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JOM! picks

10 KL's architectural gems

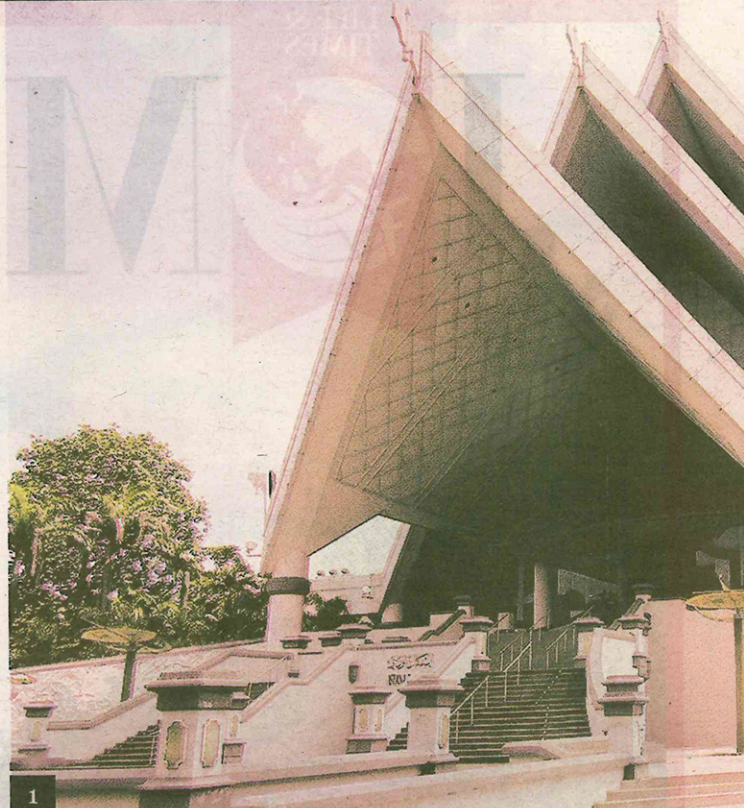
Ewe Paik Leong goes on a quick tour of the city's skyline



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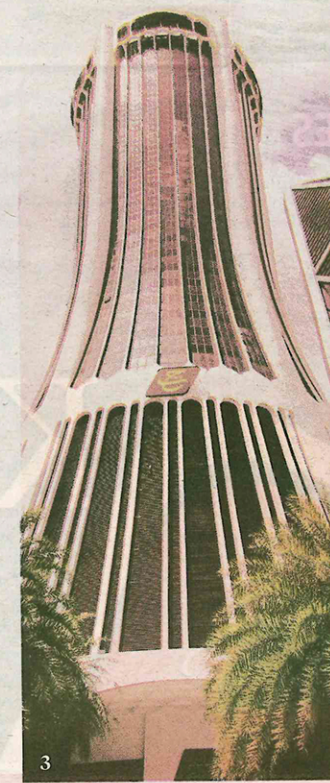
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1 **ISTANA BUDAYA, JALAN TUN RAZAK**
The design elements of Istana Budaya are based on the various aspects of Malay culture. The layout plan of the building follows the pattern of a traditional Malay house, including the lobby (which corresponds to the serambi), the auditorium (rumah ibu) and the rehearsal hall (the kitchen). The building structure resembles the sirih junjung, a multi-tier arrangement of betel leaves used in Malay weddings and welcoming ceremonies. The staircase to the auditorium depicts the traditional staircase of a Malacca house. Completed in 1998, Istana Budaya was built at a cost of RM210 million.

2 **NATIONAL LIBRARY, JALAN TUN RAZAK**
Completed in 1992, the National Library comprises three juxtaposed blocks that represent its three main objectives: To provide education, to satisfy the quest for knowledge and to cultivate the reading habit. The most prominent feature of the building is its roof which is shaped like a tengkolok, a traditional Malay headgear. Slates in three shades of blue allow intricate songket motifs to be created. The apex of the roof is a glass trapezoid that corresponds to the tip of the tengkolok. The spacious interior symbolises an open mind acquiring knowledge.



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3 **LUTH BUILDING, JALAN TUN RAZAK**
The guiding principles behind its design concept are simplicity, discipline and unity. Completed in 1984, the 38-storey structure features a circular hour-glass form with the word "Allah SWT" in Jawi script on top. It also features five non-structural pillars that symbolises the Five Pillars of Islam. White — symbolising the purity of Islam — dominates the walls of the building while glass windows are tinted black to keep out the heat. In front of the building stands a cone-shaped mosque. The honey-combed stalactite ceiling in the ground floor lobby is reflected on the floor's marble tiles.

4 **ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM, JALAN LEMBAH PERDANA**
A treasure trove of Islamic arts, this four-level building is divided into three separate wings spread over a hill slope. Five turquoise domes of intricate designs adorn the flat roof. Unfortunately, they are not visible from the main access road. The front portal of the building is presented in a modified version of an iwan but the vaulted hall is missing, leaving a rectangular framework. (An iwan is a rectangular hall or space, usually vaulted, walled on three sides but open at one end). Its columns are embellished with cartouche and floral tendrils. The ceiling of the entrance hall is taken up by an inverted dome. Its rim showcases the opening verses of the Quran in gold. The museum was opened in 1998.

5 **DAYABUMI COMPLEX, JALAN SULTAN HISHAMUDDIN**
Built in 1984, Dayabumi showcases a marriage of Malay-Islamic and modern architectural ele-