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Still demand for houses despite weak ringgit



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The four strong feng shui pillars of a house

Prosperity grows in the south of KUALA LUMPUR

Non-landed residential properties in Seri Kembangan are in demand due to their fairly affordable pricing and healthy rental returns. Real estate experts are optimistic about Seri Kembangan's property investment prospects thanks to its rapid pace of development and improved accessibility, and the shift in population growth towards the southern part of Kuala Lumpur.

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Previn (second from right) receiving certificate and trophy from the representatives of MIEA. Photo by Sam Fong/The Edge Property

Ahead of the curve

Zerin Properties wins a brace of accolades at the National Real Estate Awards 2015 for innovation

BY RACHEL CHEW

Zerin Properties took the titles of Most Innovative Firm of the Year and Real Estate Website of the Year at the National Real Estate Awards last weekend. The awards were organised by the Malaysian Institute of Real Estate Agents.

Zerin, one of the most familiar names in the property agency and consultancy business in the country, is something of a serial award-winner but the latest two "mean a lot", says Zerin Properties founder and CEO Previndran Singhe.

"I am proud of the team for taking the agency business to the next level," said Previndran in an email to *The Edge Property*, adding that they carry added prestige for being given by an organisation of peers.

The Most Innovative Firm of The Year is a new award sponsored by theedgeproperty.com, a property portal that is part of The Edge Media Group.

It is given to a firm that has introduced innovative ideas into the market. For example, Zerin Properties has an Exclusive Ladies team made up of nine women.

"All of them have sound knowledge of the industry and understand the needs and wants of women clients," says Previndran. "The team can offer women clients the right advice and assistance to achieve their property investment targets."

The Exclusive Ladies team was created because women are increasingly taking the lead in property purchases and investment decisions.

Previndran says innovation is necessary because investors and home-buyers are becoming more discerning. "They are constantly evolving in terms of their needs and how they approach their needs," he says.

"You either change or be a dinosaur! Innovative ideas have helped us reach new markets and also garner community support in what we do," adds Previndran.

Zerin won the award for Real Estate Website of the Year for its spe-

'You either change or be a dinosaur! Innovative ideas have helped us reach new markets and also garner community support in what we do'

cialised website, officespace.com.my, which allows corporate clients to easily find the office space they need, Previndran says. Its coverage encompasses the Klang Valley, mainly its prime locations of Kuala Lumpur City Centre, Damansara Heights, Bangsar, Petaling Jaya and Subang Jaya.

The judging criteria for the award included usability, appearance and content, accessibility and reach, functionality and interactivity and other contributory factors such as number of visits to the website. As of August 2015, officespace.com.my had record-

ed more than 1 million unique hits.

Previndran explains that what is special about the website is its content of more than 300 buildings available for rent, complemented by powerful search tools. Popular features are the office space calculator, GPS locations for each building and multimedia introduction for each office building available for rent.

"I think our approach towards marketing and how we target our clients made the company stand out from other candidates in the categories that we won," he says. "I would like to thank my team who have been extremely supportive and have supported me in my decisions."

The National Real Estate Awards ceremony was held at Sime Darby Convention Centre. Awards in 19 categories were given out.



Watch a video of the Awards Night at www.theedgeproperty.com

The mushrooming growth of high-rises in Seri Kembangan today.



Seri Kembangan: A rental market hotspot

Rental market supported by students from higher learning institutions in the area while low and medium-end properties offer low-entry point investment opportunities

BY RACHEL CHEW

Located at the border of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor, Seri Kembangan has rapidly evolved into an emerging residential property investment hot spot south of Kuala Lumpur due to its strategic location, fairly affordable properties and a healthy rental market.

Located south of Kuala Lumpur, many developers have rebranded the area as KL South. Seri Kembangan is about 20km away from the Kuala Lumpur city centre and is accessible via a number of highways, such as the KL-Seremban Highway and Besraya Highway. It is also close to the Damansara-Puchong Expressway (LDP) and KL-Putrajaya Highway, among others.

According to data collated by theedgeproperty.com, as at June 2015, asking rental yields of non-landed residences in Seri Kembangan appear to be fairly good, with indicative yields ranging between 3.7% and 6.9% per annum, mainly buoyed by the substantial student population in the area. Universities in and around Seri Kembangan include Universiti Putra Malaysia, Asia Pacific University of Technology and Innovation, Perdana University and SEGi College.

Managing director of PA International Property Consultants (KL) Sdn Bhd, Jerome Hong, tells The Edge Property that the rental market in Seri Kembangan is likely to remain healthy amid the current



Hong: Seri Kembangan has good development potential supported by relatively cheaper and attractive land cost. **The Edge file photo**



Wong: Seri Kembangan is serving the mass market, where majority of the high-rise residential properties are affordable. **The Edge file photo**



Kwong: Older developments have lower investment entry point yet provide stable rental income due to strong demand.

overall slowdown in sales.

"The rental market is likely to remain healthy, particularly for developments located near educational establishments and those within easy reach of public transport," says Hong.

According to PA International's research, non-landed residential developments that are popular among the student community include Vista Pinggiran, South City, East Lake Residence, Fortune Park and The Academia (see chart 1). Some older flats and

low-cost apartments such as Vista Impiana are also attractive to students.

Raymond Kwong, senior negotiator of Hartamas Real Estate (KD) Sdn Bhd, concurs the rental market in Seri Kembangan is stable due to the substantial student population in the area.

"The student population supports the Seri Kembangan rental market. International students usually opt for mid-range high-rises with facilities while some students on a limited budget may go for older

apartments or flats. Seri Kembangan offers many choices for both groups," Kwong shares.

"International students usually have higher accommodation budgets but we also have students who do not mind staying in a basic unit because it is cheaper," he adds.

However, he believes the value of the older, lower-end flats and apartments offer more room for growth compared with the newer ones.

He recommends that investors on limited budgets look into older high-rise prop-

