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ICONIC TOWERS

STANDING TALL IN THE EYES OF THE WORLD

Petronas Twin Towers an enduring and iconic landmark as well as an architectural marvel



TEOH PEI YING

NO trip to the capital city of Malaysia is considered complete without a visit to the iconic Petronas Twin Towers, the dominant landscape of the Golden Triangle.

A landmark and symbol of Malaysia, the Petronas Twin Towers are the tallest twin towers in the world. They were designed by Argentine-American skyscraper specialist, the late César Pelli.

Its status has remained unchallenged since 1996.

Currently the 16th tallest building in the world, the 88-storey towers are as iconic to Malaysia as the Eiffel Tower is to France.

At 452m tall, the Petronas Twin Towers were the world's tallest skyscrapers from 1998 to 2004 until they were surpassed by Taipei's 101.

Built on a land that was previously the Selangor Turf Club and repurposed to ease the increasingly heavy traffic in the city centre, the Petronas Twin Towers were a Rm1.6 billion mega project commissioned by

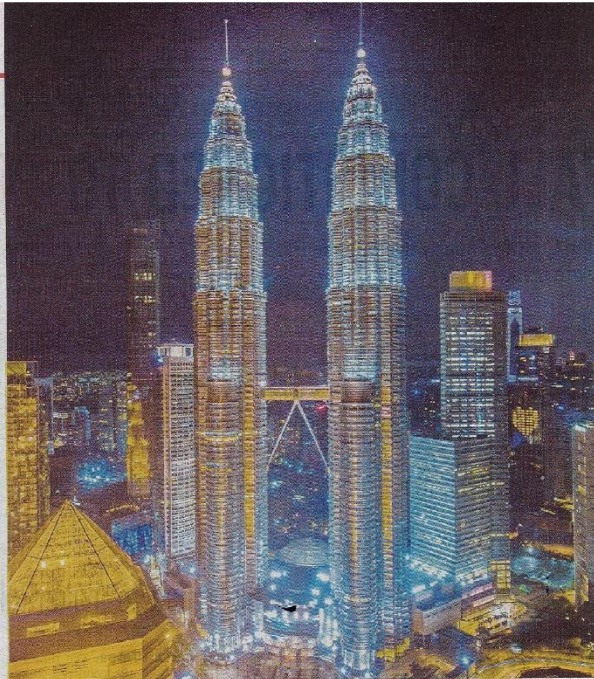
the fourth and seventh prime minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Excavation of the site commenced on March 1, 1993. Construction began in April 1994 after passing multiple rigorous tests and simulations of wind and structural loads on the design. The twin towers were completed with its encasing in steel and glass in June 1996. The buildings were officially functional and ceremoniously opened by Dr Mahathir on Aug 1, 1999.

In the original plans, Pelli had the towers topping out at 427m, which fell only 15m shy of tying the world's then-tallest building, Chicago's Sears Tower.

However, Dr Mahathir saw greater potential in the buildings as the world's tallest structures, and pressed architects and engineers to include a few more metres in height in every way possible.

To meet his ambitions, many structural facts were recalculated and retested in wind tunnels. This resulted in the addition of a



A landmark and symbol of Malaysia, the Petronas Twin Towers are the tallest twin towers in the world and the 16th tallest building in the world. FILE PIC



The late César Pelli

dome with an integrated pinnacle atop the towers — successfully reaching 452m tall, surpassing the Sears Tower.

The towers were built by two contractors. Japan-based Hazama Corporation led the consortium for Tower One while South Korean titan Samsung Engineering and Construction led the building team for Tower Two plus the skybridge.

The 'double-decker' skybridge acts as the connector between the two towers on levels 41 and 42. Interestingly, the skybridge, at 170m above the ground and 58.4m long, is not fully attached to the main building.

Engineers deliberately designed the skybridge this way to give allowance for small movements during high winds and other unpleasant weather conditions.

This prevents the bridge from breaking away from the towers.

Tower One is fully occupied by the Malaysian state oil company Petronas, its subsidiaries and associate companies. Tower Two is mostly taken up by multinational companies such as Accenture, Al-Jazeera, Barclays Capital, Bloomberg, Boeing, IBM, McKinsey & Co., Microsoft and Reuters.

The interior motifs are designed to resemble Malaysia's local handicraft and weaving patterns, with a stunning combination of stainless steel and glass finishing on the building to form beautiful Islamic patterns.

The design of each tower floor plate is based on simple Islamic geometric forms of two interlocking squares, creating a shape of an eight-pointed star.

Architecturally, these forms represent the important Islamic principles of unity, harmony, stability and rationality.

The observation decks at Petronas Twin Towers are located at Level 86 of both towers. The deck allows visitors to enjoy the spectacular view of the cityscape

from above 370m.

Visitors will also get to learn about the history of the twin towers in detail through digital displays and exhibition.

Below the twin towers is Suria KLCC, a shopping mall, and the Petronas Philharmonic Hall, Southeast Asia's leading venue for classical music and the home of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Located in-between the two towers, the architectural design of the facility, which has earned praise as

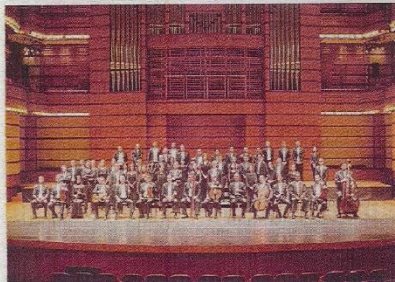
one of the world's best concert halls, is based upon the time-honoured design of 19th century European concert halls.

Free admission tickets are handed out daily on a very limited basis. Visitors can also purchase tickets online.

On Sept 1, 2009, French "Spiderman" Alain Robert scaled to the top of Tower Two in just under two hours using only his bare hands and feet with no safety devices. This feat was achieved after his two failed attempts in 1997 and 2007. He was arrested on all three attempts by the authorities at the end of his climb.



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The Petronas Philharmonic Hall, Southeast Asia's leading venue for classical music and the home of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra, is located at the Twin Towers. FILE PIC

(Source: New Straits Times, News, 4 September 2020, Friday)