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Splendid Nusantara craft

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FEAST your eyes on handicraft from Malaysia and Indonesia at the Kuala Lumpur Craft Complex in Jalan Conlay which is having a "Nusantara Craft" promotional fair until Sunday.

Organised by the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation and Association of Exporters and Producers of Indonesian Handicraft (ASEPHI), the fair was launched by Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Tuesday.

Dr Siti Hasmah said the fair was a good opportunity for local and Indonesian craftsmen and entrepreneurs to learn from one another.

She said handicraft making was a thriving industry in Indonesia. However, in Malaysia, where it is not as developed, more should be done to make the craft sector an important contributor to the country's economy.

"Maybe Indonesia can help us in production, marketing, expertise as well as techniques and technology," she added.

Also present were ASEPHI head Rudy Lengkong, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz and its secretary-general Datuk Zakiah Hashim, Kraftangan Malaysia chairman Datuk Mastika Junaidah Husin and director-general Zakiah Ahmad.

Forty Indonesian and 100 Malaysian craft entrepreneurs are taking part in the exhibition. One of them, Johan Masruhan of CV Sarana Jati Perkasa, Semarang, Central Java, produces decorative items from wood, mostly teak.

The handmade items are in the form of vehicles like trishaws, Harley Davidsons, planes and helicopters, some with movable tyres and doors that can open and close.

For textiles, the Zainal Songket stall offers songket for both men and women. Its owner Zainal Ariffin said songket is one of the handicraft Palembang is famous for.

"They can be used as sarong, scarves and tanjak (headgear for men) and worn for weddings and formal functions," he said. Fifty pieces are on display at his stall with prices ranging from RM1,000 to RM5,000 per piece.

Among activities held in conjunction with the fair are a heritage exhibition, bazaar, Malaysian and Indonesian traditional musical and dance performances. There are also demonstrations on pottery and kite-making as well as rattan and pandan-weaving. The exhibition is open from 9am to 9pm daily. For details, call 03-21627459 or 03-21627533.