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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2016 . ISSUE 2308/2016 . PP19055/06/2016(034530)

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WHAT

Opened to all strata and non-strata buildings managed either in-house or by any property manager. The Awards comprises three categories — Residential, Commercial and Mixed development.

HOW

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TheEdgeProperty.com pullout is published by The Edge Property Sdn Bhd. It is available with *The Edge Financial Daily* every Friday. The pullout is also distributed at more than 200 offices, shopping complexes, condos, medical centres, F&B outlets and LRT stations in the Klang Valley. You can also download it for free at www.TheEdgeProperty.com

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Decline in property sales continues in 3Q2016

The third quarter of 2016 saw the total property transaction volume and value in Malaysia registering a decline of 8.45% and 6.34%, respectively, from the previous quarter.

According to the National Property Information Centre's (Napic) property transaction data for 3Q2016, a total of 76,456 properties were transacted or an average of 25,485 a month, a decrease of 10.98% compared with the same period last year.

On transacted value, the total dropped from RM32.88 billion in 2Q2016 to RM30.79 billion in 3Q2016. Compared with the same period last year, the total transacted value has declined 17.91%.

A total of 49,640 residential properties worth RM15.61 billion were sold in 3Q2016. Compared with the previous quarter, transacted volume and value have dipped 6.1% and 6.6%, respectively. Y-o-y, the transacted volume and value of residential properties have dropped 13.91% and 12%, respectively.

Agricultural land emerged as the second main driver of property sales in 3Q2016, behind residential properties in terms of volume, recording 15,634 transactions worth RM3.07 billion. Compared with 2Q2016, the transacted value has increased 15.6% despite a decrease of 14.6% in transacted volume.

Some 5,801 commercial properties were sold in 3Q2016 for a total of RM5.8 billion, a decline of 7.17% in volume and 4.96% in value from the last quarter.

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LAUNCHES + EVENTS

Selangor aims to achieve 'smart state' status by 2025

The Selangor state government hopes to obtain "smart state" status by 2025 according to its Smart Selangor Blueprint launched at the inaugural Smart City International Conference 2016 in Subang.

According to Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, whose speech was read by State Education, Human Capital Development, Science, Technology and



Innovation committee chairman Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, the blueprint is a roadmap towards a more sustainable economic growth for Selangor.

"This strategic pivot will bring about key transformational outcomes to realise Selangor's smart state aspirations by 2025 and place Selangor as the premier business, travel and living destination in South East Asia."

Azmin added that 12 smart domains have been selected namely Governance, Waste Management, Digital Infrastructure, Transport and Mobility, Energy, Water, Healthcare, Education, Food and Agriculture, Disaster Management, Building, and Security.

Forest City to contribute RM66 bil in tax revenue

Forest City, a mega mixed-use development on four man-made islands in Iskandar Malaysia, Johor, is expected to contribute RM66 billion in tax revenue to the government over two decades.

Its developer Country Garden PacificView Sdn Bhd (CGPV) also expects the project to create up to 220,000 jobs.

"Forest City is gaining momentum due to its local, regional and global positioning. Because of the varied industries flocking to it, the estimated gross domestic product contribution will be approximately RM1,980 billion.

"In addition, the total cumulative investment of US\$100 billion [RM444 billion] will attract returns of sufficient proportion," CGPV said in a statement issued with the signing of strategic initiatives between Forest City and 36 partners and the launch of Forest City Phoenix Hotel on Dec

6. The event was officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

Forest City will feature residential towers, office towers, parks, hotels, shopping malls and an international school. Construction began in February and as of last month, about 8,000 apartments have been sold.



Tower A of SkyAwani 2 Residences fully sold in three hours

SkyWorld Development Group's SkyAwani 2 Residences' Tower A which was launched on Dec 3 had

received overwhelming response with the 414 apartment units in Tower A fully sold within three hours.

"This is strong evidence of our ongoing endeavour in delivering a good mix of projects centred around our three key strengths namely — value creation, integrated sky living experience and innovative concepts and/or design," said SkyWorld COO Lee Chee Seng.

Located off Jalan Ipoh in Kuala Lumpur, the affordable apartment project comprises two towers of 39 and 44 storeys with nine levels of podium parking and three storeys of stratified shopoffices.

Tower A and Tower B have 414 and 294 units, respectively. Tower A was the first tower to be launched with units having built-up sizes of 800 sq ft and a fixed price of RM300,000.

The 2.78-acre leasehold project has an estimated gross development value of over RM250 million.

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If you have any real estate-related events, email us at propertyeditor@bizedge.com. Events listed here will also appear on **TheEdgeProperty.com**.

Official launch of Brezza One Residency

Date: Dec 9 to 11 (Fri to Sun)

Time: 9am to 9pm

Venue: Bukit Ampang Permai Sales Gallery, Lot 9270, Bukit Ampang Permai, Bukit Ampang, Off Jalan Hulu

Langat, Ampang, Selangor

Contact: (011) 3250 166 / (011) 3250 188 / (011) 250 199

Wangsa Keringat Development Sdn Bhd will launch Brezza One Residency, a leasehold condominium located in the Bukit Ampang Permai township in Selangor. Refreshments and a buffet dinner will be served.



Santa Factory at Bandar Sri Sendayan

Date: Dec 10 and 11 (Sat and Sun); Dec 17 and 18; Dec 24 and 25



Time: 11am to 9pm

Venue: d'Tempat Country Club, PT12653, Jalan Pusat

Dagangan Sendayan 1, Bandar Sri Sendayan, Negeri Sembilan

Contact: 1800 88 2688

Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd will be hosting a series of family fun activities at its Bandar Sri Sendayan township to celebrate the festive season. Activities include ice skating and DIY Christmas craft sessions. One can also experience snow and watch a fireworks display.

Recycle for charity at The Pano

Date: Dec 18 (Sun)

Time: 10am to 3pm

Venue: The Pano Sales Gallery, 486-6, G Floor, Block E, Rivercity, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah, Kuala Lumpur

Contact: (03) 7710 1000

OCR Property has teamed up with Community Recycle for Charity in this charity event where the money generated from the donation of recycled items will go to help those in need. Bring along items for recycling such as old clothes, plastic bottles, glass bottles, newspapers or any type of paper, cardboard boxes, used shoes and bags, small electrical items and kitchenware to participate.

Experience Ice Cream Wonderland with Mah Sing

Date: Dec 2 to Jan 3 (Fri to Tues)

Time: 12pm to 5pm

Venue: Star Avenue Lifestyle Mall, No 3, Jalan Zuhal U5/179, Pusat Komersial Arena Bintang, Seksyen U5, Shah Alam



Contact: (012) 527 7646/ (012) 710 0873

Mah Sing Group will be organising a month-long "Ice Cream Wonderland" event at Star Avenue Lifestyle Mall to celebrate the festive season.

BIG HOMEExpo

Date: Dec 9 to Dec 12 (Fri to Mon)

Time: 11am to 9pm

Venue: Bukit Jalil Stadium, Car Park B (aircon tent), Jalan Barat, Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur

Contact: (012) 388 1237

BIG HOMEExpo will feature as many as 300 booths with over 500 well-known brands exhibiting their products, including home appliances, furniture, and home furnishings and fittings.

Bumiputera Property Exhibition 2016

Date: Dec 17 and 18 (Sat and Sun)

Time: 10am to 7pm

Venue: Putra World Trade Centre, 41, Jalan Tun Ismail, Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur

Contact: (03) 4142 1151

The exhibition highlights property projects of various developers with Bumi lots to sell.



Property management crucial in ensuring quality of urban living

BY NATALIE KHOO

Living in high-rise and stratified properties is becoming the norm in land scarce cities. The increased congestion in urban centres has also made it more challenging to create comfortable living environments.

“There will be much more satisfaction and happiness for Malaysians when they work and live in well-managed properties,” said Malaysian Institute of Professional Property Managers (MIPPM) president Sarkunan Subramaniam.

