

02 JAN 2002

Mahathir-Mint

DR MAHATHIR VISITS ROYAL MINT OF MALAYSIA

SHAH ALAM, Jan 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali paid a special visit to the Royal Mint of Malaysia here today to join the company's staff in their Hari Raya celebration.

He was accompanied by Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo and Bank Negara Governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz and they were met on arrival by the company's managing director, Datuk Megat Abdul Wahab Megat Abu Bakar.

The prime minister attended a closed-door briefing for about 45 minutes before proceeding to the company's design department for a brief tour.

Dr Mahathir and his entourage later joined guests for a Hari Raya celebration, and also distributed duit raya to children of the staff, including under-privileged children of Rumah Peyakin, Meru and Rumah Anak Yatim Batu Belah, Kapar.

In his speech at the celebration Dr Mahathir commended the company for its achievements although it was only set up a year ago.

The Royal Mint, a sister company of Mariwasa Kraftangan Sdn Bhd, had been entrusted by the government to mint the country's coins.

It was set up following the government's decision to privatise the central bank's minting operations which was formerly undertaken by Jabatan Kilang Wang Bank Negara Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said: "This is my second visit here, and since then the Mint has achieved much development in various fields, not only producing the denomination coins."

He said the Mint had diversified its operations and was now involved in producing porcelain goods.

Dr Mahathir said the Mint's activities were in line with government efforts to help Malaysian businessmen venture into the franchise business.

The Mint was franchising its products including commemorative coins to Malaysian businessmen, he said.

The prime minister said Malaysians, especially those retrenched following the banking sector mergers, should take advantage of the Mint franchising programme.

"When they are retrenched they are given some money, and using this fund they can take up the franchise business offered by the Mint seriously," he added.

Since taking over from the government a year ago, the Mint had produced 821,561,000 circulation coins of which 224,963,000 were one sen coins, 97,456,000 were five sen coins, 241,140,000 were 10 sen coins, 219,880,000 were 20 sen coins and 38,122,000 were 50 sen coins.

The Mint has 14 machines that can produce up to 5.5 million coins in various denominations per day.

-- BERNAMA

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