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'LIBRARIES VITAL TO PROTECT HERITAGE'

'AGENTS OF CHANGE'

Librarians have served as custodians of history throughout time, says Nancy Shukri



Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri mingling with participants after launching the Annual Malaysia Library Conference 2022 in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA-PIK

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LIBRARIES in Malaysia are community hubs and venues to promote local history through storytelling and keeping of records. Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said librarians played an active role in protecting the country's

heritage by directly supporting the ministry's vision, which was entitled "Malaysia — Culturally rich sustainable destination".

She said the role of librarians and librarians was still relevant, with the latter having the ability to adapt to the passage of time and technological advancements — from ancient scribes writing on leaves, to modern information technology specialists in the digital information era.

"If we look back on the history of librarianship, the Royal Library of Alexandria or the Great Library, the biggest in the world that was built around 280BC, had about 500,000 to one million scrolls before they were destroyed in stages, starting with their burning by Julius Caesar in 48BC.

"At the time, the head librarian post had existed and was held by well-known Library of Alexandria editors," she said when launching the Annual Malaysia Library Conference 2022 at Seri Pacific Hotel here.

Themed "No One Left Behind: Libraries as Agents of Change", the five-day online conference, which started on Monday, was organised by the National Librarians Association and the National Library.

She said the theme for this

year's conference was in line with the role of libraries as a one-stop centre for teaching, learning and knowledge and experience-sharing for children, housewives and the elderly.

"In line with National Library's mission to form a knowledgeable and competitive society, it will work hard to cultivate reading among the people to increase literacy rate by implementing various programmes involving stakeholders," she said.

Nancy said the National Li-

brary was the central agency in regulating libraries in the country in accordance with the National Library Act 1972 (Act 80).

So far, 35 presenters had shared their writings in four sessions and 14 panel members had held discussions on the field of librarianship during the conference.

Yesterday, a plenary session was held to discuss the roles of librarians and librarian associations with representatives from Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines.