

# ISI

## Institute Sultan Iskandar

Script

for the

videotape documentary

# **The Jewels of Johor**

for presentation to  
the Prime Minister of Malaysia  
Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad  
13th March 1997  
in Johor Malaysia

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<b>VISION</b>	<b>NARRATION</b>
<p><i>Dawn over the Johor River as the mangroves come to life, a bird finds its prey, fishermen set out on their daily journey.</i></p> <p><i>The sequence runs without narration for about 10 seconds under a lone flute or perhaps some appropriate Ghazal rhythm as we establish that we are in a most serene and beautiful part of the world.</i></p>	
	What price do you put on nature's solitude?
	The so-called civilised world is living at breakneck speed - and the faster they live, the greater the value on the last pristine forests, beaches and rivers on earth.
	Nature's gifts, as most countries have discovered - too late - don't handle abuse very well.

	<p>In Malaysia, with about 60% of the country still covered by its original forests - some much older than those of the Amazon - there are rare opportunities for ecologically sustainable tourism on a scale others can only dream about.</p>
	<p>In the southern peninsular growth state of Johor, there are hundreds of thousands of hectares of pristine forests, beaches, mangroves and waterways still largely as they were millions of years ago.</p>
	<p>.....that eastern Johor has survived so well is even more surprising when you consider that the eastern flank of the Johor River was once the heart of the great Johor empire - going back to the 15th Century.</p>
	<p>Had civilisation overtaken these forests, the historic monuments and fort escarpments would have almost certainly been buried under concrete or garbage.</p>

	<p>Further to the east, the South China Sea has blessed the Johor coastline with pristine beaches. For water clarity and postcard scenery, the east coast, from south of Desaru to Mersing and the offshore islands in the north, is in international class.</p>
	<p>The tourism treasures in this largely unexploited part of the world are - <b>the Jewels of Johor.</b></p>
<p><i>OPENING TITLES:</i>  <b>THE JEWELS OF JOHOR</b></p> <p><i>SCROLLING ACROSS  BOTTOM OF SCREEN</i></p> <p><i>(JOHOR - derived from the Arabic "jauhar", or jewel)</i></p>	
	<p>But even jewels are worthless until they are discovered.</p>
	<p>The government of Johor, well aware of its environmental responsibilities, is not talking about wholesale development to cash in on the Asian - and global - tourism boom.</p>

	Learning from the mistakes of others, they are in a unique position to plan for tourism and for the economic and infrastructure growth which must follow.
	Strategic thinking is at the core of all decisions coming from Johor right now.
	The government doesn't hesitate to scour the world for the best ideas and the best brains, to help guide the state's growth destiny.
	.....going East is central to the government's policy of balanced growth and greater opportunity for its people.
	....going East is also righting an historic wrong, which stems from the colonial days when the British poured all effort into the western sectors to exploit the available resources.

	Here's the state's growth balance sheet.....to the west of the capital, Johor Bahru, are the regions which will explode as a result of the second link to Singapore - including the new city of Nusa Jaya and the Pontian region - currently the focus of a new government study.
	Also in the west, Malaysia's biggest technical university, UTM is well established, providing the nucleus for a Technovation Park and business incubation centre of world standing.
	To the north of Johor Bahru, the Senai airport - already the subject of studies for major upgrading to meet the demands of both people and cargo.
	....to the east, it's just beginning.
	The State Government has received its first studies - on the Kajora Region.
	It confirms what they instinctively knew - the potential for international tourism is huge.

	<p>Scores of activities and natural attractions were identified as being capable of harnessing into a total eastern Johor experience which would be unique to Malaysia, and certainly to the world.</p>
	<p>One single initiative is the key to this storehouse of treasures.</p>
	<p>The State is studying proposals to move the seat of Government from antiquated surroundings in downtown Johor Bahru to a new purpose built city on the banks of the Johor River.</p>
	<p>This single move would achieve two things - the stimulant for infrastructure and growth so desperately needed in the east - and the establishment of developmental benchmarks for all to follow.</p>
	<p>The possibility of a new administrative city on the banks of the Johor was a decision reached only after the most intense riverine study ever conducted in Malaysia.</p>

	The researchers found a river which has survived.
	More than 10 thousand hectares of mangroves still exist in the Johor River basin.
	Of all the rivers of Malaysia, the Johor is the <u>least</u> degraded.
	<u>One</u> site, along the eastern bank, around Johor Lama can sustain development, providing access to the river without mangrove loss.
	It's here, in old Johor, where some of Malaysia's greatest jewels are found - remnants of a civilisation which was sacked by the Portuguese and Achenes in the 16th Century.
	A move to Johor Lama would place the government in the role of custodian of the River, preserving for the international historians and culture seekers a significant piece of Malaysian heritage.



	<p>Encompassing education, tourism and hospitality training centres as well as the seat of Government, Johor Perdana could be the catalyst for development, and an icon for the entire eastern region.</p>
	<p>The linchpin to opening up the east is a spectacular crossing of the Johor River - undoubtedly one of the infrastructure legacies to follow the Government's move to Johor Perdana.</p>
	<p>At a point where the river is four and a half kilometres wide, a bridge which respects nature is proposed.</p>
	<p>Initial concepts show a high scenic route across the water and a unique lower promenade just above the mangrove jungle - virtually an attraction in its own right.</p>
	<p>From here, it's a short journey to the east coast beaches.</p>

	In addition, a proposed opening up of a tunnel and bridge link from Singapore's international airport at Changi into Johor at Pasir Gudang, effectively opens a visitor floodgate.
	The announcement, early in 1997 of the Nine hundred million Ringgit Agarta Universe family theme park near Pasir Gudang shows that private enterprise also views the east as a commercial jewel.
	The park is catering for six million visitors a year.
	Significant developments, incorporating housing, recreation and tourism complete the circle of activity around the Johor River basin.
	At Desaru, what began as a tourism experiment of the Kejora region in the mid 70's, is now a fledgling international resort region.

	<p>Eastern pioneer establishments like Sevana Cove and Desaru International Resort, are now the catalysts to intense investor interest in this part of the world.</p>
	<p>At the Desaru Resort alone, there will be more than 12 thousand apartments, 12 hotels, four golf courses, a theme park, eco tourism complex and other recreation facilities of international standard.</p>
	<p>There are at least another 20 projects in the eastern wings - either under construction, in planning stages or waiting for approvals.</p>
	<p>All of them contain elements of interest to international and local tourists.</p>
	<p>There is a recognition that eastern Johor's natural attributes and heritage attractions are collectively unique in the world.</p>
	<p>Johor has discovered that cultural monuments are significant assets rather than economic burdens.</p>

	Johor's timing is perfect.
	Next to Europe, Asia and the Pacific are the second largest tourist destinations in the world.
	As remote as it currently may be, Desaru manages to increase its visitation by an average 10.5% per year.
	The Johor Government is keen to see that everyone wins in the opening up of the east.
	Local communities will reap the benefit of infrastructure and services which just weren't feasible before.
	Advances in eco-tourism and hospitality are opening up career opportunities for local Malaysians.
	Farmers and fishermen - potters and performers - all will be encouraged to put their industries on show because all are unique.
	Improved living standards will follow better job opportunities.

	Tourism will be the new industry which makes it all possible.
	The Jewels of Johor deserve to take their place among the great treasures of the 21st Century.
<p><i>Closing Titles</i></p> <p><b><i>The Jewels of Johor (COAT OF ARMS OF THE STATE)</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Presented by the Johor State Economic Planning Unit</i></b></p>	