Issues such as security and proper house-keeping or cleanliness must take priority in a well-managed property.

“On top of that, it is important for the building to be well maintained so that there is no risk or hazard to its occupants,” he told TheEdgeProperty.com.

A well-managed building will also ensure a high level of occupancy and provide strong returns on investment because of its asset preservation and asset enhancement values, he added.

According to Building Managers Association of Malaysia (BMAM) president Tan Sri Eddy Chen, the current ratio of landed residential property to high-rise ones is about 70:30. By 2025, it is estimated that the ratio will be 50:50 and as we move further into the future, the proportion for landed homes will be reduced even more.

“There are varied reasons for the increase in high-rise buildings — the main reason being scarcity of land and the fact that people want to reduce travel time to work. These have led to more developments on brown-field sites that are generally more expensive and nearer to public transport.

“To justify the high land cost, one way is to increase density and to go vertical,” Chen told TheEdgeProperty.com. He also noted that many choose to stay in guarded high-rise properties for better security.

“With increasing affluence, people are travelling more and hence guarded and gated living enables them to lock up and go with peace of mind that everything would be intact when they return home,” he said.

It is therefore important for a high-rise building to be well managed as it concerns the health and wealth of Malaysians in general.



Sarkunan: There will be much more satisfaction and happiness for Malaysians when they work and live in well-managed properties.



Chen: The Awards will set the benchmark and lift building management standards and quality.



Ng: The basic qualities of a building have to be of a certain standard such as its cleanliness, security and building maintenance services.



Meanwhile, Malaysian REIT Managers Association (MRMA) chairman Datuk Jeffrey Ng Tiong Lip noted that the basic need of a building occupier is for a clean, safe and functional space. “The basic qualities of a building have to be of a certain standard such as its cleanliness, security and building maintenance services. More importantly, it must meet the needs of the community within the property or asset,” said Ng.

Other building management qualities

that cannot be ignored include adopting energy efficiency systems, improving the service level to keep occupiers satisfied, the ability to support and enhance a maintenance programme plan, as well as incorporating the latest technologies to meet the needs and lifestyle of the occupiers within the community.

“A well-managed property will be able to achieve high occupancy and attract good quality occupiers. This way it can also de-

mand strong rental rates or subsale values,” he concurred.

With the introduction of TheEdgeProperty.com Malaysia’s Best Managed Property Awards 2017, much-needed attention will be drawn to the issue of building management.

Ng said it has been long overdue that the public at large be made aware of the importance of good property management and its impact on property values.

“It (the Awards) will motivate and incentivise stakeholders to achieve higher standards in property management to be at par with global standards and trends,” he said.

Organised in partnership with Nippon Paint Malaysia and Panasonic Malaysia and supported by MIPPM, BMAM, MRMA and The Edge Malaysia, the Awards is now open for submissions until Jan 16, 2017. Nippon Paint Malaysia is giving a RM500 paint voucher for each submission and a RM10,000 paint voucher to each winner.

Entries are open to all stratified and non-stratified buildings, managed in-house or by property managers. There are three categories — residential, commercial and mixed developments.

“The Awards is significant and hopefully will provide the necessary encouragement, reward and recognition for well-managed buildings. It will set the benchmark and lift building management standards and quality which are very important to the relevant stakeholders such as comfort, security and value added,” said Chen.

“Everyone is always concerned about how well their properties are managed, more so the investing public who see real estate as their best bet against inflation. No investor wants to see their investments go down the proverbial drain due to poor maintenance,” he noted.

Sarkunan also believes that the Awards will draw attention to buildings which are properly managed so that others can emulate their success.

“They will be able to see what the winning properties are doing right and what they can learn from them,” he added.

The winners of the Awards will be announced in April 2017. Visit www.theedge-property.com or call (03) 7721 8289 for more information on the Awards.

MOHD SHAHRIN YAHYA | TheEdgeProperty.com



The current ratio of landed residential property to high-rise ones is about 70:30. By 2025, it is estimated that the ratio will be 50:50.



Kerjaya Prospek Property to launch RM2 bil worth of projects in next two years

BY TAN AI LENG

PETALING JAYA: The listed entity of construction and property development veteran Datuk Tee Eng Ho, Kerjaya Prospek Group Bhd, is an established name in the construction sector. Meanwhile, Tee's private company, Kerjaya Prospek Property Sdn Bhd, is gaining momentum as a property developer.

Kerjaya Prospek Property has plans to roll out at least three developments with a total gross development value (GDV) of RM2 billion within the next two years.

"Going forward, the listed company [Kerjaya Prospek Group] will focus on construction work, while my private company, Kerjaya Pros-

pek Property, will concentrate on the property development segment," he told TheEdgeProperty.com.

Tee, who is the executive chairman of Kerjaya Prospek Group, stressed that there will not be any conflict of interest between the private arm and the listed entity. The listed entity currently has two property projects in hand — Vista Residences and a condominium project in Montere Golf and Country Club.

The RM300 million GDV Vista Residences was launched early 2016 and 60% of the units have been booked while 48% of the buyers have signed the Sale and Purchase Agreement.

On the Montere project, Tee noted that the company has secured all the needed approvals and is planning to launch the 349-unit condominium in the second half of 2017.

Meanwhile, the new projects which will be unveiled by Kerjaya Prospek Property (Tee's private company) include the Kaleidoscope at Setiawangsa as well as two high-rise residential projects in Old Klang Road and Penang.

Tee said the foundation



Artist's impression of Kaleidoscope.

work on Kaleidoscope has been completed and the company recently granted a preview of the project to selected buyers. It is slated to be launched next year. The six-acre development comprises four 25-storey residential blocks that will house 600 units with built-up sizes ranging between 1,196 sq ft and 1,491 sq ft.

According to Tee, Kaleidoscope lies next to Bukit Dinding's 200-acre forest, hence the project will offer forest views to its residents. A suspension bridge with a viewing deck will also be built for residents to enjoy its natural surroundings.

"This project has a GDV of RM400 million and is expected to be completed by 2020. The estimated average selling price for Kaleidoscope is RM500 psf," said the 52-year old developer who hails from Melaka.

Over in Old Klang Road, there will be a five-acre mixed development located near Pearl Point Shopping Mall. "The project has a tentative GDV of RM1 billion. The development will be similar to the company's previous development known as The Shore in Melaka, which consists of serviced residences, a shopping mall, hotel and offices," he explained.

Tee said its construction work will start next year, and will probably take five years to complete. The office tower in this development could house Kerjaya Prospek Group's office in the future.

In Penang, it is planning the development of Penang Straits Residence with an estimated GDV of RM300 million. Located in Seri Tanjung Pinang, the development comprises 246 units of serviced apartments on a one-acre site.

"It will be a 28-storey tower. The built-up size of the units is around 800 sq ft and the serviced apartment will be managed by Eastern & Oriental Bhd," he added.

The indicative average selling price is about RM1,200 psf, with a minimum selling price from RM1 million.

Tee said the company also has a 150-acre landbank in Melaka Tengah, Melaka, and a 30-acre plot in Klang, Selangor.

The softening market may pose a challenge to developers as well as property buyers but Tee believes there are investment opportunities as well.

"For buyers, they could get good bargains as there are plenty of choices in the market; for developers, as long as they are in healthy cash flow condition, they could get cheaper land for future development purposes," Tee explained.

As for Kerjaya Prospek Property, it is also keen to expand its landbank and has its eye on areas with a Kuala Lumpur address not too far from the KLCC area.



KENNY YAP | TheEdgeProperty.com

The softening market may pose a challenge to developers and property buyers but Tee believes there are investment opportunities as well.

E&O to launch 70 units of Avira Garden Terraces in 1H2017

BY SHAWN NG

PETALING JAYA: Eastern & Oriental Bhd (E&O) plans to launch phase 2 of Avira Garden Terraces at its Avira Iskandar Malaysia development in Johor in the first half of 2017.

