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Know what you are buying

Commercial properties can come in many guises these days, so don't jump in without adequate information. [See pages 8 & 9.](#)



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BCB to unveil phase 2 of Home Tree township in Kota Kemuning

Johor-based developer BCB Bhd will be launching Broadleaf Residences at its 150-acre Home Tree township development in Kota Kemuning, Shah Alam by end-August.

The 49-acre leasehold project Broadleaf Residences is phase 2 of Home Tree and carries an estimated gross development value (GDV) of RM650 million. The development comprises five phases including residential and commercial projects.

BCB founder and group managing director Tan Sri Tan Seng Leong said Broadleaf Residences is targeting the medium- to upper-income group who wants to upgrade to bigger homes.

Broadleaf Residences' semi-dee units have an average built-up size of 4,654 sq ft on land area ranging between 3,111 sq ft and 7,858 sq ft. The selling price starts from RM1.9 million.

The bungalow units offer built-up choices ranging from 4,942 sq ft to 6,081 sq ft on land areas of between 4,553 sq ft and 7,174 sq ft. The selling price starts from RM2.79 million.

Titijaya begins construction of The Shore, Kota Kinabalu

Titijaya Land Bhd has begun construction of its new waterfront premium commercial hub in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, known as The Shore.

The 1.82-acre luxury mixed commercial development has a GDV of RM575 million.

The 25-storey project comprises 561 serviced residences with built-ups

Mah Sing sources more land

Mah Sing Group Bhd, which currently holds a 2,183-acre landbank, is still on the lookout for more potential land buys.

"We are in a very good cash position that allows us to acquire good potential land when the opportunity arises. Our net gearing is at 0.02%; it is very close to net cash position," said its chief executive officer Datuk Ho Hon Sang.

Mah Sing has recently announced several land acquisitions in Cheras, Sentul, Titiwangsa (all in Kuala Lumpur) and in Bukit Mertajam, Penang. Ho was speaking to reporters at the topping-up ceremony of Lakeville Residences Tower E & F.

Sitting on a 12.38-acre site in Taman Wahyu, KL, the integrated development comprises six residential blocks and one affordable housing scheme known as Residensi Seri Wahyu, and some podium shophots.

"We are very happy to celebrate 8.4 million safe man-hours and timely delivery. This highlights the



high level of commitment and dedication of the project managers and contractors," said group managing director Tan Sri Leong Hoy Kum at the event.

Lakeville Residences consists of 2,567 residential units with built-ups ranging from 977 sq ft to 1,365 sq ft and priced at RM598,000 and above.

ranging from 409 sq ft to 541 sq ft and priced from RM453,000, said the developer in a press release following the ground-breaking ceremony of the project. The event was witnessed by Sabah Minister of Local Government and Housing Datuk Seri Panglima Hajiji Noor.

"With this ground-breaking ceremony, we have officially opened a new chapter in the corporate history of Titijaya — expanding our presence to Sabah," said Titijaya group managing director Lim Poh Yit.

UEM Sunrise to launch Dahlia terraced houses at Serene Heights, Bangi this weekend

UEM Sunrise Bhd will be officially launching phase 4 of its Serene Heights township in Bangi this weekend.

Dubbed Dahlia, phase 4 consists of 170 double-storey terraced houses with built-ups ranging from 1,943 sq ft to 2,402 sq ft. The selling price starts from RM585,800. It is expect-

ed to be completed in July 2020. The official launch will take place at the Serene Heights sales gallery in Bangi.

The 14-acre Dahlia is part of the 448-acre freehold Serene Heights, which has an estimated GDV of RM3.4 billion.

The first three phases comprised affordable double-storey terraced houses, namely Acacia (100% sold), Begonia (85% sold) and Camellia (92% sold).

UEM Sunrise group chief operating officer of development Datuk Roslan Ibrahim said the developer expects similar take-up rates for Dahlia.



