

# INTERNATIONAL AREA

Be they meetings of foreign leaders or groundbreaking world events, Putrajaya plays host to them all.

Since Putrajaya was opened to the public in 1999, it has become a national icon, an ambassador for the country's vision, growth and achievement.

Foreign dignitaries treated to a tour of the administrative capital often had nothing but praise for the city. 'Compared to similar developments in the world's tropical countries, Putrajaya rises above them all,' said Indonesian Ambassador to Malaysia H Rusdihardjo, following Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's visit in February 2005.

But more significantly, Putrajaya has been the stage of several prestigious international events, especially with the opening of the Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC) in 2003.

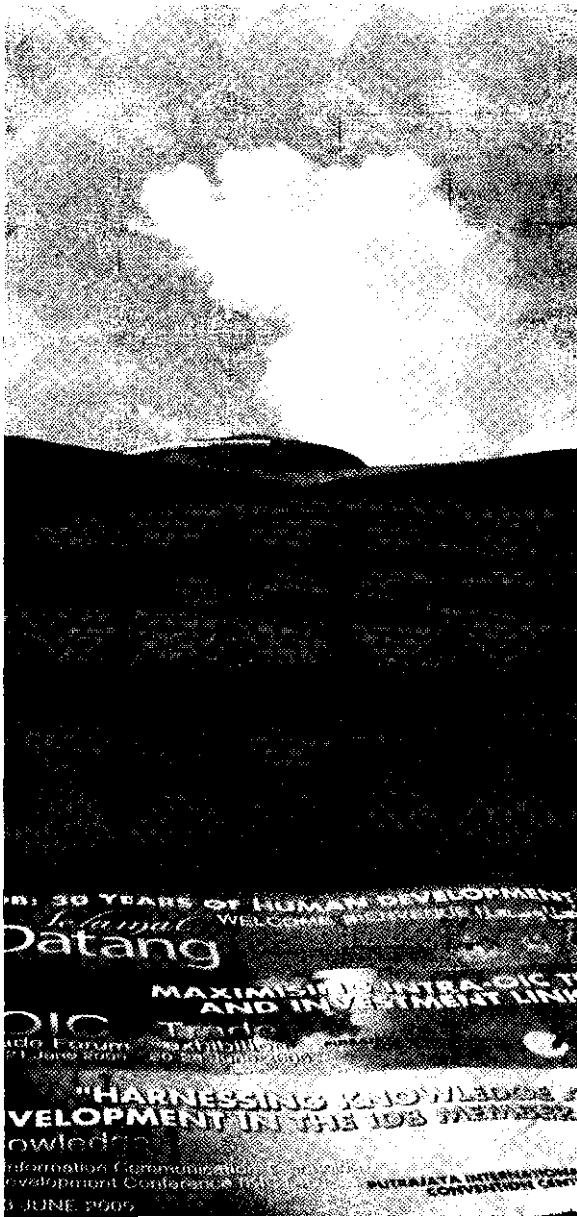
One of the most high-profile events was the 10th Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) summit, held in October that year. The summit, the first to be held in the Asia Pacific region, drew 33 Muslim leaders, the largest number since the inception of the 57-member OIC in 1969. The other members sent representatives for the event.

The landmark Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting on the Advancement of Women was held there, too, in May 2005. Attended by 84 member countries, the meeting concluded with the nine-point Putrajaya Declaration, which serves as a blueprint to address the challenges and grievances of women around the world.

More recently, the 30th annual meeting of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) was held from June 23 to 24 this year. This annual meeting of the board of governors of the IDB represents the largest Islamic gathering, with the participation of Ministers of Finance, Economy and Planning from 55 member countries and representatives of national financing institutions, Islamic banks and other similar regional and international institutions.

All these have, no doubt, helped to raise the profile of Putrajaya, and Malaysia as a whole, in the eyes of the world. Besides that, these events have helped to spur tourism activity in Putrajaya and the country as many delegates would extend their stay to relax and shop with their families ... the much-desired multiplier effect on the economy.

