

NEW STRAITS TIMES

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Malaysia and the Vatican to have diplomatic ties

COOPERATION The world is at 'crossroads', so forging links and alliances is important, Prime Minister says

AZURA ABAS
KUALA LUMPUR

malaymail.com.my

Malaysia and the Vatican have agreed to establish formal diplomatic relations to promote bonds of mutual friendship and strengthen cooperation between both sides. The announcement came following Prime Minister Najib Razak's audience with Pope Benedict XVI at the papal summer residence in Castel Gandolfo, outside Rome.

Saying that the world "is at a crossroads", Najib said Malaysia was keen to share its experience with the world, and it was why Malacca was considered a forging link and alliances with like-minded countries to promote peace and prosperity. "This is the main reason why Malaysia established diplomatic relations with the Holy See. 'The world has crossroads, the focus of tranquillity and discord are these

crossroads being checked and hard-gained stability and prosperity," Najib said in a statement issued after the meeting.

He said Malaysia and the Vatican were committed to countering negative forces that used religion to justify acts of terrorism by strengthening the powers of reason and moderation.

He added that the Holy See recognised Malaysia's commitment to promote moderation as a global doctrine.

"Our effort in managing our diversity despite various hurdles and challenges is a great example that diverse societies can succeed. However, we must remain vigilant and confront persistent forces that threaten to unravel this harmony. We must also do more to adopt an inclusive approach to education and governance, and ensuring the Malaysian constitution abides on Malaysia," he said.

The establishment of Malaysia-Vatican ties follows similar moves by other Muslim-majority nations such as Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jordan, Turkey, Egypt, Libya, the Arab League and a majority of members of the Organisation of the Islamic Cooperation.

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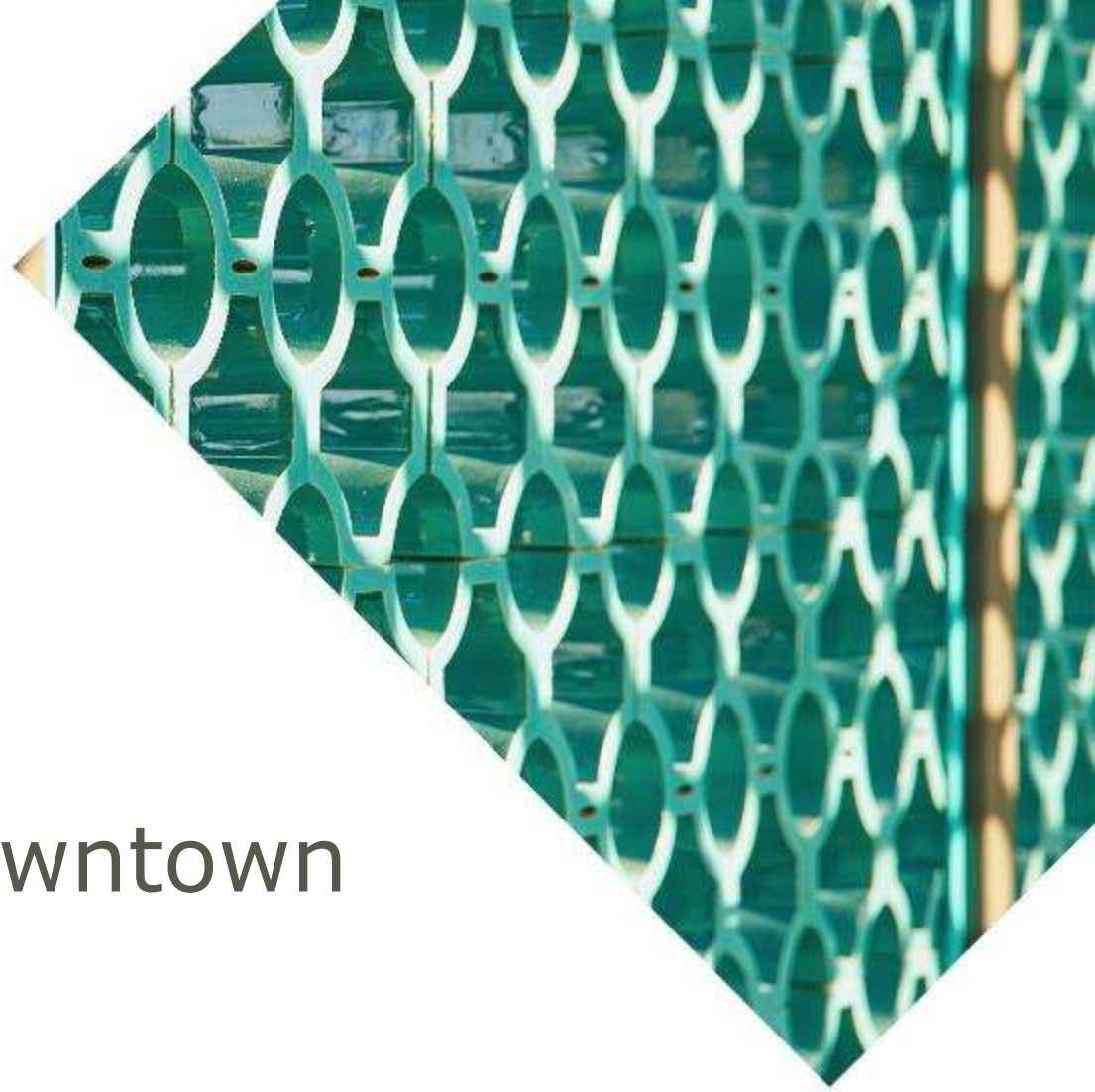
Malaysian women 16th most stressed

