

The National Museum of Malaysia



Brief History of Museums in Malaysia

Museums in Malaysia started in 1883 when the British government established the Perak Museum in Taiping. In 1888 the Sarawak Museum in Kuching was established by the Sarawak ruler, Sir Charles Brooke. It was then followed by the Selangor state which established its museum in 1899.

In 1910, the management of the Perak Museum and Selangor Museum were merged under the Federation of Malay State Museums Department. However, the management was separated by the British as a system towards decentralization in 1930. A part of the Selangor Museum was destroyed due to bombing by the Allied Air Force on 10 March 1945. As a result, a lot of artefacts were destroyed.

After independence in 1959, the government appointed an architect to design the National Museum on the site of the Selangor Museum. The National Museum was officiated by the Third Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Putra Al-Haj Ibni Almarhum Syed Hassan Jamalullail on the 31st of August 1963.

Muzium Negara/National Museum

Located in the heart of Kuala Lumpur and set amongst its neighbours of historical building and romantic parks, Muzium Negara's architecture is a fine blend of traditional Malay style and modern lines. The museum building, apart from being stimulative from the point of tradition also presents a panoramic view of the development of Malaysia, as depicted by the two large murals of Italian glass mosaic, which extend across the museum's façade. Muzium Negara was officially opened on 31 August 1963, is a repository of Malaysia's rich cultural and historical heritage.

Muzium Negara is a three storied structure of 109.7 meters long and 15.1 meters wide and 37.6 meters at the central point. The museum houses four exhibition galleries featuring Malaysia's history and rich cultural diversity. However planning is still underway for the galleries as the Prehistory Gallery and the Early Malay Kingdom Gallery are under renovation.

The Prehistory Gallery on the first floor showcases the formation of the Malay Archipelago to the findings of numerous important prehistoric archaeological sites in Malaysia. Among the highlight of the exhibits is a complete skeleton of the Perak Man dated 10,000-11,000 years.

The Early Malay Kingdom Gallery features the existence of the Malay States and highlights the zenith of the Malaccan Empire during the 15th century as centres of the spice trade and the proliferation of Islam. Malacca was known as the 'greatest emporium the world has ever seen' and "A Golden Cherosene", is an anthropologist's delight due to its astonishing diversity of people, cultures and images.

The fall of Malaccan Empire in 1511 to the Portuguese was the prelude to a succession of other foreign powers namely the Dutch, British and Japanese in Malaya for 446 years. In this Colonial Era Gallery, the visitor is able to observe the influences that have molded the development of our nation during the 19th century. Along side the exhibition texts are displayed weapons, ceramics, shipwreck porcelains, coins and paper currencies, medals and decorations, a model of a tin dredge and tin ingots. The masterpiece exhibited in this gallery is the Pangkor Treaty Table used by the Malay Sultan and the British to sign the Pangkor Treaty of 1874.

The Malaysia Today Gallery brings visitors to the sights and sounds of the Road Towards Independence. It begins with the nationalistic movement of the 1940s to the glorious achievements of Malaysia today. The gallery provides an insight for visitors with a knowledge and understanding of the changes and continuity of Malaysia from the 1930s to a dynamic and progressive Malaysia today.

Muzium Negara endeavours through its collections, exhibitions, research, publications, educational and public programmes, which we hope will inspire a broader understanding of our nation and her multi-racial people.

The Museum is currently undergoing a revitalization programmes for the Prehistory and Early Malay Kingdom Galleries. This project is scheduled to be completed before the end of the year. These upgraded galleries will be enhanced by the latest information technologies and innovative exhibition presentation that will make your visit to Muzium Negara a memorable one.

Address & Information for visitors

Address:

National Museum

The Department of Museums Malaysia

Jalan Damansara

50566 Kuala Lumpur

Tel: 03 22826255 / 03 22827349 / 03 22827911

Website: www.jmm.gov.my