they have been

"I assure you that the renovations outside the museum will be completed before Aug 18. The new-look Muzium Negara will be completed by January next year," Paiman said.

Paiman said, to make up for the inconvenience, temporary exhibitions, such as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong exhibition, have been set up to attract the public.

Since the beginning of the year, Muzium Negara has received more than 300,000 visitors, averaging about 350 to 500 visitors daily.

It receives about 1,000 visitors on weekends.

UPGRADE: The new look will help attract more visitors



Best of 50 on show

MALAYSIA's achievements will be showcased at Muzium Negara from Aug 18 to the end of October.

The *Glory of Malaysia* exhibition aims to provide a detailed insight on Malaysia's achievements over the last 50 years to the public, said Malaysian Museums Department deputy director Paiman Keromo.

The exhibition promises to be the largest temporary exhibition ever held at Muzium Negara. It will also feature state-of-the-art animation and video displays to attract younger visitors.

"All the ministries are contributing

their materials for the exhibition," he said.

The exhibition is expected to draw around one million visitors.

Paiman, however, said the department might consider extending the exhibition if response is encouraging.

"We had initially planned to hold it until Oct 20 but we may extend it to Oct 31 as it is the school holidays," he said.

The exhibition will be open to the public from 9am to 5pm daily. Entrance is free.