

second biggest in this region after the National Gallery Singapore (10,000 sq metres).

Abdul Karim said yesterday the construction of the RM300 million new Sarawak Museum Campus that commenced last year, was according to schedule at 37 per cent completion.

"The completion of the museum complex is expected by December, 2018. However, it will take some time to put the artefacts for display, say by February, 2020," he told a press conference at the site office after making a site visit to Sarawak Museum Campus here yesterday.

Abdul Karim said apart from the gallery for the public, there will a section for storage and conservation of artefacts as well as for the Museum Department to conduct research and studies.

"There will be an auditorium inside the museum campus for briefing big group of visitors or students before the tour. A one-day tour will not be enough for a campus of this size."

believed management of the new museum campus needed beefing up.

"More workers have to be trained such as in keeping artefacts. Besides having academic qualifications, those involved in this industry must have the passion, love for the arts and artefacts.

"I told Sarawak Museum Department director that with three years for completion (of the museum campus), we need to consider the number of staff required. We will submit the numbers next year as the Public Service Commission has to be informed much earlier."

Abdul Karim said presently, six staff from the Museum Department are being trained overseas, and more will be sent in stages for training to ensure they can manage the new museum campus and conserve the artefacts.

With the tourism, arts and culture under the same ministry, Abdul Karim expected their agencies like Sarawak Tourism Board, Sarawak Convention Bureau and Sarawak Council to come up with packages to ensure those coming for leisure or business, visit interesting places in the city.

"We want to see all those here for seminars, fora and sports tourism brought to see places like the museum so they have fond memories of Sarawak.

"We have rich culture and historical background to show foreigners and tourists. The present museum has run out of space to put the artefacts so we need a museum campus."

Abdul Karim said when the new Sarawak Museum Campus opens, the present Sarawak Museum will still operate but will have to be restored.

"The present museum will still be around with its own artefacts but we will be doing the second phase of development. When this museum campus nears completion, we will start restoring the present museum.

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