

26/06/1998

Bakti members visit handicraft complex in KL

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Kompleks Budaya Kraf today played host to members of the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers, or Bakti, in a bid to promote Malaysian batik and handicraft.

They were treated to a fashion show of batik finery, an ikebana demonstration and a tour of shops selling handicraft and other goods at the complex in Jalan Conlay.

In her welcoming speech, Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation director-general Rahimah Ahmad said the local batik industry had made a significant contribution to both the handicraft and tourism sectors.

"Unfortunately, presently the Malaysian batik industry is facing tremendous competition from Chinese, Korean and Italian silk manufacturers."

She urged the people to help the industry regain its glory by buying and wearing Malaysian batik.

Rahimah said the complex had since its opening in August 1996 received more than 280,000 visitors and registered sales of RM3.67 million.

Her appeal for support for the batik industry was well received by Bakti's cultural committee chairman Datin Seri Faizah Shuib, wife of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Megat Junid Megat Ayub, who commended the pivotal role the complex played in promoting Malaysian products.

Also present were Bakti chairman Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, who is also the wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Bakti deputy chairman Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, wife of Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and MHDC chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim.

Rahimah also described the complex as a "one-stop handicraft shopping centre", because of the wide variety of Malaysian handicraft put on sale.

Among them are ceramics, exclusive batik textiles, pewter ware, wood carvings, rattan furniture and crystal products.

The complex also houses an artists' colony, which has 18 resident artists, representing the diversity of Malaysian art.

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