Comprising 70 double-storey superlink houses, the developer is looking to launch the homes by March or April next year, E&O Johor operations general manager Benjamin Ong told TheEdgeProperty.com.

"Phase 1 of Avira Garden Terraces, which consists of 458 double-storey superlink houses, had enjoyed a good take-up rate of 90% with a healthy mix of buyers. About half of them were foreign buyers," he said, adding that phase 1 was launched in 2Q2014.

Similar to phase 1, the 70 units in phase 2 will be priced from RM1.6 million to RM1.7 million per unit. The built-up sizes for the 3 + 1 bedroom units will range from 2,215 sq ft to 2,314 sq ft.

"The upcoming phase is open for



Artist's impression of Avira Wellness Sanctuary.

registration and we have received strong interest from foreigners, including from Hong Kong, China, Singapore and India," said Ong.

Avira Garden Terraces is part of phase 1 of Avira Iskandar Malaysia. Phase 1 covers 60 acres and has a gross development value (GDV) of RM1.4 billion. It comprises about 700 units of serviced apartments, a wellness centre dubbed Wellness Sanctuary, and the two phases of

double-storey superlink houses in Avira Garden Terraces.

Meanwhile, the entire Avira Iskandar Malaysia development has a total GDV of RM3.5 billion and spans 207 acres of leasehold land. It comprises terraced and semi-detached houses, bungalows, condominiums, serviced apartments, a commercial district and a wellness centre.

Ong said E&O also targets to

commence the construction of the Avira Wellness Sanctuary in 1Q2017.

"We are now planning the development of the Wellness Sanctuary, a five-acre wellness centre equipped with modern facilities such as an Olympic-size swimming pool and a health and fitness centre for our residents," he said.

Looking ahead, Ong remains bullish on the Johor property market's long-term outlook given that

Ong: E&O targets to commence the construction of the Wellness Sanctuary in 1Q2017.

there is still a healthy demand for housing while the government continues with its efforts to make Iskandar Malaysia successful.

Being the third largest city in Malaysia, Johor Bahru remains one of the top three property destinations in the country, he said.

"I believe there is still a healthy demand for properties in the market. Investors should also take advantage of the rebates and discounts that developers are currently offering.

"Well-priced and well-planned projects in good locations remain in demand," he added.

Nevertheless, Ong said the current slowdown seems to be holding out relatively longer than previous slowdowns which usually lasts around 12 to 18 months.



TheEdgeProperty.com



Gamuda Land to launch properties in four new townships over next two years

BY RACHEL CHEW

KOTA KEMUNING: Gamuda Land, the property arm of Gamuda Bhd, plans to launch properties in four new townships over the next two years. The townships have an estimated total gross development value (GDV) of RM45 billion, said its group managing director, Datuk Lin Yun Ling.

The four townships in Selangor are located in Kundang, Kuang, Kota Kemuning and Sepang.

"[We] expect strong [property] growth over the next two years," Lin told reporters after Gamuda Bhd's annual general meeting yesterday.

"We launched the first phase of the 90-acre Kundang Estates @ Kundang last month. It was fully sold. We will be launching Gamuda Gardens @ Kuang in March next year. It is a township sitting on 810 acres of land," added Lin.

The first phase of Kundang Estates com-



Lin: If there are good opportunities, we will continue to buy land.

prises 120 double-storey houses with built-ups of 1,733 sq ft to 2,424 sq ft. Prices start at RM570,000. The overall development will have 573 landed homes in nine precincts while 14 acres of land will be dedicated to recreational areas and parks.

Meanwhile, Gamuda Gardens is a mixed-used development. It is located 5km away from Kundang Estates and will take 10 to 15 years to complete. The commercial component at Gamuda Gardens will also serve Kundang Estates.

Kundang Estates and Gamuda Gardens have a combined GDV of RM11 billion.

As for the other two new township developments, one will be about 300 acres located in Kota Kemuning while the other spans 1,500 acres in Sepang.

Gamuda Land had achieved RM2.1 billion sales in the financial year ended July 31, 2016 (FY2016). It is targeting RM3 billion sales for FY2017.

"We are in the second



An artist's impression of Kundang Estates.

quarter of the financial year now. Our sales so far is on track to the full year target. I believe we can achieve the RM3 billion sales target and there is no need to revise it," said Lin. He expects half of the sales to come from overseas, namely Singapore, Vietnam and Australia.

He also noted that the company has an unbilled sales of RM1.9 billion.

Gamuda Land has a substantial landbank of 3,800 acres with a GDV of RM55 billion which it could develop over the next 20 years.

"If there are good opportunities, we will

continue to buy land. Land investment is for the long term. The current market situation shouldn't be the main consideration in land purchase decisions," he said.

Meanwhile, Lin shared that its second Industrialised Building System factory located in Banting will be completed in the first half of 2018.

"Our first factory is located in Sepang and that is for the group's in-house projects. The second factory will cater to the market. Each factory can produce 2,000 units per annum," he said.

Korean fashion brand The Twee to open first SEA flagship store at KL Gateway Mall

BY LUM KA KAY

PETALING JAYA: Korean fashion retailer The Twee will open its first flagship store in South East Asia (SEA) at KL Gateway Mall.

The mall is part of the KL Gateway mixed development in Bangsar South, Jalan Kerinchi, Kuala Lumpur by Suez Capital Sdn Bhd. The mall is set to open to the public on Jan 12, 2017.

Located along the Federal Highway, it offers a net lettable area of about 400,000 sq ft across seven levels, with over 200 retail outlets.

"Not only will it be their flagship store, but it will be the first in Malaysia and the biggest in South East Asia," Suez Capital head of asset management Michael Chee Soon Hin told TheEdgeProperty.com.

Launched in 2009, The Twee currently has over 28 fashion stores as well as kiosks in major departmental stores across Korea as well as in Shanghai, China, according to the fashion brand's website.

Targeting mainly those between 19 and 25 years of age, the fashion retailer will take up about 11,000 sq ft of space at KL Gateway Mall.

Chee said the mall is already 80% occupied and Suez Capital is looking to achieve 100% occupancy by April 2017.

Among the other tenants secured for the mall are Village Grocer, Yamazaki Bakery, Doutor Coffee, H&M, Home's Harmony, Mr DIY, Yubiso, Daiso, Times Bookstore and Cotton On.

Suez Capital has also invested in an automated car park system for shoppers.

"It will be the biggest automated car park in South East Asia with 1,230 automated parking bays in addition to the 900 normal parking bays.

KL Gateway Mall is set to open its doors on Jan 12.



"Today people want to have convenience, security and to enjoy new technology. You don't have to waste your time searching for parking or worrying that you might forget where you have parked.

"So this automated car park system is like a valet service but automated!" said Chee. The automated car park facilities will be ready by February 2017. KL Gateway Mall will also offer free WiFi throughout the common areas of the mall.

"The concept of the mall is based on a street mall. You will not be bored," he declared. Each floor is inspired by elements from a different continent of the world, he added.

Targeting young families and urbanites, Chee said the mall also has a 10,000 sq ft outdoor landscaped garden for the eco-driven urbanites where residents can use the space as a little vegetable patch.

"This is especially for our residents in the residential units above the mall where the space can be used by them to educate young children by growing their own vegetables such

as tomatoes and herbs." There is also a Central Piazza for people to gather and hang out with their friends and family.

"This is a lifestyle mall for the community to serve their needs, be it lifestyle or fashion or household needs," he said.

The projected footfall for KL Gateway Mall is more than 10 million annually with 40% of the estimated footfall from LRT (light rail transit) commuters as the mall will be connected to the KL Gateway-University LRT Station located about 100m away via a covered and air-conditioned link bridge.

