

PIC WEEKLY

Feature Interview

Up Close & Personal with **Kamal Bahrin Ahmad** SVP & CEO of PRPC



The end of 2022 was the two-year mark for PRPC Senior Vice President & Chief Executive Officer En Kamal Bahrin Ahmad. Beginning 2023 with fresh perspective and energy, he has no doubt the PIC is set to become at par, if not better, than Jurong Island, Singapore's Petrochemical Hub.

Graduated in 1986 in Chemical Engineering from the University of Texas, En Kamal shared his vision and aspirations for 2023 in an up close and personal interview with PIC Weekly, giving a behind-the-scenes sneak peek into the life of the SVP & CEO of PRPC, the utilities and service provider to one of the largest integrated refinery complex in Southeast Asia.

Also fondly known as Hj Kamal or KBA, he has been no stranger to PETRONAS and also PRPC specifically after having served for 35 years in various OPU's in Melaka, Kerteh, South Africa and PETRONAS Gas Berhad. He took the helm of PRPC in January 2021 and he believes the people is the heart of any organisation and if steered well, can do wonders no matter how big the challenges that may come. And this belief has not wavered.

Question 1: PRPC and PRefChem is a strategic alliance of two of the world's largest and most successful national oil companies -- Petrolim Nasional Berhad (PETRONAS), the national oil company of Malaysia, and Saudi Aramco, the national oil company of Saudi Arabia. After stepping into the role of PRPC SVP & CEO, what were among the biggest challenges you have faced and how did you overcome it?

Answer: Since its inception, PIC has faced several key challenges such as the fire which took the lives of some of our colleagues, total power failure, the minor fire incident, among others. It is a massive refinery and petrochemical complex with stretched schedules, there are bound to have some issues and challenges. But what kept me keep going is the support system from the top management and vote of confidence. The CEO, Downstream SVP, our peers in PD&T and DBE and the rest in PETRONAS Group and even the Board of Board of Directors, have been supportive to our challenges. We have a great team, and that keep me encouraged as well. With the recent challenges such the MCO and other incidences, I chose to have an office in Pengerang because I want to feel what the staff feels and keep me near them to understand their challenges and help me steer the organisation better.

Question 2: What is your vision for PIC in the next 5 years?

Answer: We have crafted our PIC Vision. As PRPC, we provide the utilities and facilities such as water, power, office space, securities etc. We work closely with PRefChem, who is the molecule owner as well as other companies such as PETRONAS Chemicals Group Berhad (PCG) to attract more investors to set up their businesses here.

PIC is a very strategic asset and with our integrated petrochemical facility, my vision is to drive us to change from crude to petrochemical products in line with our Net Zero Carbon Emission 2050 (NZCE 2050). We have about 6000 acres and 1/3 of it is still empty, and this is our opportunity to expand and prove what we can do as the national oil company.

Pengerang is the right place for us to position ourselves and compete with the likes of Jurong Island, Singapore's Petrochemical Hub. In Oct 2022, Johor Petroleum Development Corporation Bhd (JPDC) announced on the government's proposal to give special status to Pengerang as the country's petrochemical hub to increase the attractiveness of the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex (PIPC) as an investment destination for downstream oil and gas and petrochemical industries. The PIPC development, which covered an area of 9,269 hectares, involved a period of 25 years from 2013 to 2037 and is divided into four phases. The first phase of PIPC from 2013 to 2019 saw the development of two catalytic projects in downstream oil and gas and petrochemical-related activities.

Question 3: PRefChem and PRPC has been in an integrated partnership since 2018, two professionally-run national oil companies where both are able to leverage on each other's strengths and share technical capabilities as well as experiences for mutual benefit. How do you think collaborative efforts between both parties can be further fine-tuned?

Answer: Two years ago, collaboration was a challenge as PRefChem was not able to recoup their investments, which was a tense moment for both parties. But now, I can say the collaboration is much better. For example, early last year, Aramco brought in about 25 of their experts from Saudi Arabia and we also brought in our additional experts to ensure that this JV is successful despite the challenges faced. And both companies are still injecting money to ensure the JV continues.

