

16/10/2003

Hotels excited about hosting VIPs

THE nation is abuzz with activities and excitement as it prepares to host the 10th OIC Summit. Ten hotels in and around the city designated to host world leaders are working with the authorities to ensure minimal or zero glitches during the Putrajaya Summit.

The organisers have also ensured that security measures are stepped up and all guests and staff are issued with passes and luggages scanned prior to entering the premises.

The role of the hotels do not end with just providing luxurious rooms to visitors as they have taken it upon themselves to help promote Malaysia's heritage and food.

With this in mind, each hotel has drawn up its own 'strategy' to make their guests' stay memorable.

Indeed, delegates should not only go home with eye-openers about national strategies, bilateral co-operation and security issues but also leave with images of what the country has to offer as a tourism haven.

Located in a green enclave overlooking Putrajaya is the five-star boutique resort Shangri-la Putrajaya, modern in architecture yet reflecting Malaysia's heritage.

All 118 rooms of the hotel, 25 minutes from the Kuala Lumpur International Airport and 30 minutes from the city centre, have been taken up. Each room has a private balcony.

General manager Philip Dailey said the hotel's engineers and staff had been working around the clock to ensure all went smoothly and would continue to be on stand by for 24 hours throughout the summit.

"This is the first time we are hosting such a big event since our opening in February. Being part of the event and watching the hustle and bustle of Putrajaya throughout the Summit is a valuable experience for the hotel.

"The first time for anything is always unforgettable... it will be a long time for this experience to happen again... Malaysia hosting OIC for the first time, the Putrajaya Convention Centre opening its door for the first time."

He said preparations had long been made to ensure the hotel's guests had a memorable stay and it has been buzzing with activities with the hotel's F&B department working in full swing as it was no easy feat to prepare meals for 1,000 guests at any one time.

For the Palace of the Golden Horses, one of the major hotels playing host to the OIC delegates, it will be an all-Malaysian affair throughout the Summit.

Located on the shores of a 60ha lake in The Mines Resort City, just minutes from Kuala Lumpur city centre, this luxury hotel offers a blend of Moorish architecture and Malaysian culture.

Mines Resort City operations and management vice-president Kai Wagner said the 600 hotel staff had been briefed and trained to ensure delegates would cherish their stay.

The hotel will be closed to the public throughout the summit as all 480 rooms, which includes 80 suites, had been booked for delegates.

Chef S. Logarajah, who runs the kitchens with 90 cooks and 49 stewards, will be working round the clock to ensure the delegates' stay there was a pleasant one.

As at other major summits he had handled before, the hotel will need a

daily supply of items such as 50kg of lamb, 150 dressed chickens, 50kg of vegetables and 100kg of fruits to cater to the large number of guests.

Logarajah, who has been with the hotel since it opened in 1997, will also ensure the kitchen personnel take the effort to find out what dishes delegates preferred.

Repeat guests would definitely seek Logarajah's specialities, rendang tok and chicken rice, as they are his two most-popular dishes.

Other five-star hotels around Kuala Lumpur city centre playing host to the delegates are The Regent, Mutiara Kuala Lumpur, Istana Hotel, Nikko Hotel, Shangri-La Hotel, JW Marriott, Renaissance Hotel, Sheraton Imperial, Mandarin Oriental and Ritz Carlton.

While most of them have embarked on ambitious programmes to display the country's rich heritage, others, which were involved in major refurbishing costing hundreds of millions of ringgit during the recent Non-Aligned Movement Summit, are set to make the OIC another milestone for the country.

Apart from glimpses of the country's cultural delights at the hotels, delegates will be spoilt for choice as all hotels involved will be promoting local dishes.

Hospitality is the order of the day for many hotels as most had sent their staff for training to enhance their skills and better serve the guests.

Hotel's banquet halls have also been prepared to host leisure programmes and work for heads of state/government and heads of delegations and their spouses.

After a long day on Oct 16, which begins with the summit's official opening and a tour of Putrajaya, OIC chairman Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali will host dinner at the Mandarin Oriental.

Renaissance will welcome another spousal programme, the First Ladies Dialogue on Women, Peace and Development chaired by Dr Siti Hasmah on Oct 17 and organised by the Women and Family Development Ministry.

Its Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil will host a luncheon on that day.