

Family gives up search for chieftain's remains

NST-7/9/2006

IPOH: The descendants of Datuk Shahbandar, exiled after being implicated in the killing of the first British Resident in Perak, J.W.W. Birch, have given up the search for his grave.

"Let the Datuk Shahbandar rest in peace, wherever he is now," his great-great grandson Datuk Seri Mohd Zulkifli Mohd Kushairi said.

Zulkifli said further attempts to find the grave of his exiled great-great grandfather were fruitless.

"My family and relatives have spent a lot of time looking for my ancestor but we returned empty-handed because we could not locate his grave in Singapore," said the *Orang Besar Jajahan* (territorial chief) of Kerian yesterday.

Asked if the effort to locate his ancestor's grave ought to be continued by the National Heritage Department, Zulkifli said the matter should be laid to rest.

Zulkifli, 73, who also inherited the title of *Orang Kaya-kaya Shahbandar Paduka Indera*, is one of the eight territorial chiefs of Perak.

Zulkifli said news of the return of the remains of Tengku Menteri Ngah Ibrahim and Laksamana Mohd Amin Alang had saddened him as his



Archaeologists from the National Heritage Department and employees of Warees Investments Pte Ltd digging Ngah Ibrahim's grave at the Al-Junied Cemetery, in Jalan Kubur, Singapore, yesterday. — NST picture by Amran Hamid

great-great grandfather's grave had yet to be found.

"I am sad that my ancestor will never return to his birthplace. But wherever he is, I pray he is resting in peace. My family has given up the search for the grave."

Datuk Shahbandar, together with Sultan Abdullah, Tengku Menteri Ngah Ibrahim and Amin were implicated in Birch's murder in 1875.

They were banished to the Seychelles in 1876. Sultan Abdullah remained there for 16

years before being allowed to return to Perak.

He was buried in the royal mausoleum at Bukit Chandan, Kuala Kangsar in 1922.

Datuk Shahbandar, Ngah Ibrahim and Amin, however, were banished for life and

were first sent to Sarawak before being exiled to Singapore.

Ngah Ibrahim died in 1895 and was buried in Makam Al-Junied while Amin, who died in 1908, was buried in Jurong.

When Singapore developed

Jurong, Amin's remains were relocated to Pusara Aman.

Details about Datuk Shahbandar's death are sketchy, although historians believe that he was also buried in the Jurong Muslim cemetery. — *By Jaspal Singh*