On whether there is an oversupply of mall space in the Klang Valley, Chee said, "It's an undeniable fact."

"But I always live by this: carve a niche, live by it and then develop it. The thing with shopping malls is that they have this window of opportunity.

"And our opportunity is the 400,000 catchment and 1.9 million pairs of eyes along the Federal Highway. It goes back to the location, it's a fantastic location whereby it is a perfect

KENNY YAP | TheEdgeProperty.com



Chee: We have spent a lot of time studying the demands and trends to understand what our target market wants.

place for people from KL, Petaling Jaya, Bangsar or even Klang to come by [the mall]," he said.

He added that the mall's rental rates are "very competitive," despite its prime location.

"Carving a niche for the right people, right market and with the right strategy is very important to us, instead of just going with the concept of 'build first and then people will come'.

"We hope to enhance community living with this integrated project. We have spent a lot of time studying the demands and trends to understand what our target market wants rather than simply creating supply," explained Chee.

The entire KL Gateway integrated development has a total gross development value of RM1.6 billion. There will be four residential towers of over 1,180 units with built-ups ranging from 500 sq ft to 1,400 sq ft which will be completed in 2017 while the two Grade A corporate office towers are being delivered in stages.

It is accessible via the Sprint Expressway, New Pantai Expressway, New Klang Valley Expressway and the Federal Highway.



Batu Kawan, Penang has been on the lips of property investors over the past few years ever since it was touted to be an emerging real estate hotspot in the northern region of Peninsular Malaysia.

Made up of over 6,000 acres of mainly freehold land, the area is located off Seberang Perai on Penang mainland. It used to be an oil palm plantation belonging to Batu Kawan Bhd (BKB) before the state government gazetted the land under the Land Acquisition Act 1960 in 1990. After a lengthy legal case, BKB was then awarded RM15,000 per acre from the initial RM8,167 per acre. BKB tried to raise the compensation to RM40,000 per acre but was denied by the Federal Court in 2001 on the grounds that RM15,000 per acre was sufficient for compensation.

In 2014, the Penang Development Corp (PDC) started developing Batu Kawan with the introduction of Bandar Cassia offering 11,800 units of affordable housing comprising 3,372 low-medium cost apartments and 8,428 medium-cost apartments to be built over 80.9ha. The first launch called Suria 1 was made up of 149 low medium-cost units of 800 sq ft priced from RM72,500, 98 Type-B medium-cost 900 sq ft units priced from RM168,000 and 273 Type-A medium-cost 1,000 sq ft units priced from RM220,000. The 520 units are said to be nearing completion and will be issued the Certificate of Completion and Compliance by June next year.

The 831-acre Batu Kawan Industrial Park (BKIP) was also promoted to attract high-technology and skill-intensive industries to the area.

According to associate director of Henry Butcher Malaysia for Seberang Perai Fook Tone Huat, Penang mainland, which constitutes more than two thirds of the size of the entire state, holds the future of the state's growth.

"The mainland provides more opportunities for future developments than the island due to the scarcity of land on the island. Hence, the future of Penang would be focused on the mainland," says Fook.

However, while Penang Island has seen rapid growth as a port and tourism city, only a few towns on the mainland, such as Butterworth, Simpang Ampat and Seberang Jaya, are considered business hubs. Hence the excitement over Batu Kawan as the next growth area.

"Batu Kawan is the upcoming growth area in Penang and in the northern region. It would be the new residential, commercial and industrial hub of the northern region," Fook opines.

For CBRE WTW director Tony Lee Eng Kow, Penang mainland has been a hinterland to Penang Island with its industrial parks and residential neighbourhoods for the local working population.

"Batu Kawan is intended to be the third satellite town for Penang after Bayan Baru and Seberang Jaya, both of which are already fully developed. A number of integrated developments have been planned for Batu Kawan under the Batu Kawan Master Plan," Lee says.

PA International Property Consultants (Penang) Sdn Bhd executive director Michael Loo shares that currently the main development hubs on Penang mainland are the old towns of Bukit Mertajam and Butterworth which have existed since the 1950s af-

ter World War II, and Seberang Jaya which is the first satellite township on Penang mainland developed since 1980 during the late Tun Lim Chong Eu's tenure as the second Chief Minister of Penang.

"It took about 20 years to transform Seberang Jaya into a mature satellite township. Similarly, we foresee the development of Batu Kawan might follow a similar development model," says Loo.

Catalysts for Batu Kawan

According to Loo, Batu Kawan has the advantage of having vast parcels of flat land owned by the PDC, which allows for proper town planning and township developments. This makes it easier for it to be developed into a satellite city compared with the older towns such as Bukit Mertajam and Butterworth.

"The completion of the Second Penang Bridge in 2013, which connects the North-South Highway to Penang Island, was a notable infrastructure development that has eased accessibility and connectivity between the island and the mainland.

"The other notable development is the BKIP where several major MNC (multinational) industry players such as VAT Manufacturing Malaysia, Boon Siew Honda and Hewlett-Packard have set up factories and created job opportunities in the southern district of Seberang Perai," offers Loo.

He also notes that PDC will be expanding BKIP to about 5,000 acres at the Byram and Changkat localities (southern part of Batu Kawan) and about 750 acres at Bukit Tambun (eastern portion of Batu Kawan).

Significant developments

As for new property developments in Batu Kawan that are banking on its future potential, Loo cites Aspen Vision City by Aspen Group, One Auto Hub by PKT Logistic, Utropolis by Paramount Property, Design Village Mall and its surrounding projects by PE Land, IKEA furniture store and the upcoming developments by Eco World Development Group, including the 300-acre Eco Horizon and 75-acre Eco Sun township developments.

"The new developments will help position Batu Kawan as the next well-planned satellite township," Loo adds.

Mainland residents are certainly looking forward to the RM10 billion Aspen Vision City that will include the first IKEA furniture store in the northern region. Spanning 245 acres of freehold land, it is one of the largest mixed developments in Penang. It offers a combination of condominiums, shop-offices, serviced suites, hotels, office tower, financial hub, medical centre, international school and a range of amenities. The first phase of Aspen Vision City is the 35-acre Vervéa comprising 441 three- and four-storey shop-offices with built-ups ranging from 3,300 sq ft to 7,830 sq ft.

The second phase of Aspen Vision City is Vertu

Batu Kawan's FUTURE POTENTIAL

BY NATALIE KHOO

Resort, a resort-inspired condominium development with furnished move-in condition units. The project was soft-launched in February this year and is more than 60% booked. Aspen Vision City will also be seeing its first landed housing, a luxurious designer bungalow development called ViLuxe, being launched next year.

PE Land (Penang) Sdn Bhd also recently launched Design Village Penang on Nov 23. The first premium outlet mall in the northern state which boasts some 400,000 sq ft is part of the 40-acre mixed-used development that will include a hotel, serviced apartments and high-end condominiums.

Meanwhile, Paramount Corp Bhd's property arm Paramount Property has recently unveiled the 44.3-acre Utropolis Batu Kawan university metropolis development with an estimated GDV of RM1.8 billion in Batu Kawan. It is the group's first development in Penang and will feature residential, commercial, retail and hotel components as well as a new flagship campus for KDU Penang University College.

Beyond Batu Kawan, there are other significant developments including Pearl City



Loo: The first phase of Aspen Vision City might be a vote of confidence to market players and homebuyers.



Lee: Batu Kawan is intended to be the third satellite town for Penang after Bayan Baru and Seberang Jaya.



Fook: The mainland provides more opportunities for future developments than the island.



SAM FONG | TheEdgeProperty.com

Batu Kawan is located off Seberang Perai on Penang mainland spanning over 6,000 acres.