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LAUNCHES + EVENTS



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

'Raikan Silaturahmi' with Gamuda Land

Date: July 15 (Sat)

Time: 11am to 4pm

Venue: The Robertson, No. 119, Jalan Pudu, Kuala Lumpur
Contact: (03) 2148 6668

Venue: HighPark Suites Sales Gallery, Ground Floor, The Grand SOFO, Jalan SS 6/2, SS6, Petaling Jaya, Selangor
Contact: (03) 7886 0688

Venue: Gamuda Gardens Sales Gallery, Lot 3825 & 3826, Jalan Sungai Serai, Rawang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 6037 2888

Venue: twentyfive.7 Sales Gallery, Gamuda Walk, Kota Kemuning, Selangor
Contact: (03) 5131 6257

Gamuda Land welcomes visitors to its open house at various sales galleries in conjunction with the Raya celebration. There will be fun activities for the whole family. Those who purchase a new home during this festive period will stand a chance to win a special gift.

Setia Raya open house

Date: July 15 (Sat)

Time: 6pm to 10pm

Venue: Setia Putrajaya Galleria, Lot 14124, Presint 15, Jalan P 15 H 1/3, Putrajaya
Contact: (03) 8861 6500

Venue: Setia Eco Glades Sales Gallery, Persiaran Setia Eco Glades, Cyber 1, Cyberjaya, Selangor
Contact: (03) 8008 2228

Join S P Setia Bhd at its Raya open houses and enjoy traditional Malay delicacies and activities planned for you and your family.

Raya open house at The Reserve @ Kemensah Ampang

Date: July 22 (Sat)

Time: 11am to 6pm

Venue: Puncak Kayangan Kemensah, Ulu Kelang, Ampang, Selangor
Contact: (016) 208 5108

Reapfield Properties (KL) Sdn Bhd is organising a Raya open house on behalf of Asset Aus (Ulu Klang) Sdn Bhd, the developer of The Reserve @ Kemensah Ampang offering freehold, stand-alone bungalows.

Sime Darby Raya open house

Date: July 15 (Sat)

Time: 10am to 5pm



Venue: Elmina Pavilion, Persiaran Eserina, Elmina East, Sek U16, Shah Alam, Selangor
Contact: (03) 7831 2253 / 1300 88 1118

Join the festivities at Sime Darby Property's Raya open house where exclusive Raya rebates await buyers. There will also be a showcase of Elmina Valley phase 3.

Preview of Mayfair

Date: July 15 to 26 (Sat to Wed)

Time: 11.30am to 5pm



Venue: White Box, Publika, mapKL Level G2-01, Block A5, Menara SapuraKencana, 1, Jalan Dutamas 1, Solaris Dutamas, Kuala Lumpur
Contact: (03) 2718 7609 / (03) 2718 7793

UEM Sunrise Bhd will be previewing globally acclaimed Zaha Hadid Architect's first development in Melbourne — Mayfair. The luxury project is located at St Kilda Road, featuring 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom residences and penthouses.

Sheda Property Expo 2017

Date: July 14 to 16 (Fri to Sun)

Time: 10am to 9pm

Venue: Borneo Convention Centre Kuching, The Isthmus, Sejingkat, Kuching, Sarawak
Contact: (08) 236 6334

The Sarawak Housing and Real Estate Developers' Association (Sheda), with the support of the Ministry of Housing and Urbanisation of Sarawak and the Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia, will be hosting the three-day expo. It will feature various residential and commercial properties in Sarawak, Singapore, Australia and the UK.

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TheEdgeProperty.com to launch Malaysia's first virtual property expo

BY SHAWN NG

It is no longer considered far-fetched to find your dream home just by hooking yourself up to the internet. Even if you do not put your money down for that particular house you have your eyes on, you could at least make your interest known straight-away and from the comfort of your home.

At the coming Malaysia Virtual Property Expo 2017 (VPEX 2017) organised by TheEdgeProperty.com, one can check out and “tour” over 40 property projects by well-known developers anytime and anywhere with any device that is connected to the internet.

