



Wednesday September 6, 2006

Gallery had no plan for years

KUALA LUMPUR: Between 2003 and last year, the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) had no strategic plan for Galeria Perdana, which houses souvenirs and awards given to Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife during his tenure as Prime Minister.

The Auditor-General said in his 2005 report that Lada, which was in charge of organising all activities related to tourism, commercial or industrial, and research, had however prepared a list of activities for last year.

The Auditor-General said the gallery currently had over 8,000 items that were given to Dr Mahathir and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali by world leaders as well as the public.

He said the audit showed that there was no written manual for the management of the collection by the gallery officers. The manual should include procedures for the receipt, storage, preservation, restoration and security of the collection, he added.

IMPROPERLY STORED: An audit team found that some paintings were left exposed in a store and dust or mould.

The Auditor-General said the Prime Minister's Department, which had initially managed the collection, had started transporting the items to the gallery in 1995.

He said the items had been stored without being registered first or without considering factors that could damage the collection.

An inspection by the audit team showed paintings left leaning against a wall and not properly wrapped in the store, leaks in the ceiling of one of the store rooms, and some items affected by dust and mould but left untreated.

Although an inventory system had been established in 2004, he said, many of the inventory forms were incomplete.

He recommended that valuable items be insured appropriately.

On its financial needs, he said RM1.21mil had been approved for 2003-05 from the RM3.14mil requested.

Saying the management expenditure for each of the three years was less than 50% (between 19.7% and 25.7%) of the approved sum, the Auditor-General urged the gallery management and Lada to give more attention to preparing a realistic budget.

The Auditor-General's report added that the operation cost was way above the gallery's income.

He also recommended that consideration be given to Lada's long-term plan to surrender Galeria Perdana to the Museums and Antiquities Department if it could not find expert and skilled people to manage the gallery.