SOURCE: TheEdgeProperty.com

New launches in Batu Kawan

PROJECT TITLE	DEVELOPER	TYPE	BUILT-UP	NO OF UNITS	TENURE	PRICE (RM)
VertuResort, Aspen Vision City	Aspen Group	Condo	1,030-1,290	1,282	Freehold	450,000 onwards
Vervéa, Aspen Vision City	Aspen Group	3- & 4-storey shop-offices	3,300-7,830	441	Freehold	1.88 mil onwards
Phase 1A Metropolis of Utropolis	Paramount Corp	Retail shops and offices	420-3,509	196	Freehold	326,600 onwards (gross)

SOURCE: PA INTERNATIONAL

Terraced house prices in Batu Kawan

	LAND AREA (SQ FT)	BUILT-UP (SQ FT)	2013			2014			2015		
			AVERAGE TRANSACTED PRICE AND PRICE PSF								
1-storey terraced houses											
Taman Intan Cempaka	1,249	703	RM150,000 RM210 psf	RM170,000 RM240 psf	RM170,000 RM240 psf						
Taman Intan Delima	1,320	805	RM230,000 RM280 psf	RM260,000 RM320 psf	RM280,000 RM350 psf						
2-storey terraced houses											
Callisia, Taman Crescentia	1,475	1,716	RM340,000 RM200 psf	RM400,000 RM230 psf	RM400,000 RM230 psf						

by Tambun Indah Land Bhd, a 1,140-acre township in Simpang Ampat comprising landed properties, serviced residences, a commercial hub, international school and mall.

Current housing price trend in Batu Kawan

According to CBRE WTW's Lee, as Batu Kawan grows, it is likely that there will be more high-rise developments as the earlier developments were mostly low-rise and landed in nature.

However, Henry Butcher's Fook notes that the area has been seeing more high-rise apartments coming up as land prices have been rising. "Land price in 2006 was about RM10 psf. In 2016, it is about RM40-RM50 psf," says Fook.

According to transaction data collated by TheEdgeProperty.com from the National Property Information Centre, terraced homes in Batu Kawan have seen their average price psf peak in 4Q2015 at RM204 psf, up 11.48% y-o-y. In terms of absolute average price, terraced homes in Batu Kawan recorded the highest transacted price of RM299,221 in 4Q2015, up 8.6% y-o-y. As at 2Q2016, the average transacted price was down by about 10% to RM175 psf (based on land area size).

According to PA International's data, a single-storey terraced house in Taman Intan Chempaka with a land area of 1,249 sq ft and built-up area of 703 sq ft was transacted at RM170,000 in 2015, a 13.3% growth since 2013 while in Taman Intan Delima, a single-storey terraced house with a land area of 1,320

sq ft and a built-up area of 805 sq ft was transacted at RM280,000 in 2015, up 21.7% since 2013.

Meanwhile, a double-storey terraced house such as Callisia at Taman Crescentia with a land area of 1,475 sq ft and built-up area of 1,716 sq ft was transacted at RM400,000 in 2015, up 17.65% since 2013.

"The average price growth of existing housing in Batu Kawan from 2013 to 2015 was within the range of 10% to 20%," offers Loo.

He also notes that the launch price of a new Vertu Resort condominium unit in Aspen Vision City is about the price of an existing double-storey terraced house.

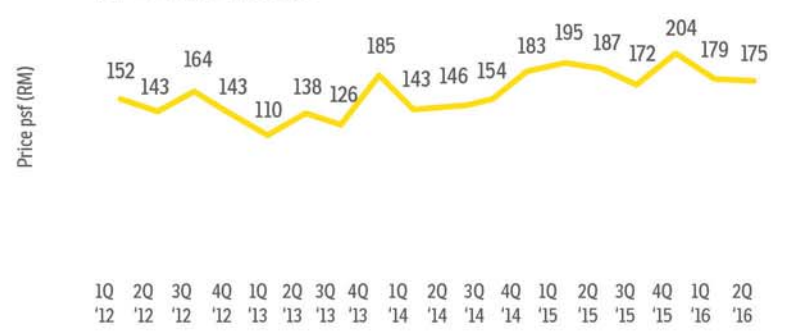
"The upcoming projects will definitely have a positive impact on the pricing of the existing developments," Henry Butcher's Fook adds.

What lies ahead

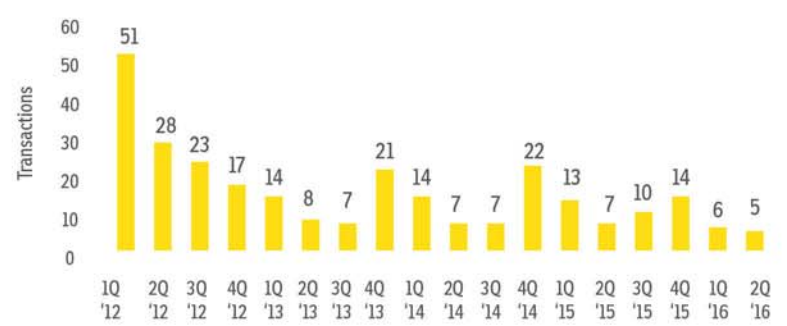
According to PA's Loo, the first phase of Aspen Vision City, which is expected to be completed by 2019, might be a vote of confidence to market players and homebuyers with the realisation and transformation of the oil palm plantations into a modern living satellite city.

"Besides infrastructure development, a vibrant growing population is one of the key factors in determining the sustainability of a township. The state government's efforts to attract new industrial players to establish their plants in Batu Kawan and create more job opportunities would be crucial in achieving the desirable population number," says Loo.

Average price psf of terraced houses in Batu Kawan



Transaction volume of terraced houses in Batu Kawan



SAM FONG | TheEdgeProperty.com



Nevertheless, it takes 10 to 20 years to establish a new mature satellite city. "The macro and micro economic environments will also determine the speed of the transformation," he adds.

The experts contend that although in the short term, there may not be many choices for investment, the medium term will see more choices become available as developers begin their developments.

"I would advise investors to catch the earlier launches as prices are likely to be on the upward trend as newer developments come on stream and the place matures," CBRE WTW's Lee says.

Batu Kawan will host the first IKEA furniture store in the northern region.



Bandar Cassia's Suria 1 affordable homes are nearing completion.

PA INTERNATIONAL

1 It will be hosting the first IKEA on the northern region of Malaysia

2 The first outlet mall in Penang is situated here

FIVE FACTS

about Batu Kawan

3 The third satellite town for Penang after Bayan Baru and Seberang Jaya

4 It used to be an oil palm plantation belonging to Batu Kawan Bhd, hence it's name

5 The second Penang bridge links to Batu Kawan

SOURCE: TheEdgeProperty.com | GRAPHICS: NURUL AIDA MOHD NOOR



Harnessing the value of research and data

BY NATALIE KHOO

Real estate negotiator Adrian Tan was in the accounting line for eight years before he switched over to real estate.

"At first, when I started out in the accounting line it was interesting because I learnt many new ways of tackling problems at work. However, after a while, things became very repetitive and I felt like I was on autopilot mode," recounts the University of Sydney Bachelors of Commerce graduate who majored in Accounting and Finance.

"When I was deciding which course to pursue, it was either medicine, business, law or engineering. If you mention other courses like music, your parents will say, 'No, you cannot pursue this course or I will commit suicide!' So I gravitated towards numbers and took up commerce," reminisces Tan, who is now a negotiator with GMAC Realtors.

Tan had also worked part time while he was studying in Australia by helping clients submit their income tax filings. He then decided to come back to Malaysia and began work in the auditing line and went on to work in several accounting firms.

One day, a friend offered him a very interesting proposition. "My friend told me this: Property prices grow in tandem with the rate of inflation. If inflation goes up, property prices go up as well. Then your

wages will also increase accordingly. On top of that, you don't need to rely on your bosses for your appraisal!"

His friend's words made so much sense to him that he decided to change his career path and joined Asian Land Realty in 2011 before moving to GMAC Realtors early this year.

Tan has another friend to thank for his early days as a negotiator. "This friend introduced me to my first client and helped me arrange the house viewing.

