

Gold Business Thriving In Malaysia Despite World Economic Strain, Says Habib Jewels MD
Bernama
February 1, 2012

GEORGE TOWN, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- The bearish world economy has not affected the gold business in Malaysia as the people are still buying jewellery and gemstones for investment and personal use, a prominent jeweller said.

Habib Jewels Managing Director Datuk Meer Sadik Habib said his company's jewellery sales are on the rise despite the spiralling gold price.

He said the gold price hike in the world market has given more confidence to the people to invest in gold including buying jewellery.

"The people are not buying jewellery merely for personal use but also as an investment following a sharp rise in gold price," he told reporters after the opening of the Jawi Peranakan (Indian-Muslim community) Heritage Gallery by the Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas.

To provide investment guarantee for gold items to its customers, Meer Sadik said Habib Jewels, a household name in Malaysia's gold business, operated Al Rahnu Islamic pawnshops which accept pawning of jewellery and gemstones.

He said Habib Jewels' sales touched about RM300 million last year and "we are confident to perform even better this year."

"We are aiming to boost our sales by 10 to 20 per cent this year due to growing demand for jewellery and gemstones.

"The demand is high as our jewellery and gemstones have their unique features blend with traditional and modern designs," he said.

To cope with the rising demand, Habib Jewels, a fully integrated jeweller involved in wholesaling, retailing, manufacturing, micro-financing (pawnbroking) and franchising, will invest about RM4 million to open two new branches in Perak and Pahang this year, he said.

Meer Sadik said he has no plans as yet to open branches overseas as he intends to focus on the domestic market. "However, we are actively engaged in promoting our brands overseas," he said.

On the heritage gallery, he said, the Habib Jewels Group, which started in Penang 50 years ago as a family-owned business, has invested about RM2 million to refurbish its old premises at Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling.

The gallery showcases a collection of more than 100 antique jewellery and gemstones including more than 100-year-old gold items worn by Indian-Muslim women in Penang.

---BERNAMA

Copyright © 2012 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v6/newsindex.php?id=643422>