

Develop market for collectible coins, says Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia should have activities to nurture the interest in numismatics as a hobby and develop the market for collectible coins and notes into a viable industry, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister said there was great potential for quality collectibles and gift items as tourists to Malaysia spent about RM9bil a year buying goods, of which about 20% was spent on collectible products.

"Therefore, there is almost RM1.8bil worth of this market to tap," he said in his address at the inaugural Kuala Lumpur International Money Fair (Klimof) 2002 hosted by the Royal Mint of Malaysia. His speech was read out by Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Chan Kong Choy.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia was positioned not only to produce circulation coins but also fine numismatic and collectible items for both the domestic and export markets.

Citing an example, he said the Malaysian ten-sen coin issued by Bank Negara in 1971 was traded among collectors for about RM120 a piece because it was rare, with only a total of 48,000 pieces.

He said numismatists were going to find collecting money less easy because credit cards and e-commerce would make the supply of physical money less necessary.

Dr Mahathir also said the development of the secondary market was important to sustain continuing interest in numismatic collectibles.

He believed it would be in the interest of the world mints, including the royal mint of Malaysia, to nurture and develop further the secondary market that traded in new and old coins and notes.

To facilitate this, he said, a systematic way of disseminating information among the market participants should be developed.