NEW YORK Malaysian women rank 16th most stressed in the world, according to a recent study on the stress levels which women worldwide are subjected to. Indian women rank as the world's most stressed (37 per cent), says the study, prepared by the international media company, Nielsen.

They are closely followed by Malaysian women (21 per cent) and Russian women (20 per cent). In the developed countries, the stress level is the highest for women in Spain (26 per cent), France (26 per cent) and Italy (24 per cent). Malaysian women (14 per cent) rank 16th in the list while women in Thailand (14 per cent) share the 16th spot with South Korea (15 per cent).

Japanese women (52 per cent) rank 12th while mainland Chinese women (31 per cent) rank 15th. The study, which researched social behaviour patterns of women in 21 developing and emerging economies, revealed that women all over the world felt stressed out, with those in the so-called emerging countries facing greater stress than their counterparts in the developed countries. According to India's Economic Times, the greater stress levels of women in the emerging economies could be attributed to the fact that in recent years, for example, in India, the corporate sector and the jobs had developed at a pace. According to India's Economic Times, the greater stress levels of women countries. **Bernama**

As featured in New Straits Time



Oasia Hotel Downtown



IN a city like Singapore where land is expensive, out-of-the-box thinking is mandatory to give hotel guests an illusion of spaciousness.

That new frontier in urban architecture is achieved by manipulating vertical space, seen in high ceilings, open-air areas, creative use of rooftops and creepers that climb as high as skyscrapers.

These are some of the ideas employed to cocoon guests in a sanctuary that feels kilometres away from the concrete jungle right outside the front door.

The new Oasia Downtown Singapore Hotel in Tanjong Pagar is a clear manifestation of the success of such a concept. Opened in April, the four-star non-smoking hotel is beautiful and serene, in line with the word oasis, from which its name is derived.

The aluminium mesh structure looks red and green now because the creepers need a year or two to fully cover the whole building. By that time, I guess it will look like a giant tree in the midst of buildings.

The 27-floor building is as tall as a 40-floor structure, which means ceilings are elevated and sunlight is generous to give a tranquil setting. My favourite public space is the outdoor lawn on the 12th floor, opposite the reception.

A square space perfect for yoga, the open-air area overlooks the city and gives a natural vibe despite the artificial grass and the concrete surrounding it. The same natural concept is employed on its 27th floor pool.

Each level, from the 30m high ceiling at the Skyline Pavilion to the rooftop pools on level 27, provides a spectacular view of Singapore, from the heritage view of old Singapore to its central business district and even the port.

With the theme Journey Well and the concept of Refresh, Recharge And Refuel spread throughout the hotel, wellness is its central approach, hence the lawn and the 24-hour gym.

