

# Taking note of Kampung Hakka's rich heritage

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## Exhibition on century-old settlement aims to preserve its history

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MORE effort is needed to document the culture and traditions of the races in Malaysia for the benefit of future generations.

Deputy Education Minister Datuk Chong Sin Woon said this in commending Universiti Malaya (UM) for its role in preserving the history and rich heritage of the century-old Kampung Hakka in Mantin near Seremban.

"The demolition of old and historical settlements in the country in the name of development is a wake-up call to all of us.

"The development of such settlements must be balanced so that the culture and traditions of the people can be preserved.

"It is important that we preserve them because future generations need to know that this country was built by all races," said Chong after launching an exhibition on "Kampung Hakka Mantin – A Disappearing Heritage" at the Moi Kong Ng Shook Association hall in Seremban.

Kampung Hakka was a settlement of working class migrants from China who traced their roots to Huizhou in Guangdong.

About 300 families once occu-



Yap Kok Ann, 70, a former resident of Mantin's Kampung Hakka, playing the violin as Chong looks on at the opening of the 'Kampung Hakka Mantin – A Disappearing Heritage' exhibition at the Moi Kong Ng Shook Association Hall in Seremban. — UU BAN/The Star

pied the 13ha village which is considered to be among the older Hakka settlements in the country.

Today, only 32 families still live there as the village has been partly developed after it was sold.

The event was co-organised by UM's Malaysian Chinese Research Centre, UMCares, Rakan Mantin and seven Hakka associations in Negri Sembilan.

UMCares is an institution within

UM that funds efforts to connect the university with the community while Rakan Mantin was set up to promote and protect Malaysia's historical and cultural landscape.

Also present were project head and UM Institute of China Studies director Prof Danny Wong Tze Ken and state Hakka Association president Datuk Seri Wong Sin Fatt.

Chong, who is also MCA Youth

chief, suggested it was time the authorities compel developers to preserve a section of such settlements for posterity.

"I do not see why that cannot be done," he said in expressing hope more institutions of higher education, research bodies as well as non-governmental organisations would emulate UM and make an effort to preserve the country's vanishing heritage.