

02 NOV 1997

Hotel-Prince

PRINCE CHARLES OPENS M'SIAN HOTEL IN SOUTH AFRICA

By: Siti Hawa Othman

JOHANNESBURG, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- Malaysian-owned Sandton Hilton Hotel in Johannesburg, South Africa created history as being the first Malaysian hotel to be opened by Prince of Wales on Saturday.

Sandton Hilton is 70 per cent owned by Business Focus Sdn Bhd, a group controlled by Datuk Amin Shah Omar Shah, while the other 30 per cent shareholding is by a local consortium called A Van Der Mer Konstruksi.

The RM145 million 324-room hotel, built in the upmarket segment in Sandton, is the second Hilton Hotel here in Durban also owned by a Malaysian company, Renong Bhd with an 85 per cent stake.

The hotel, whose ground-breaking ceremony was done by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad during his visit here in 1995, is being managed by Hilton International.

Apart from being opened by Prince Charles, the hotel has served several firsts. It is first Hilton Hotel outside Malaysia to have a Malaysian restaurant and the first to have a "halal" kitchen identical with the concept of the "Makkah Hilton" kitchen.

Described as the "Hotel of Arts" by Amin Shah, who is Business Focus chairman, the floor was carpetted with African design and the hotel was full of art works by African artists.

Meanwhile, Prince Charles is on his last leg of his Southern Africa tour together with his son, Prince Harry. This is his first official visit overseas following the death of his former wife, Princess Diana.

In his address, the Prince said he was impressed with the hotel which blended the concept of cultural diversity of Africa in its decor.

The Prince said it was important for hotels to be built to respect the local landscape to warm the hearts of tourists who are in search of cultural diversity.

He was particularly pleased that attention has been given to some environment principles in the construction of the hotel.

"The growth in hotel capacity all around the world has a direct and to often damaging impact on the environment, particularly through the extravagant use and destruction of natural resources and production of waste. This must be managed effectively," the Prince said. -- BERNAMA

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