Come July 21 to 31, log on to www.TheEdgeProperty.com and experience VPEX 2017 which will feature projects by more than 16 prominent developers in the country such as Gamuda Land, IJM Land Bhd, IOI Properties Group Bhd, S P Setia Bhd, Eco World Group Development Bhd, Mah Sing Group Bhd, Eastern & Oriental Bhd, UEM Sunrise Bhd, Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd, Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd, Sime Darby Property, Paramount Property, Orlando Holdings, Putrajaya Holdings, Aseana Properties Ltd, Tropicana Corp Bhd, PNB Development Sdn Bhd and LBS Bina Group Bhd.

VPEX 2017 is not about grouping together developers and their projects under one virtual “hall”. It is about providing an easy and engaging user experience with the participating developers. This is enabled by the provision of functions such as going “live-chat” with the participating developers.

Consumers will also get to “tour” project sites or units that the developers choose to showcase.

“VPEX is about digitalising the footprints of customers to traditional property fairs and showrooms. It is an event of intent — bringing together, under a digital roof, projects of interest. It is a one-stop centre for those interested in buying property,” says TheEdgeProperty.com managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee.

“The world is constantly changing. More and more of our lives are locked into the digital realm — whether we like it or not. The speed and the length and breadth a developer chooses to embrace technology will surely redefine its competitiveness,” adds Au.

16TWO Communication Labs Sdn Bhd is the digital partner of VPEX 2017. The Gold and Silver sponsors are Panasonic Malaysia and Lafarge Malaysia Bhd, respectively. Air-Asia Bhd, Grab Malaysia and Nippon Paint Malaysia are the supporting partners.

The media partners for the event



LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com

Being open to and embracing change is what is going to drive the business — Au

are The Edge Malaysia, TheEdgeProperty.com Singapore and BFM.

Embrace change

Au says through VPEX 2017, TheEdgeProperty.com aspires to raise the competitive edge of Malaysian developers in particular, by seeking to create a bigger presence both within and outside of Malaysia.

“The ability to capture more and better data that enables the continuous understanding of insights into customer behaviour will determine if the traditional offline business of brick and mortar can stand

the test of time,” she says.

“Being open to and embracing change is what is going to drive the business,” Au adds.

While this is the first such digital endeavour in Malaysia and possibly in Southeast Asia, virtual property expos are not new in places such as India, where a number of virtual property fairs have been organised by real estate portals, media and property agencies over the past few years. One of the first virtual property fairs can be traced back to property portal IndiaProperty.com’s Virtual Property Fair held on June 25 and 26 in 2009, according to Merinews.

16TWO managing partner Vickenzean Selvadurai says the world is experiencing an exciting digital content revolution. With even more access to an infinite amount of content available online, people are spoiled for choice, causing a shift in the consumption behaviour.

“This virtual expo takes advantage of this shift in behaviour as we are progressing beyond content and towards artificial intelligence. Building a virtual expo enables us to learn from the audience’s behavioural demands and inspires us to bring about relevant content,” he shares.

“When the idea of VPEX 2017 was first conceptualised, we knew we can make it materialise by partnering with TheEdgeProperty.com as it already provides an existing and credible platform.”

Live on The Edge Property Malaysia Facebook!

Hear it from property CEOs, industry experts, lifestyle personalities and fashionistas

Time: 3pm-5pm | Date: July 22 and 23

Home & Lifestyle

- Tips on keeping your open wardrobe neat — Shalma Ainaa, TV host and fashion entrepreneur
- What to do with 20 stalks of roses? — Eunice Teo, founder of Amtrol Flower Designing (Tune in to win floral arrangement lessons worth RM2,280)
- “Join” celebrity Amber Chia in her heavenly home...
- Touring Colony Co-Working Space with Timothy Tiah
- Celebrity Stephanie Chai on what it takes to set up and grow luxury travel website The Luxe Nomad
- Ready to create your own furniture? — Hani Ali, creator of LAIN furniture
- Feng Shui and you — Dato’ Joey Yap