One of the things that we need to do in 2023 is the Creditor Reliability Test (CRT) - 90 days of uninterrupted service to PRefChem. We, as the service provider need to ensure this is successfully done. I think the issues we have can be addressed by March this year in preparation towards the CRT test run. The Asset Reliability, Integrity & Sustainability Elevation (ARISE) team has also been assembled to uncover arising issues and mitigate problems as soon as possible, safely.

Question 4: Is PIC Safe?

Answer: First of all, I need to ensure first and for all, for myself, that it is a safe place. Whenever we go to see the authorities such as DOSH or the Board, I am of the stance that I will not allow the plant to operate if DOSH, the Board or myself feel that it is not safe to do so. I gave the assurance to all during the engagements we had that it is. To answer your question, yes, it is safe. I will not operate otherwise.

Question 5: What is your personal "mantra" when it comes to steering an integrated refining entity the size of PRPC? What drives and motivates you every day?

Answer: As a state-of-the-art facility, I think we can elevate PIC to be at par, if not better, than Jurong. We have a long way to go but we can definitely get there. When investors come in, they are also looking for schools, proper housing areas, good connectivity, proper roads, community area etc. But I believe that we can put all these in place and enhance PIC and Pengerang surrounding areas to become THE Regional Petrochemical Park. In Shaa Allah.

Asked on his first message for 2023 to his staff and PIC peers, En Kamal said with a strong team comprised of PRPC, PRefChem, PT2SB, PePSB as well as a few other tenants, the right ecosystem and support from the management, PIC is set to rise to overcome any challenge that come its way.

"Alhamdulillah, it is now my 2 years in Pengerang. I can only face the challenges with good support from all and I want to say thank you for your feedback in order for me to keep doing better. The journey is not over and there will be more challenges. But we can do it, together. Thank You, PIC," he said, before concluding the interview.



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PRPC begins 2023

PRPC began the new year on a positive note after a challenging 2022 when PETRONAS President & Group CEO Datuk Tengku Taufik paid a visit to the Integrated Rebuild & Commissioning (IRC) project area on January 6, 2022. He conveyed his appreciation on the early completion of the rebuild works following the unfortunate fire incident which occurred late October last year.

Datuk Tengku Taufik, who was also present to give Focused Recognitions to the project teams involved, noted that although many were affected following the incident, the team stayed resilient and strong.

"But what we are seeing today is you don't get beaten easily. This is after many obstacles that had to be faced by this team from ARDS, DHT and this incident but you came back stronger. Today I feel proud to say thank you.

"What I see here is what lives up to shared values of cohesiveness, where working here as a family, part of the larger PETRONAS sisterhood and brotherhood, and where we refuse to surrender to failures," he said in his appreciation speech.

"This is one example in which we can walk away and hold our chins held up high because we did not concede to norms of conventions. I don't want to come here only for successes. I want to be here in the struggle with you because we are all in this together," he said.



on a high note

Concurring with what was highlighted by Datuk Tengku Taufik, PRPC SVP & CEO Encik Kamal Bahrin Ahmad in his welcoming speech said all this could not have happened without the support of PETRONAS management.

"It doesn't matter which OPU you come from, what colour, they worked together with a common goal. And to me, that is one of the key factors for the success of this project. The team here produced a lot of surprises instead of three months to complete it became less than two months, in addition to involving a lot of hard work and sacrifices," En Kamal Bahrin also said.

Also present were COO & EVP and CEO of Gas Business Encik Adnan Zainal Abidin, SVP Upstream Malaysia Puan Hasliza Othman, VP, Group Project Delivery Encik Noor Ilias Mohd Idris and VP, Group HSE Mr Yong Sai Chung. Datuk Tengku Taufik also attended the Friday prayer, solat hajat and doa selamat at Masjid Al-Falah, PIC, before wrapping up his visit.

