

20/02/2003

Kuala Lumpur hotels rise to the occasion

THE whole nation is abuzz and pulsating with activities. There's excitement in the air. Understandably, as Malaysia has been honoured to host the 13th NAM Summit, the second biggest conference next to the UN conference.

The 11 hotels in and around the city designated to host distinguished world leaders are already working at a frenzied pace with daily meetings with the relevant authorities to ensure minimal or zero glitches during the summit.

The role of the hotels do not end with just providing luxurious rooms to rest tired bodies but they have taken it upon themselves to help promote Malaysia's rich cultural heritage and tantalising gastronomic delights.

With this in mind, each hotel has drawn up their own 'strategies' to make their guests's stay memorable. Indeed, delegates should not only go home with eye-openers on national strategies, bilateral co-operation and impending security issues but also leave with indelible prints on what the country has to offer as a tourism haven.

We did a check-up on the hotels and here's what's in store:

Pan Pacific Kuala Lumpur - a 550-room- hotel located smack in the city centre, is expected to accommodate about nine VIP guests, with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali heading the list. Others include Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and wife Datuk Seri Endon Mahmood, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai and the Sultan of Brunei.

Located just next-door to the Putra World Trade Centre where the summit will be held will be closed to the public from Feb 15-27.

Marketing Communications Director Raja Anis Rahyuwati Raja Zainal said an uninterrupted supply of electricity is crucial for conferences and the hotel has been working closely with Tenaga Nasional Bhd with 12 of their staff put on stand-by at the substation, assisted by the hotel's chief engineer and charginman who would be on stand-by for 24 hours.

The hotel's F&B department will be working in full swing as it is no easy feat to prepare meals for no fewer than 1,000 guests at any one time.

Security will be very tight and all guests will be issued with special passes. All luggages will also be scanned prior to entering the premises.

For the Palace of the Golden Horses one of the major hotels playing host to the NAM delegates, it will be an all-Malaysian-affair throughout the Feb 20-25 period.

Located on the shores of a magnificent 150-acre lake in The Mines Resort City, just minutes from Kuala Lumpur city centre, this luxury hotel which offers a harmonious blend of Moorish architecture and Malaysian culture is the ideal setting for delegates to experience the wonderfully rich and diverse heritage of Malaysia.

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

The hotel will be closed to the public from Feb 16-27 as all 480 rooms which includes 80 suites had been booked for delegates Chef S. Logarajah, who takes charge of the running of the kitchens said some 90 cooks and 49 stewards will be working round the clock to ensure the delegates' stay there was a pleasant one.

He said the hotel would be needing daily supply of items like some 50kg of lamb, 150 dressed chicken, 50kg of various vegetables and 100kg of local fruits to cater to the large number of guests.

He said the kitchen personnel will take the effort to find out what dishes delegates preferred.

Logarajah who has been with the hotel since it opened in 1997, named two of his specialities delegates could look forward to, his rendang tok and chicken rice.

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

While most of them have embarked on ambitious programmes to display the country's rich cultural heritage, a few others were involved in major refurbishing costing hundreds of millions of ringgit.

Regent Hotel delegates will not only be given an insight of the intricacies of the Malaysian culture through the cultural shows lined up, but a feast to the eyes awaits delegates with a 35-piece of photo-exhibition themed "Images of Malaysia", which showcases the wonders of the country's architecture, sceneries and its people.

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 Malaysia's popular dishes including Malay, Chinese, Indian and Baba authentic delicacies, to whet their tastebuds.

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 country's guests.

In providing delegates a chance to experience the Malaysian crafts some of the hotels including Mandarin Oriental will fly experienced craftsmen from the East coast to show the guests the art of batik painting or mat weaving.

The hotels have ensured that utmost priority is given the interests of the delegates and nothing is left to chance.