

Act carefully, Israel told

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Al Aqsa Mosque a very holy site

KUALA LUMPUR: Israel should be more careful when carrying out work near the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The mosque is an extremely holy place for Muslims as well as a recognised world heritage site, he said after inspecting the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre here yesterday ahead of the Asean Summit from Dec 12 to 14.

Abdullah, who chairs the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC), said the United Nations had a resolution stating that heritage sites should be protected even during conflict.

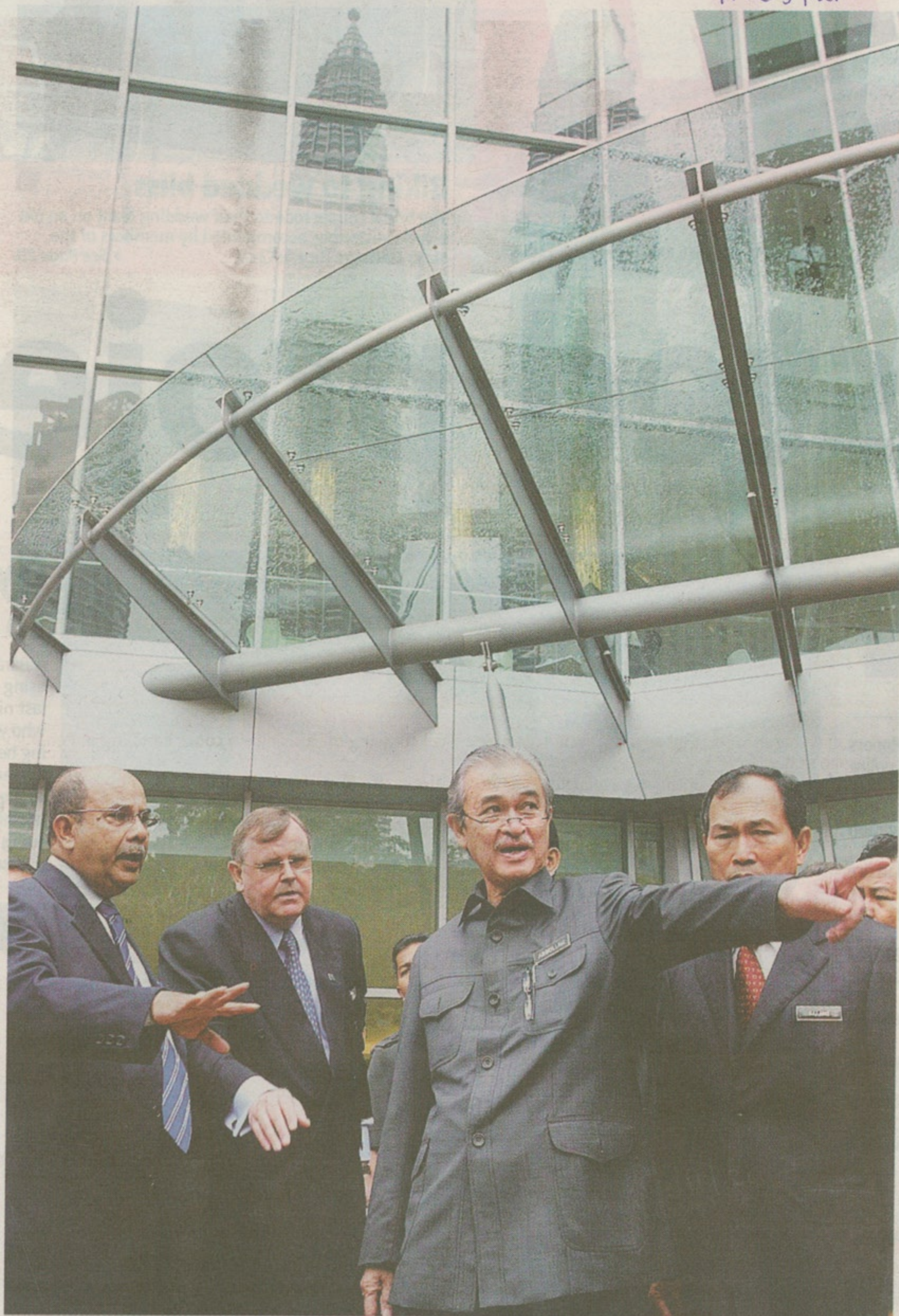
Al-Aqsa mufti Sheikh Ikrama Sabri was reported as saying the historical mosque was cracking and could collapse at any moment due to the excavation activities by Israel since 1967.

Sheikh Ikrama said the Israelis were using heavy machinery in their bid to look for proof of the existence of a Jewish temple at the site.

Abdullah said: "They have to be more careful. This is what makes Muslims angry."

The Al Aqsa Mosque is the third most holy shrine in Islam and the largest in Jerusalem.

Commenting on preparations for the Asean Summit, Abdullah said he was satisfied with the facilities.



ALL OKAY: (Left) Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar and (third from left) Abdullah inspecting the convention centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, where the Asean Summit will be held.