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#### Dana Khas Negara still accepting donations

THE Dana Khas Negara, which was launched in March last year, will continue to accept contributions from the public until the country has fully recovered from the economic downturn.

Yesterday's auction managed to raise a total of RM1.35 million in bids for the 37 items which had a reserve price totalling RM3.9 million.

Second Finance Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said yesterday the Government had yet to make a decision "as to when to wind up the fund."

Speaking to reporters after launching the auction of valuables donated by the public at the Restoran Seri Melayu in Jalan Conlay, Kuala Lumpur, he said: "For now, we still welcome contributions from the public."

Currently, the fund stands at RM35 million.

The event was jointly organised by the Finance Ministry and Malaysia On Call Sdn Bhd. Some 350 people, mostly local businessmen, attended the auction.

Dana Khas was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in March last year in an effort to help revive the country's economy.

The fund comprises money or valuables such as jewellery, silverware, pewter vases, crystals, watches, pens, pearls and other articles donated by the public, organisations or companies.

A jewellery set belonging to the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali emerged as one of the most sought after items at the auction.

Ban Hin Lee Bank Bhd chairman and chief executive Datuk Goh Eng Toon successfully bid for the set consisting of matching necklace, baguette diamonds with ruby red gemstones, bracelet, earrings and ring, after 10 rounds of biddings.

The reserve price for the exquisite collection was RM120,000. The 37 items auctioned yesterday included 10 lots of bungalow land and a bungalow house.

The highlight of the two-hour event was the auction of foreign currencies donated by Dr Mahathir which had a reserve price of RM30,000.

An album of foreign currencies collected over the years by the Prime Minister was sold at RM10,000, while a frame of foreign currencies, also collected over the years, was sold at RM40,000.

Other available items were jewellery, watches, crystal, pearl and ceramic products. Alen Noordin and Dr Mohd Kassim Ali from the Malaysian Numismatic Association were the auctioneers.

To ensure that participants were committed to the auction, a fee of RM100 per person was charged.

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