

# Archaeologist to be honoured at convocation



By JEREMY TAN

**METRO NEWS**

Tuesday, 21 Nov 2023



Siti Zuraina is credited with discovering the 74,000-year-old palaeolithic site of Kota Tampan in Perak's Lenggong Valley. — Filepic

AN ACCLAIMED Malaysian archaeologist will be among those who will be conferred awards at Wawasan Open University's (WOU) 14th convocation in Penang this weekend.

Emeritus Professor Datuk Dr Siti Zuraina Abdul Majid will receive an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree in recognition of her contributions to archaeology in a career spanning over five decades.

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“WOU recognises her pioneering work in preserving Malaysia’s rich prehistoric past.



Prof Siti Zuraina will receive an honorary degree from WOU.

“She garnered acclaim for her groundbreaking discoveries.

She uncovered the prehistoric sites in Niah Caves, Sarawak, as well as the 10,000-year-old intact skeleton of the Perak Man and the 74,000-year-old palaeolithic site of Kota Tampan in Perak’s Lenggong Valley.



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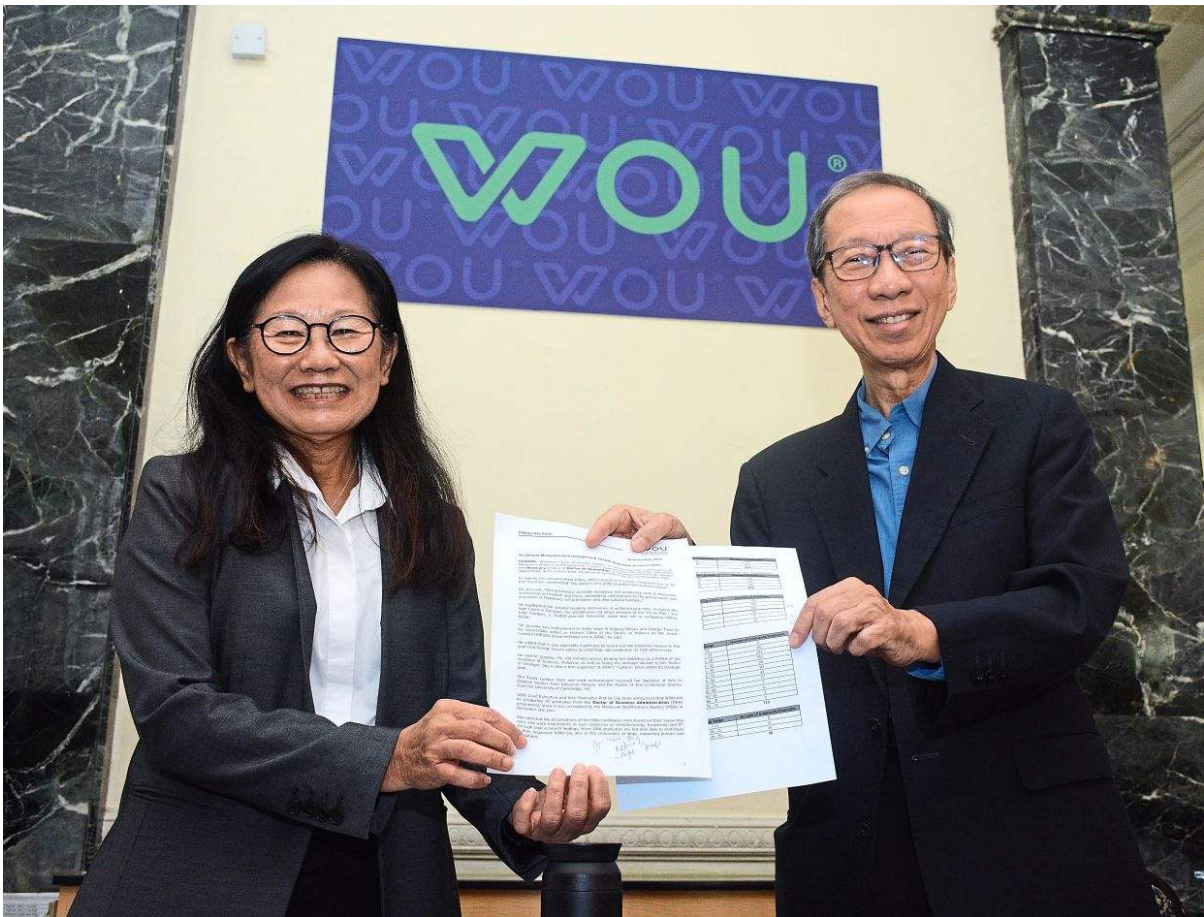
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“These landmark discoveries confirmed that peninsular Malaysia was part of the early migratory route when human beings first made the exodus out of Africa.

“She was also instrumental in many ways in the joint inscription of Melaka and George Town as the Historic Cities of the Straits of Malacca on Unesco’s World Heritage List,” Dr Koh said in a press conference at WOU’s main campus in Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah.

Prof Siti Zuraina, 79, now lends her expertise as a Fellow of the Academy of Sciences, Malaysia, and as heritage adviser to the Sultan of Selangor.

She was educated at Convent Bukit Nanas in Kuala Lumpur, and went on to earn a Bachelor of Arts in Chinese Studies from Universiti Malaya, a Master’s of Arts in Oriental Studies from Cambridge and a PhD in Anthropology from Yale.



Koh (right) and Chan showing convocation details at the press conference. — JEREMY TAN/The Star

WOU chief executive and vice-chancellor Prof Dr Lily Chan said this year's convocation would produce 803 graduates, the majority of whom are working adults.

They graduated from 38 programmes, with 172 taking postgraduate studies and the remaining 631, undergraduate studies.

Notably, 80% of the this year's cohort are aged 40 or below.

"This shows there is a desire among working young professionals to upskill themselves."

Prof Chan said there would also be 10 graduates from the Doctor of Business Administration (DBA) programme, which was accredited by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) last year.

Among them is valedictorian Dr Bernard Lim Kee Weng, 50, who is chief operating officer of a Norwegian tech startup; Jimmy Chow Kong Fatt, 67, a veteran hotelier from Kuala Lumpur; E Swee Yong, 53, managing director of a technology and training provider; Gurjit Singh Harbans Singh, 49, a quality management director for a medical equipment manufacturer, and Ong Hoong Aan, 57, a supervisor at a Singapore-based paper container manufacturing firm.

"The dissertations of the DBA candidates were based on their leadership roles and work experiences. Their research will not only contribute to their fields but also the community at large, impacting policies," said Prof Chan, adding that there would be three medal award winners.

Venothkumar Selvarajoo, 35, will receive the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Memorial Gold Prize for being the best postgraduate open distance learner (ODL).

Phang Jing Mei, 40, will get the Chancellor's Gold Medal as top undergraduate ODL while Janice Lim Ee Lin, 24, will receive the Tun Dr Lim Keng Yaik Memorial Gold Prize for being the top full-time degree student.

The convocation will be held over six sessions on Saturday and Sunday at the main campus.

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