PRIVATE SPACE

The 28sq m Club Rooms exude the same wellness and organic-themed decor such as natural wood and intricate designs. With only 88 rooms and two suites, the Club Rooms offer privacy and personalised check-in, among others.

Little things matters in this hotel. There is complimentary in-room coconut water in the minibar, a Nespresso coffee machine

JOURNEY TO WELLNESS

A new hotel in Singapore has added little things to motivate travellers who have fallen off the wellness grid, writes **Syida Lizta Amirul Ihsan**



Grab a book and relax by the infinity pool.

PICTURES COURTESY OF FAR EAST HOSPITALITY

and Tripod Capsules (the capsules are biodegradable) as well as pillow mist to ensure a good sleep, especially for jet-lagged travellers.

The rooms are also equipped technologically. These include a Samsung Smart TV where you can stream your own content or connect to YouTube or Twitter. There is also a Press reader for e-papers and e-magazines, and a Handy smartphone, equipped with 3G connectivity and free calls to select countries.

But the best thing about the Club floor is the lounge. Its breakfast is smaller in selection than its Marmalade Pantry restaurant, but the quality of food is better, especially the juices and cereal selection.

With a barista around to make you a cup of your favourite coffee, you don't have to settle for the watered-down version that's a standard at hotel breakfast buffets.

This old Singapore area is also a great place for morning runs. There are not many cars on the roads and you can enjoy the architecture of old buildings or run along the port area to enjoy the view of the sea.

Otherwise, head over to the Duxton Plain Park, which is about 2km away, if you want to run in a park.

If the hotel can, in future, incorporate running sessions for guests or yoga and pilates session on the 12th floor lawn, then I think this green building will soon become a gem in the city.

syida@nstp.com.my



The Club Room.

FAST FACTS



Wellness is central to the hotel, and the lawn on the 12th floor serves as an ideal spot for morning yoga.

OASIA HOTEL DOWNTOWN SINGAPORE

100 Peck Seah Street, Singapore
079333
TEL +65 6812 6900
WEBSITE info.ohd@fareast.com.sg

GETTING THERE

It's 20 minutes by taxi from Changi International Airport. If you are taking the MRT, take the green East West Line to Tanjong Pagar and the hotel is a two-minute walk away.

FIRST IMPRESSION

Beautiful, spacious and nature-oriented.

ROOMS

314 rooms, of which 224 are superior and deluxe rooms, 88 are club rooms and two are suites.

PRICE

From S\$195 (RM\$79) (excluding tax).

FACILITIES

Complimentary WiFi for guests, a 24-hour gym and two pools. Marmalade Pantry serves meals from breakfast to dinner and Cin Cin Bar, also on the same floor, is a gin joint.

The business centre has two Retreat Rooms, offering space for functions and seminars with a seating capacity of 60 in theatre format or up to 20 in a boardroom set-up.

Set in a floor-to-ceiling glass meeting room, conference guests can enjoy the peace and serenity of the surrounding greenery to help boost creativity.

OVERALL SERVICE

Attentive, helpful and friendly.

NEARBY ATTRACTIONS

Within walking distance of the Tanjong Pagar MRT station, Tanjong Pagar market, International Plaza Mall, Icon Village, 100 AM Shopping Mall.



Oasia Suites Kuala Lumpur

**FAST
FACTS**


OASIS SUITES KUALA LUMPUR
No. 10, Lorong P. Ramlee,
Kuala Lumpur

TEL 03-2726 6788

FAX 03-2726 6733

EMAIL
resenay@farwest.com.sg

WEBSITE
www.stayfarwest.com

GETTING THERE

If you're coming from Jalan Sultan Ismail, turn right at the traffic light, into Jalan P. Ramlee and the first right into Lorong P. Ramlee. The Oasis Suites Kuala Lumpur is at end of Lorong P. Ramlee.

MAIN ATTRACTION

Location. Quiet locale in the heart of the city but strategically located to all the tourist attractions, Jalan P. Ramlee nightlife and Jalan Bukit Bintang.

ROOMS

267 rooms over two blocks with choices of Superior, Deluxe, One-bedroom Premier Room, One-bedroom Premier Suites, Two-bedroom Junior Suites, Two-bedroom Premier Suites.

