

50 unique items on heritage list

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Perak Man, the national anthem, the hibiscus flower and Batu Caves are among 50 items on the National Heritage list unveiled yesterday.

Others on the list announced by Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim include the Mulu National Park, the *joget melayu* and the open house concept, which is unique to Malaysia.

Significantly, the announcement was made at a building included in the list — the Parliament House.

Rais also launched the Online Heritage Register System, which holds information about the items on the list.

Only 50 items out of 500 nominated were initially chosen in line with the nation's 50th year of independence. Other items will be added later to the list.

The selection was based on the importance of the items to the nation's history.

Rais said the declaration that these items were national heritage indicated a concerted move to protect and preserve the nation's treasures.

"How we protect and preserve our heritage is a reflection of how we respect and appreciate ourselves," he added.

Saying some people emphasised the preservation of buildings while others gave importance to intangible assets, he added that Malaysia gave equal emphasis to all areas.

He said the ministry was carrying out various projects to instill a love of heritage and culture among the younger generation.

He hoped there would be more activities to promote consciousness of heritage and culture in schools and universities.

Speaking at a press conference,



Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim holding up the National Heritage list. Flanking him are Datin Seri Masnah Rais (right) and National Heritage Department heritage commissioner Datuk Professor Zuraina Majid.

Rais said the relationship between Unesco and Malaysia needed to be improved. He hoped that Penang and Malacca would be placed on Unesco's heritage city list soon.

He announced that memorials and monuments would be built in honour of political leaders such as

Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Tun V. T. Sambanthan, Tun Ghafar Baba and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"The memorials will reflect the government policy of appreciating those who have contributed to politics and arts in the country," he said.

Describing heritage as the life of a nation and "an anchor to safeguard our culture and integrity," Rais said the 50th year of independence was an opportune time to begin preserving the nation's heritage in all earnestness.

Also present were the speaker of

parliament, Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, and National Heritage Department heritage commissioner Datuk Professor Zuraina Majid.

After the launch, 300 students started off on a one-day visit to heritage sites and museums here to learn about the nation's history.