

29 JUN 2002
Museum-Ships
SEARCH FOR SOME 60 SUNKEN GALLEONS

MELAKA, June 29 (Bernama) -- The Museum and Antiquity Department is searching for some 60 ancient merchant ships which sank off the country's coast, said its Director-General Datuk Dr Adi Taha.

He said the effort, to facilitate research and treasure retrieving, was being held with the cooperation of several international maritime agencies.

However the identity of the ships and where they were believed to have sunken could not be revealed due to several reasons including that of security, he said.

"We (department) have set up a maritime archeology unit two years ago with six members conducting research on artifacts retrieved from sunken vessels," he said after opening an exhibition on sunken treasures here last night.

The two-day event, jointly held by the Renaissance Hotel and Nanhai Marine Archeology, displays artifacts retrieved from the sunken Thai galleon "Royal Nanhai".

Among the artifacts were ceramic and porcelain wares, believed to have been made in China over 650 years ago.

Adi said the department's maritime archeology unit was not being able to conduct research at the seabed as it was fully equipped for the task.

"However its staff took part in expeditions held by foreign firms looking for treasures from the sunken wrecks".

He said the department had so far collected 60,000 artifacts, most of it spoons found in ships which sank in the South China Sea off Rompin, Pahang.

Adi also said two more museums would be set up in Putrajaya, one on a Malay ethnology and the other, on the environment.

A national automobile museum, the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, would be set up near the Sepang F1 Circuit, he said.

-- BERNAMA
NO ZUL