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Govt handed RM650m venue for meets

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MALAYSIA'S RM650 million Putrajaya Convention Centre was completed and handed over to the Government yesterday.

Sited on 20.4ha in Precinct 5 of the administrative city, Putrajaya Convention Centre will host the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit in October.

The centre has a gross floor area of 1.35 million sq ft extending over nine levels, including two for 1,198 parking bays.

There are VVIP rooms, meeting rooms, restaurants, public galleries, banquet halls and other purpose-built halls.

The largest is the Plenary hall which can seat up to 3,000 people. There

is a hall for Heads of State with a seating capacity of 180.

Work on the centre began on June 18 2001 and was completed in June this

year. The centre took slightly under two years to build.

It was designed by local architectural firm Hijjas Kasturi Associates Sdn Bhd whose works include the Securities Commission building, Hotel Nikko, Menara Maybank and Menara Telekom. The main contractor was IJM Corp Bhd.

Developer Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd chairman Datuk Mohd Hashim Hassan said the centre can meet the rapid demand and growth of the MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) market to attract visitors and, ultimately, boost tourism revenue.

"Statistics have shown that in one country where a new convention centre was built, the number of events there increased by 76 per cent over a year after completion.

"Research has also shown that in some countries seriously in the MICE industry, up to 75 per cent of their visitors are international convention delegates who otherwise would not have entered as normal tourists," Mohd Hashim said at the handing-over ceremony yesterday.

The handing over was done by Mohd Hashim to Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman before Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"(The centre) has been built within the time frame in order to be ready for the OIC summit in October," said Putrajaya Holdings chief executive officer Datuk Mohamad Othman Zainal Azim.