RATES

Prices range from RM420++ (Deluxe) to RM630++ (Two-bedroom Premier Suite). All prices are not inclusive of tax and breakfast.

OVERALL SERVICE

Friendly

PLACES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE

A 15-minute walk to KLCC, Bukit Nanas train station and Hard Rock Cafe. It's a 5-minute walk to the Wisd and Merata Flag Seng which has various outlets. Or take a five minute brisk walk or free shuttle bus to the base of KL Tower and to the back gate of KL Eco Park.

IMAGINE living in the heart of the city but away from its hustle and bustle. It can be possible if you stay at a residence-cum-hotel which gives you all the comforts of home. Though right smack in the Kuala Lumpur Golden Triangle, Oasis Suites Kuala Lumpur is tucked away in Lorong P. Ramlee but still within walking distance to the popular shopping and tourist attractions.

Adjacent to KL Forest Eco Park (formerly known as Bukit Nanas Forest Reserve), the hotel is located at the dead end of Lorong P. Ramlee and is just behind the KL Tower. When driving towards the hotel, my friend and I realise the hotel driveway is somewhat narrow. During the day, the road leading up to it can be congested with cars parked along the sides.

The park fits perfectly with the whole concept of Oasis's wellness theme. Oasis Suites Kuala Lumpur is the first expansion of the Oasis brand by Singapore-owned Far East Hospitality in Malaysia. The newly launched hotel in Kuala Lumpur, which caters to business and leisure guests, focuses on the wellness pillars—refresh, retreat and recharge.

I can imagine hotel guests start a busy day of meetings or shopping spree at the neighbouring Bukit Bintang Shopping District with a morning walk through the forest.

SENSE OF CALMNESS

A modern design of comfortable grey couches, wooden tables and granite pillars reflect a sense of calmness. That and a warm welcome from the friendly reception staff make me ready to get recharged.

I check into a one-bedroom premier room on the 14th floor with a view of the KL Tower. The premier room comes with an en-suite area. It feels luxurious with two flat screen TVs, a blue-ray DVD player with a USB port, a kitchenette, washing machine cum dryer, microwave and a dimmable. The soft lighting lends a cosy homely feel.

The bedroom comes with an attached bathroom and dressing room. The whole unit has elements of nature with its green and brown striped carpets and wooden bedding. There is an amazing night view of the KL Tower, all lighted up and surrounded by trees.

The bathroom has a unique layout—sliding doors separate the main area from the shower and water closet area. The concept is nature-themed, hence the toiletries are a collection of green-coloured soap with "white tea" fragrance, fresh scented lotion, shampoo and other amenities.

The king-sized bed is comfortable and after a goodnight's sleep, I wake up feeling refreshed.

REFUELLING AND RECHARGING

The hotel has an all-day dining at Cafe



The rooftop pool on the 24th floor boasts a view of the city. PICTURED BY LAVEDA CHARLES

WELLNESS OASIS

This hotel not only gives you a feeling of home but is also within walking distance to popular shopping and tourist attractions, writes **Laveda Charles**

Oasis which serves Asian and Western fare. There are some "healthy" dishes to choose from such as fresh salads, tofu cheese cake and organic pasture-fed chicken. For drinks, there's are fresh juices, tea and coffee.

Though it does not have a huge selection for the international breakfast buffet, the cafe changes its selection daily, which is refreshing for longer-staying guests. The menu try dishes are the Indonesian satay, ayam perik Selaman and Vietnamese soft rice rolls. Take note that room service is available until 10.30pm.

Guests can also recharge at the 24-hour gym that has ceiling-to-floor windows overlooking the city. The gym seems perfect for those who just want some alone time. The rooftop garden and swimming pool located on the same level has unique rounded pool chairs, and have a beautiful view of the city. Next to the pool are two meeting rooms and a modern lounge but is only accessible for long-stay guests.

This hotel caters for families and corporate people who just want a place to stay in the city but away from the crowd. The hotel also provides multi-story parking.



The outer room of the one-bedroom Premier Room.



The 24-hour gymnasium overlooks the city.



The bedroom with the flat screen TV and white-themed king size bed.