

# Rais downplays UN heritage bids

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**MALACCA:** Getting Penang and Malacca listed as World Heritage Sites may not be so important after all, Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said.

He said the current conditions set by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) for listing were also difficult for Asian countries.

He said he would propose to the United Nations to establish an Asia Chapter for Unesco listing comprising Asian members as judges.

"It would be fairer this way. The current conditions set by Unesco are difficult for Asian countries to be listed," he said, adding that European countries enjoyed a higher chance of being listed.

He was speaking to reporters after the groundbreaking ceremony for the 110m-high revolving tower which would be built near the Stadhuys heritage zone here yesterday.

Dr Rais said Penang and Malacca had made three joint applications and each time Unesco came back to ask for more data.

"We gave the additional data when asked to do so. Now, we do not have any more new data to give," he said.

Gunung Mulu National Park and Kinabalu National Park have been declared World Heritage Sites.

*Mak yong* and *orang asli* carvings have also been proclaimed "Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritages of Humanity" by Unesco.

On the construction of the revolving tower, Dr Rais said it should not be used as a reason to reject the application for listing.