She even taught me that even when a client is set on closing a deal, I still need to bring them to view several other houses so that they are really certain with their choice," says Tan, adding that his friend let him close the deal without taking a cut.

Business had been good until two years ago when the market

Tan: I want to improve my work and when the time is right, I will be ready to lead my own team.



slowed. "I would advertise my listings on different online portals and printed banners. Every day, I made calls to clients and just waited for them to call me back. When my phone rang, there were more homeowners asking me to help them sell their houses instead of buyers wanting to buy," says Tan. He was tempted to go back to the accounting line but his superior advised him to stay on a little longer.

"He told me to hang in there because the property business is cyclical. If I don't hang in there, when the cycle comes up, I won't be able to reap my harvest," he says.

His own book

Over the past two years, he reveals that many clients have been asking him about buying properties surrounding the upcoming mass rapid transit (MRT) stations.

"Whenever a client comes to me [asking about which MRT-adjacent properties to buy], I will do my research and send them a report within a week.

Some of my friends say I take my job too seriously but I feel, if you want to do something, you need to do it well. You need to put your whole heart into it. Don't just give a one or two lines an-

swer to your clients even if some of them may not come back to you," Tan stresses.

Then he had this idea — that since he was already doing so much research, he might as well compile all the information into a book.

"In 2015, I self-published my very first book with the help of my former company which shared the printing cost. The first batch sold quite well. The Borders branch at The Curve also carried the books on consignment," says Tan.

Shortly after that, Tan approached several publishers and Kanyin Publications published the 2016 edition. "I am currently working on the 2017 edition. I am also working on another book about properties surrounding the Kelana Jaya-Ampang LRT (light rail transit) Line. I've got a great team behind me. I have a team of freelancers who collates the data for me which I will then review and compile to ensure the accuracy of the data. My wife will then go through all the formatting and make sure all the small details such as the spelling and spacing are correct," he says.

On the future, if everything goes well, Tan sees himself leading his own team in five years' time.

"These two years have definitely rattled my confidence a bit, so I am working on improving my personal sales skills for now. I want to improve my work and when the time is right, I will be ready to lead my own team," offers Tan with a smile.

FENG SHUI

Asking all the right questions?



From a very tender age, we have constantly been encouraged to develop the habit of asking questions because there is no such thing as a silly question. Studies have also revealed that the habit is a catalyst to cognitive ability growth in children. As adults, we realise that learning does not stop and asking questions is a good habit to possess at any age.

An area of metaphysics that never fails to attract showers of questions is Feng Shui. It has long been subject to misconception and disbelief due to the misleading interpretations that many have experienced.

However, if you ask your feng shui consultant the right questions and put it into practice the right way, there is a large chance that you could benefit from it.

The following are some of the questions you should be asking your prospective feng shui consultant.

How much does a consultation cost?

Most feng shui consultants these days accept payments in cheque or credit card and there are no actual market rates to serve as guides. Some practitioners would quote you a figure like for example RM8888.88 due to superstitious beliefs with the number 8 but this is merely an old wives' tale. When enquiring about their services, do not be apprehensive about asking how much a consultation would cost. A professional feng shui consultant will always be upfront about their fees.

BY DATUK JOEY YAP



If you feel that the fee is either too high or too low, do not hesitate to ask about it. In general, you should expect fees to vary based on the size of the property in question and the type of consultation services you want the practitioner to perform.

What does the service include?

A good feng shui consultant would usually include a BaZi consultation to check your personal stars before starting on any recommendations for the property. Therefore, you should make sure that a BaZi consultation is part of the provided service and whether it is charged separately before agreeing to a consultation.

Other services would also consist of a property audit that includes a date selection that is specially tailored to your BaZi chart. This audit will help guide the consultant into recommending solutions — if there is a need to

either improve or correct the feng shui of the property. The consultant can also help select a good date to undertake any renovations and for moving in.

Will there be follow-up sessions or a report?

Since you are engaging the services of a consultant, you have every right to ask if their services and prices include follow-up sessions to discuss the audit and recommendations or whether you will be given a written report with the recommendations.

Some consultants do not provide follow-up sessions or a written report. This does not mean that they are any less professional. Some consultants just have a casual approach to their consultancy services. However, make sure you ask them in detail to avoid paying for hidden or extra charges later on.

What kind of feng shui do you practise?

Familiarise yourself with the type of practice and methodology that the consultant uses so that you are comfortable with their approach. Some consultants use the New Age approach in their consultancy while others use the Classical Feng Shui approach. If you know your feng shui well enough, you can tell which approach they are using especially since a Classical Feng Shui consultant will probably be using a combination of techniques such as San Yuan, San He, Xuan Kong or Ba Zhai.

Will I be required to buy anything?

Be wary if you are told by the consultant to buy products to place in various sectors of your home or office in order to improve the Qi as more often than not, these items are not included in the services. When this happens, there will be a conflict of interest and you have every right to say no.

If the need to place an elemental object at a specific sector arises, the consultant should advise you to use things that are already lying around the home in order to cut back on costs — unless you do not have a certain item at your disposal.

Engaging the services of a feng shui consultant is an interpersonal project because this is someone whom you will most likely turn to in the future to evaluate your property or select dates for your business, if you have one. However, constantly asking questions about grey areas would certainly go a very long way in bringing about positivity in your life. If you would like to do preliminary research before hiring a consultant or get to know other types of questions to ask your consultant, simply drop by www.joeyyap.com and get started. Always remember, ask and you shall receive.

If you have any feng shui-related questions for Yap, please go to the Tips section of TheEdgeProperty.com.

Datuk Joey Yap is the world's leading Chinese Metaphysics consultant and bestselling author of more than 160 books which have sold over four million copies worldwide. He is chief consultant of the Joey Yap Consulting Group and founder of Mastery Academy of Chinese Metaphysics. His nearly two decades of professional consultancy includes working with Microsoft, Sime Darby, UEM, Prudential and Citibank. He has students in more than 30 countries.

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Growing population to support Sydney and Melbourne's house price growth

SOURCE: KNIGHT FRANK AUSTRALIA

HARIS HASSAN | TheEdgeProperty.com



(From left) Ciesielski, Pugh and Heaton-Watson are looking forward to a bright future for Sydney and Melbourne.

BY SHAWN NG

Despite the spike in housing prices in both Sydney and Melbourne in recent years, these two cities are expected to see further price growth in the next 12 months.

According to Knight Frank Australia residential research director Michelle Ciesielski who was here in Kuala Lumpur recently, house prices in Sydney and Melbourne are expected to go up by 3% to 5% in the next 12 months.

"The growth in the Australian property market is much more sustainable now than previously and with the large government spending on infrastructure, I believe the two cities will continue to grow over the next year," she said.

Sydney and Melbourne have been offering better property investment opportunities since the shift of Australia's economic centre of gravity from the West Coast to the East Coast.

"For many years, we had a commodity-driven economy on the West Coast, so we saw strong growth in residential property prices in the cities along the coast, such as Perth," Ciesielski told TheEdgeProperty.com.

However, over the last few years, the situation has changed as the government has made more investments on the East Coast to improve connectivity, infrastructure and healthcare, she said.

According to Knight Frank Australia's data, average house and apartment prices in Perth as at August this year declined 4.8% and 6% from a year earlier, to A\$495,500 (RM1.63 million) and A\$418,000, respectively.

Nationwide, from September 2015 to August 2016, house values saw a growth of 3%, less than half the growth experienced over the same period a year earlier at 6.7%.

The overall Australian property market is mixed as the capital cities in the country are far from each other with each city experiencing different cycles, explained Ciesielski.

"Throughout the period when house

prices in Perth was experiencing strong growth, we did not see much growth in the cities along the East Coast, but this has certainly changed in the past two to three years," she said, adding that now there are more property hotspots in the East Coast.

