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Theft

MALAYSIAN OFFICIAL'S HANDBAG, PASSPORT STOLEN IN MELBOURNE

MELBOURNE, Nov 17 (Bernama) -- A thief took a handbag belonging to a Malaysian public relations firm's project officer while she was helping to arrange photographs for the Malaysia-Australia multicultural exhibition here on Friday.

Irene Tan, of Mosaïque Communications, lost her passport, Ansett Australia airline ticket, identity card, more than A\$500 cash as well as some Malaysian currency, credit cards and other personal items.

Tan, who arrived with Marina Mahathir, who heads Mosaïque Communications, to supervise and help launch the exhibition at the ANZ Headquarters, was with a group of officials from the Melbourne University-based AsiaLink, arranging the display when the thief struck.

The culprit went through five handbags left in the foyer of the exhibition hall, but took only Tan's handbag after scooping cash from the other bags.

Marina, who was at the building at the time of the theft, was in another part of the hall, being interviewed by a newspaper reporter. She had her handbag with her.

An upset Tan told Bernama, at the launch of the exhibition on Saturday night by Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer, that she was shocked to find her handbag had been stolen.

"One moment the bags were there on a table and a couple of seconds later my bag was gone. Unfortunately, the security cameras were not on when the theft occurred," she said.

A police report has been lodged and the Malaysian Consulate here is arranging for new travel documents to be issued before Tan returns to Kuala Lumpur on Wednesday. -- BERNAMA

NDC RM