Thus, Putrajaya is not only positioning itself as a world-class administrative and commercial centre but is also keen on taping the hugely profitable and growing MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions) market.

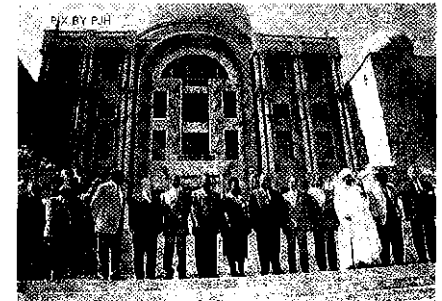


PIX BY BERNAMA

The recent 30<sup>th</sup> Islamic Development Bank Board (IDB) of Governors Meeting was one of several international events held at the PICC.



Head of states and governments from 57 member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) in 2003.



Leaders of developing countries who attended the 1999 Langkawi International Dialogue were one of the first foreign visitors to Putrajaya.

'The spill-over effect of Putrajaya International Convention Centre is tremendous and benefits the city in a lot of ways,' says Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd's (PjH) chief executive officer Datuk Ir Mohamad Othman Zainal Azim. 'Of course, PjH is very keen to see this enhanced. We are working closely with the operator of the convention centre and are helping to complement the facilities there.'

The purpose-built, ultra-modern RM650 million PICC was planned and developed to accommodate delegates from the 185 member-countries of the United Nations. Covering an area of 20.66 hectares at 60 meters above sea level, the development sits prominently atop a commanding hill in Precinct 5. The 4,320sq m Plenary Hall, the largest meeting hall, seats 3,000 people; the Banquet Hall, up to 4,500 cocktail style; and the Heads of State Hall, 184.

One major upcoming event in PICC is the HealthPraxisAsia International symposia and fair that will be held from

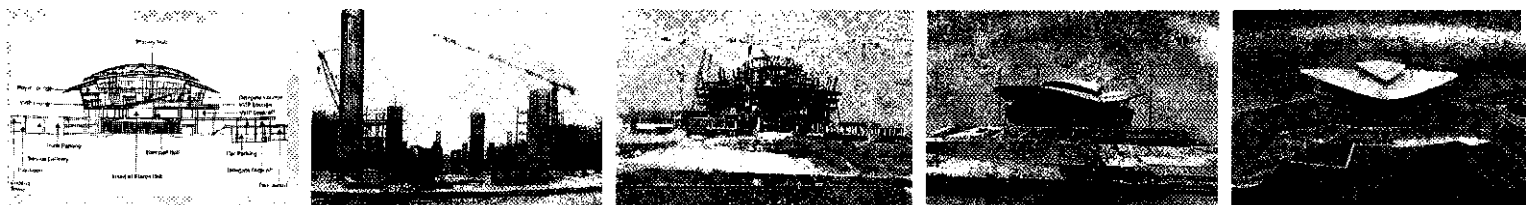
Nov 16 to 19, 2005. The fair is a unique environment devoted to furthering the knowledge of clinicians and all healthcare practitioners in the medical, dental and life sciences.

According to Perbadanan Putrajaya President Tan Sri Samsudin Osman, PICC will continue to aggressively tap into the growing MICE market especially in this region and make Putrajaya a leading contender in this business in a couple of years. Samsudin believes this can be achieved with the proactive approach of the convention centre's operators, the city's strategic locality and infrastructure.

Everyone, he adds, has a part to play in promoting events in the city to boost tourism and business activity. 'Putrajaya must be proactive, aggressive and be mindful about the need to continuously have activities that make a city great,' he says. 'These activities not just help to bring in tourist dollars but also spur a much needed spill-over effect to other industries and sectors. Most importantly, it helps keep the city on its toes.' **mb**



While their spouses attended the OIC summit, these ladies took time off for a tour of the main attractions in Putrajaya, together with former Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali (centre).



From drawing board to reality: The iconic Putrajaya International Convention Centre.