She points out that house prices in Sydney, the largest city in Australia, have increased exponentially and steeply from mid-2013 until end-2015 with an average annual growth of 14.4%, thanks to pent-up demand and short supply.

However, Sydney house prices have risen only 1.2% to A\$1.049 million as at August this year from a year earlier. Apartment values in the city grew 3.8% to A\$691,000 during the same period.

This is because the housing market has corrected to a more sustainable level for annual capital growth after a lengthy period of short supply, explained Ciesielski.

Looking at the next 12 months, although buyers will have many more choices available as more property projects will be completed, she expects that a large portion of the new apartments will be absorbed given the strong population growth in the area. Besides, the total vacancy in Sydney as at August this year was at 1.9%, well below the overall market average at approximately 3%.

"Population growth was recorded at 1.7% in the period of July 31, 2014 to June 30, 2015, and the New South Wales government continues to invest heavily in road and rail infrastructure keeping Greater Sydney unemployment low at 4.1% in September this year — this is trending 110 bps lower than the 5.2% recorded a year earlier," she said, adding that these factors will support the housing market in Sydney.

Melbourne buoyed by population growth

Interestingly, house prices in Melbourne tend to follow the growth pace of Sydney, noted Ciesielski. "We are seeing a steady increase in house values in Melbourne, underpinned by a strong population growth over the last five years.

The six-month average total vacancy of houses and apartments stood at 2.6% as at August 2016."

She said the population in the Greater Melbourne area was estimated at 4.5 million in 2015. The area had experienced a population growth of 2.1% in the year up to June last year, ahead of Darwin (1.9%) and Sydney (1.7%).

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, Melbourne's population is expected to surpass Sydney's by 2036. "The growing population will continue to drive house price growth in Melbourne," she said.

As at August this year, house and apartment prices in Melbourne grew 6.1% and 3.1% to A\$742,500 and A\$500,500, respectively, from the prices recorded in the same month last year.

She pointed out that Greater Melbourne is fortunate to have a lower entry point compared to Greater Sydney with the median value for an apartment at A\$691,000, thus the area is poised to continue being sought after by foreign buyers and interstate investment.

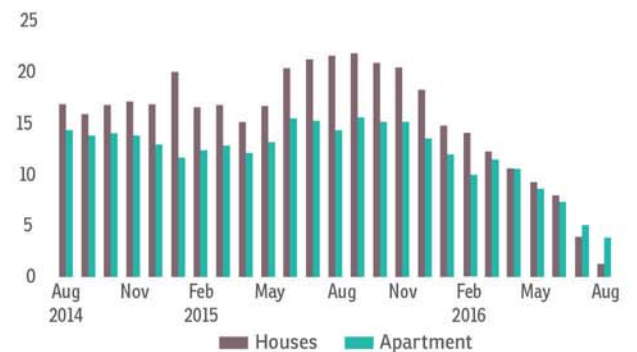
"Overseas and interstate migration continue to be attracted to the planned city, with world-class universities, well-designed sporting precincts and an efficient transport system," she said.

Meanwhile, Knight Frank Malaysia senior manager of international project marketing Dominic Heaton-Watson said the bright outlook for Sydney and Melbourne is great news for Malaysia as the two cities will offer good opportunities not just in property investment but also immigration.

Besides Sydney and Melbourne, the Gold Coast on Australia's East Coast will also offer genuine opportunities for investors as the government is building infrastructure in the area to prepare for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, he pointed out.

Knight Frank has been receiving overwhelming response from Malaysian investors for the Australian projects it is marketing here including Chloe and Hank in Melbourne, Amara in Sydney,

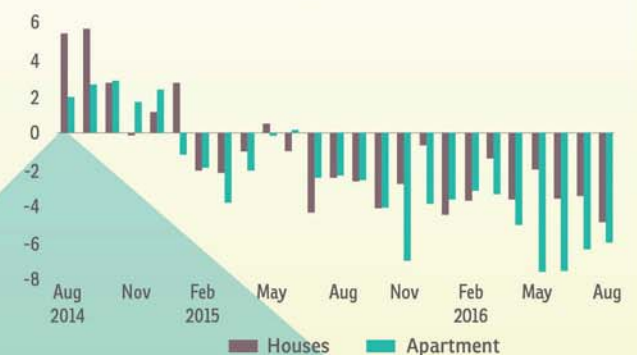
Capital growth, Greater Sydney 12-month rolling (%)



Capital growth, Greater Melbourne 12-month rolling (%)



Capital growth, Greater Perth 12-month rolling (%)



and Essence in the Gold Coast, said Knight Frank Australia head of international project marketing Rebecca Pugh.

These projects are located in the vicinity of the central business district with good connectivity, transport and educational institutions. "Australia is such an open and investment-friendly country and it is always a good time to invest in property, which is good for wealth creation and preservation," said Heaton-Watson.

However, foreigners are only allowed to buy new properties and there is a fee imposed on them for purchasing Australian real estate, reminded Ciesielski.

The application fee is at least A\$5,000, with an additional A\$10,000 payable for every million dollar increment in the value of the property.

She also advised investors to do sufficient research before buying into a new market. "Investors should seek local advice regarding every aspect of the investment to prevent mistakes," she added.

FUTURE & BEYOND

Is this the stuff that buildings will be made of in future?

Scientists and researchers are constantly coming up with the most amazing inventions, some thought to exist only in science fiction.

In the building material sector, the solutions emerging from the industry are numerous and wide-ranging — from the incremental innovation of traditional materials and existing characteristics, to the generation

of new material combinations with additional multifunctional characteristics, to radically innovative materials with entirely new functionalities.

Even for a seemingly simple material like paint, it is no longer just about the colour as the paint and coating industry has come up with innovative solutions that offer added benefits. Nippon Paint Malaysia's Odour-less AirCare, for

instance, actually has formaldehyde abatement abilities while Nippon Virus Guard has anti-viral properties which inhibit the growth of viruses.

As we move further into the future, we can only expect more astounding inventions to come and end up where no man has gone before.

Let's look at four recent discoveries that could feature in the building and construction industry in time to come.

Jellyfish-inspired materials for smart windows

Developed in the lab of University of Connecticut researcher Sun Lu Yi, there is a suite of new materials that can change their appearance and quickly revert to their original state, akin to the camouflaging abilities of the squid and jellyfish. Indeed this range of "squishy" materials was inspired by these creatures of the deep. These materials are stretchable, thin, and slightly squishy to the touch. The researchers that came up with them see potential applications for smart windows, anti-glare displays and encryption technologies.

The study on "bio-inspired sensitive and reversible mechanochromisms via strain-dependent cracks and folds" describes a process whereby a stretchable elastomer is layered over a rigid film. When stretched the polymer creates cracks and folds into the rigid film, leading to various optical changes in the material.

This way, the thin material can change opacity, colour, fluorescence and even display an image or pattern.

Songshan Zeng, a PhD student in Sun's lab, had said in a report on the study that one possible application for this material is in creating smart windows.

"To have some privacy from the windows, all you would need to do is just stretch the material a little bit to obtain opacity," he mentioned in a report by University of Connecticut in August this year, adding that it could also be used as display optics for toys, or even in encryption technology.

Artificial bone and eggshell to replace concrete and steel

The cities of today are built with concrete and steel — but some Cambridge researchers think that the cities of the future need to go back to nature if they are to support an ever-expanding population, while keeping carbon emissions under control.

The world is completely dependent on concrete and steel, but these are unsustainable materials as they are responsible for as much as 10% of worldwide carbon emissions, said the University of Cambridge in a news release in June this year.

Both steel and concrete must be processed at very high temperatures, a process that takes a lot of energy and carbon discharge.

To address the issue, bioengineer Dr Michelle Oyen of Cambridge's Department of Engineering and her team created samples of artificial bone and eggshell, which could be scaled up and used as low-carbon building materials at room temperature.

