

**King Returns From Antarctica Trip
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PETALING JAYA, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin returned Thursday from a five-day working visit to scientific centres in Antarctica.

Tuanku Mizan flew in to the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Subang near here and was welcomed by senior deputy secretary-general of the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Othman Mahmood and Keeper of the Rulers' Seal Datuk Syed Danial Syed Ahmad.

The visit to the South Pole was in conjunction with Malaysia's formal accession to the Antarctic Treaty 1959 on Oct 31 this year as a non-consultative member.

Tuanku Mizan was accompanied on the trip by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili, Academy of Sciences Malaysia (ASM) Antarctica Task Force chairman Tan Sri Salleh Mohd Nor, National Antarctica Research Centre (NARC) director Prof Datuk Dr Azizan Abu Samah and Mohamad Mudanoran Mohamad Mushaari of the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama) who provided media coverage of the trip.

Tuanku Mizan and his entourage went to Cape Royds where Shackleton's Hut is located. The hut was built by Ernest Shackleton during his expedition between 1901 and 1904.

They also had a panoramic view of Barne Glacier, with its sculptures rising 30m above water level, as well as the Emperor penguins, the largest of the penguin species.

The trip included a visit to Scott's Hut in Cape Evans. The hut was built by Robert Falcon Scott during his expedition to Antarctica between 1910 and 1913.

Conservation works on the two huts are part of efforts to preserve the historic sites in the South Pole. The two huts have become iconic and historic destinations for researchers and scientists in Antarctica.

Tuanku Mizan also had an aerial view of the Scott Research Centre.

Malaysia's involvement with Antarctica started when Malaysia and Antigua & Barbuda highlighted the Antarctica issue at the United Nations General Assembly in 1983.

Malaysia's scientific and research involvement in Antarctica started on Nov 19, 1997, when the Cabinet approved Malaysia's participation in scientific research there.

A task force under the Malaysia Antarctic Research Programme (MARP) was then set up at ASM to encourage research in Antarctica among Malaysian scientists.

Following this, Malaysia's scientists and researchers started conducting research in Antarctica from 1999. Sixty-two expeditions have been carried out until last year involving 60 researchers from seven institutions of higher learning.

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