

Game for congkak?

By Jason Gerald John
jasong@nst.com.my

MALACCA: Would you part with RM1,500 for a set of congkak, a traditional game believed to have originated from the state during the Malay Sultanate?

Coated with intricate lines of gold and silver, the unique congkak set at the state handicraft centre in Alor Gajah is indeed worth every single sen.

The set consists of a congkak board with 100 pewter-coated marbles.

According to the centre's employee Khairal Masita Ibrahim, the congkak board is made of 100 per cent *jelutong* wood and has the traditional Malay artwork.

"This congkak set will be unveiled to the public on the National Handicraft Day at the National Handicraft Centre in Kuala Lumpur on Thursday."

The congkak board is manufactured by Zul Kraf Sdn



State handicraft centre employee Khairal Masita Ibrahim (centre) showing Nurul Haziqah Hairul, 10, (right) and her sister, Nurul Haiza, 9, how to play congkak.

Bhd, while the intricate pewter design is by Legend Crafts Sdn Bhd.

Since the set was put on display at the handicraft centre earlier this month, it has attracted numerous buyers and is also a hit among children.

"We allow visitors to try their hand at the game, especially children," said Khairal Masita.

Congkak is believed have to originated from the word *congkak*, which in old Malay means to count.

As the congkak board is shaped like a boat, it is believed to be based on the legend of a fisherman. Unable to go to the sea in rainy seasons, he created the game to pass time.

The congkak board has 14

holes in two sets of seven, with an additional hole for each player to place their winnings.

Each player controls the seven holes on their side of the board, and his score is the number of seeds at the end of the game.

The aim of the game is to capture more seeds than the opponent.