The artificial bone and eggshell are composites of proteins and minerals. In bone, the proportions of protein and minerals are

roughly equal — the mineral gives bone stiffness and hardness, while the protein gives it toughness or resistance to fracture.

In the eggshell, the ratios are about 95% mineral to 5% protein, but even this small amount of protein makes the eggshell remarkably tough considering how thin it is. However, it may be some time before we live in bone and eggshell houses.



(From left) Delft University of Technology researcher Renee Mars and Jonkers at the wastewater treatment tank built with bioconcrete.

Self-healing concrete

A concrete crack is one of the most common defects in a new building, but with the emergence of self-healing concrete, this could be a thing of the past.

Designed by a team led by Professor Henk Jonkers of Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands, bioconcrete is capable of releasing a healing agent when cracks appear.

The healing agent comes in the form of a biodegradable plastic capsule which contains bacillus bacteria and calcium lactate. These capsules are added into the wet concrete mix before the concrete consolidates.

When cracks begin to form in the concrete, water that enters will open up the capsules and release the bacteria. The bacteria will feed on the calcium lactate and then germinate and multiply. In so doing, they combine the calcium with car-

bonate ions to form calcite, or limestone, which closes up the cracks.

Bioconcrete remains intact during mixing, only dissolving and becoming active if the concrete cracks and water gets in.

Since November 2014, a start-up company has commercialised the bacteria-based self-healing technology in the form of self-healing bioconcrete, self-healing repair mortar and self-healing liquid repair system.

Nevertheless, the research on the technology is still ongoing to develop new products for tailor-made applications, Jonkers told TheEdgeProperty.com.

"We built a wastewater treatment tank with bioconcrete last year, the tank is located in Sijpeveld, in the Netherlands, and it has been taken into service in October this year," he said.



The bioconcrete comprising cement and healing agents, which are capsules that contain bacteria and calcium lactate.

Fireproof hybrid wood

For centuries, wood has been a popular building material. The drawback is that wood burns easily.

However, researchers at Empa have found a way to create fireproof wood, according to a news release in April this year.

Empa researcher Ingo Burgert, who also runs the Wood Materials Science Group at ETH Zurich, and doctoral student Vivian Merk have discovered a natural way to reduce the combustibility of wood by depositing calcium carbonate (limestone) in the wood's cell structure — mineralising the wood, in other words.

Thanks to the limestone in the cell structure of wood, the researchers were able to reduce the wood's combustibility by about a third.

Furthermore, the researchers did not use any hazardous substances during production or in the end product, unlike normal wood, which is treated with flame-retardant chemicals using conventional methods.



Researchers at Empa discovered the fireproof wood through depositing limestone in the wood cell structure.

IN COLLABORATION WITH





BE INSPIRED by flowers

BY RACHEL CHEW

WHEN American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson declared the “earth laughs in flowers” in the last century, no one seems to have objected to this day.

“It is very inspiring to play with flowers. Such little flowers, yet they have so much to tell. How they were created, their fragrance, their shapes, their unique colours — they are all inspirational!” enthused the first South East Asia (SEA)-qualified judge of American Institute of Floral Designers (AIFD), Eunice Teo.

Speaking to TheEdgeProperty.com, Teo said she took an online test held by AIFD in 2013 to become an evaluator/judge for AIFD. She passed the online test and thereafter flew to Chicago to do the final practical test, which was to evaluate actual arrangements in a room.

When the results were announced in 2014, Teo emerged the first in SEA to qualify as an AIFD judge. Soon after the honour, she was invited to present her works in a symposium in California in July this year. She seized the opportunity to present pieces inspired by Malaysia’s multi-cultural facets.

“I presented 11 pieces, inspired by the wau, sarong, gasing, Chinese coins and others. I wanted to put them on the international stage. I wanted to spread the Malaysian name. It [the presentation] was not for me, I wanted to tell the world where I came from.



PREPARATION

- 1 Trim and remove leaves from branches.
- 2 Fill glasses with water and add in flower food.





Teo presenting her pieces at the AIFD Symposium in Anaheim, California in July 2016.

Eight simple steps to an elegant floral arrangement

The simple essentials prepared by Teo for a DIY dining table flower arrangement were roses, green and soft grass, lotus leaves, two types of pliant branches, green apples, flower food, seven different-height glasses and table candles (optional).

STEPS

- 1** Cup the flower head gently and keep moving the stem sideways until the petals are detached from the stem.
- 2** While maintaining it in its shape, place the inverted petals on the other palm and gently blow into the centre to spread it into a bloom.
- 3** Add more petals around its edges to make the inverted rose look bigger, similar to a peony.
- 4** With the other hand, cup the inverted petals and place them gently onto the water in the glasses.
- 5** Allow the petals to spread out into a natural bloom afloat.
- 6** Sharpen the branches and insert them into the green apples.
- 7** Arrange the rose glasses across the table and balance the spread with green apples. For example, place more green apples on the side with fewer roses.
- 8** Add branches with leaves and lotus leaves into an arched arrangement to balance the colour, height and make the ensemble stand out.



“In fact I have achieved beyond what I wanted to achieve. I started a flower arrangement business with RM40. All I did was to work at what I love. Passion is very important. It leads you further than you can imagine,” Teo stressed.

Also the founder of Amtrol Flower Designing, Teo said she started her journey with flowers 24 years ago when she was a music teacher.

“Music and flowers are both my passion. I can’t live without either one of them. You can ask my assistant, the minute I start working, the music is on,” said Teo, as her assistant made preparations for a do-it-yourself

flower arrangement tutoring interview with TheEdgeProperty.com at The Edge Galleria.

“You don’t have to be talented or creative in doing flower arrangements, but you have to love flowers, and love to see how arrangements can make them prettier,” Teo emphasised.

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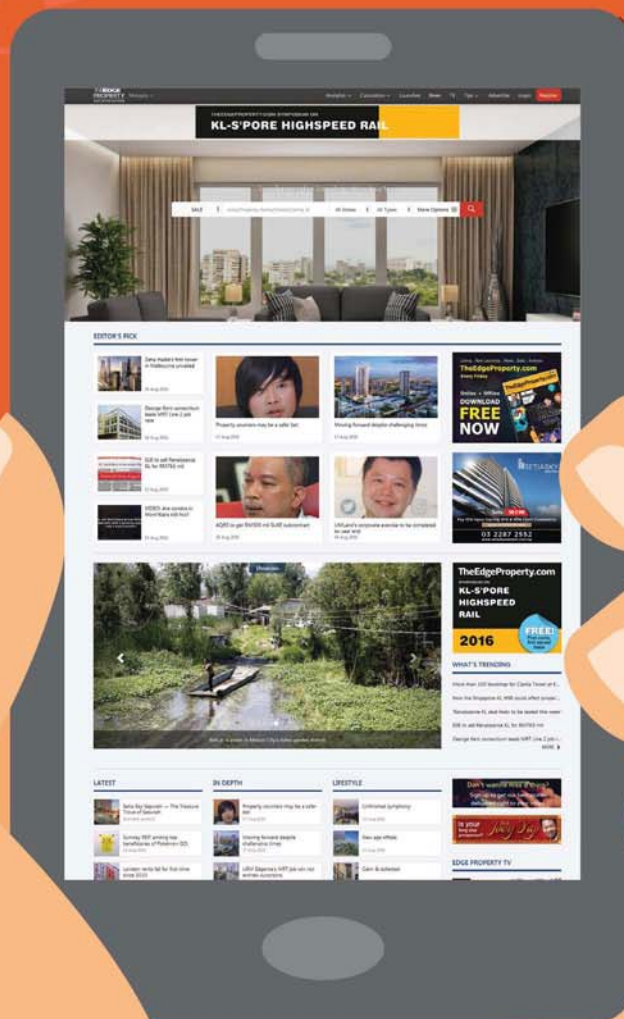
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