Property Insight

- Buying into a new township development — should you or should you not? — Aisyah Madzan, research manager, TheEdgeProperty.com

Take it from the top; chat with:

- Datuk Ho Hon Sang, CEO and executive director, Mah Sing Group Bhd
- Edward Chong Sin Kiat, managing director, IJM Land
- Lok Ngai Hey, COO, Property, MRCB

Legal

- Step by step legal process in buying property — Chris Tan, managing partner, Chur Associates
- Common myths about communal living: What’s Legal, What’s Not! — Chris Tan, managing partner, Chur Associates

Corporate Social Responsibility

- Can property developers be more innovative in their CSR fulfilment? — Kal Joffres, co-founder and CEO, Tandemic
- Going Green; hear it from the Green-Man Himself! — Matthias Gelber
- Build a home in three days! — Johnson Oei, co-founder and CEO of EPIC Homes



Going on FB live

In conjunction with VPEX 2017, TheEdgeProperty.com will also be hosting Facebook live segments on the afternoons of July 22 and July 23 (Saturday and Sunday).

The content being curated by TheEdgeProperty.com editorial team will include chats with industry players, entrepreneurs and lifestyle personalities such as international model Amber Chia; founder and CEO of The Luxe Nomad Stephanie Chai; founder of the Mastery Academy of Chinese Metaphysics and chief consultant of the Joey Yap Consulting Group Dato’ Joey Yap; and popular blogger Timothy Tiah, who just ventured into the co-working space business recently. There will also be interviews with property CEOs, while TheEdgeProperty.com will present a talk on property trends.

WIN fabulous prizes at VPEX 2017!

While looking for your ideal property on VPEX 2017, you also stand a chance to win very attractive daily lucky draw prizes. Panasonic Malaysia will be giving away RM20,000 worth of prizes while AirAsia will be giving up to 500,000 points of AirAsia Big Points and flight tickets to anywhere within the airline’s network. Grab Malaysia will be giving out promo codes for interested buyers to visit the sales galleries of participating developers.

Gamuda Land and TheEdgeProperty.com will also be sponsoring the giving away of free personal credit reports.

Stay tuned for **TheEdgeProperty.com** pullout on July 21, 2017 for a comprehensive report on the first virtual property expo.

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Virtual Property Expo 2017
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PICTURES BY IJM LAND

The 22-year-old Seremban 2 initially spanned 2,300 acres and was a joint venture between IJM Land and the Negeri Sembilan state government.

Seremban 2 attracting more buyers from the Klang Valley

LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com

BY TAN AI LENG

SEREMBAN: In the early stages of its development, 95% of IJM Land Bhd's Seremban 2 purchasers were from Seremban or neighbouring areas. Over the years however, as infrastructure development and amenities improved, many people from the Klang Valley had chosen to settle down here.

"The buyers' profile has changed over the years. Now around 20% of buyers are from the Klang Valley who are working in Bangi, Cyberjaya, Kuala Lumpur and even Petaling Jaya," IJM Land Bhd central region senior general manager Datuk Hoo Kim See told TheEdgeProperty.com.

"With the improved infrastructure, amenities and road network, Seremban 2 has become a place for work, play and stay and is especially suitable for families," said Hoo, who himself moved from KL to Seremban 2 in 2000.

The 22-year-old Seremban 2 initially spanned 2,300 acres and was a joint venture between IJM Land and the Negeri Sembilan state government. It serves as an extension to the congested Seremban town.

The satellite town is currently 90% completed with 13,000 homes and over 1,000 commercial properties.

"But with an additional 1,500 acres purchased in 2000 for the development of Seremban 2 Heights, it has now expanded into a 3,800-acre township with a mix of offerings," Hoo said.

Upcoming launches

The developer will be offering more mid-range landed homes and a project known as Safira Apartment in Seremban 2 this year.

It has launched the final phase of Rimbun Vista (Rimbun Vista 2), two months ago and has seen 75% of the 187 double-storey superlink homes of 22ft by 70ft and 22ft by 80ft, taken up.

This low density guarded development is located near the North-South highway with easy access to the Ainsdale and Seremban tolls. It features a four-acre central park with basketball court and 1.5km jogging and cycling path.

"An upcoming project Rimbun Harmoni is slated to be launched in August. The site is situated on elevated ground offering a good view of the hill park," he said.

Rimbun Harmoni comprises 228 units



of double-storey terraced homes measuring 20ft by 70ft and 22ft by 70ft, with selling prices from RM528,000 onwards.

Another double-storey terraced housing project offering over 105 homes measuring 22ft by 65ft will be launched this year, but the names and unit prices have yet to be determined.

IJM Land also plans to launch Safira Apartment by year end offering 242 apartment units with a built-up size of 820 sq ft. The indicative selling price starts from RM250,000.

Safira Apartment is located close to the Seremban district administration centre, the State Court Complex, a health clinic and the Seremban district police headquarters as well as the Fire and Rescue Services headquarters.

Hoo said the affordable pricing and its location where various government agencies are, have attracted the attention of buyers.

Seremban 2 comprises 18 residential communities, seven schools, a 15-acre city lake park, a sports complex and commercial business parks.

Accessibility in and within Seremban 2 is via a six-lane dual carriageway that eases traffic flow even during peak hours.

There is also a 30-acre adventure hill

All the infrastructure developments were planned from day one in our master plan and this is what makes Seremban 2 a success. — Hoo

from day one in our master plan and this is what makes Seremban 2 a success," he said.

Property transactions in Seremban 2 were slow in the first five years, but once the early phases were delivered and the infrastructure was completed, sales increased significantly.

The population in the self-contained township has also increased to 62,000 people now. Community activities are regularly held to bring the residents together. For instance, the IJM Run which will be held in August 13 has attracted 8,000 participants this year within two months' of registration compared to 1,000 participants five years ago.

Capital appreciation

Seremban 2 purchasers have seen the value of their properties double or triple over the years. According to Hoo, the double-storey semi-dee units known as Acacia that were

park where residents could enjoy panoramic views of Seremban 2.

Nearby amenities include malls like Mydin, Aeon shopping centre and NSK Hypermarket. Food and beverage choices, government and private hospitals are within 15 to 30 minutes' drive.

"All the infrastructure developments (parks, schools and roads) were planned

sold at RM350,000 in 2008 are now going for RM1.1 million.

Meanwhile, Kalista Residence condominium units of 926 sq ft have seen their price climb 28% to RM320,000 from RM250,800 during launch in 2013.

The higher-end projects including the two-storey Sri Carcosa bungalows are now asking for over RM2 million. The cheapest selling price back in 2006 was around RM600,000.

In terms of rental, Hoo said there is strong demand from students from the universities and colleges in Nilai and people working in the neighbouring industrial areas. "The rental yields are between 4% and 6%, depending on property type," he added. For example, a double-storey Saujana Duta semi-dee unit is fetching a monthly rental of RM4,500, generating 4% yield.

The three-storey shop offices in Biz Avenue could be rented out for RM8,000 and above, generating 10% to 14% yield while rents for the double-storey shop offices at Uptown Avenue are around RM4,000 to RM5,000, generating 8% to 10% rental yield.

"We expect prices to rise further in the future. However, it still depends on market sentiment, inflation and economic growth," he opines.

Hoo also believes the KL-Singapore High Speed Rail which will have a transit station in Seremban will boost the growth of the township further.



The Seremban 2 city lake park.



Protect your rights when buying commercial properties

BY TAN AI LENG

We used to be able to make a clear distinction between commercial and residential properties, but nowadays, we have homes with commercial titles and offices with residential elements, which can sometimes throw you off as to what exactly you are buying.

Besides office units, shophouses and retail units in shopping malls, there are also serviced suites managed by hotel operators offering short- and long-term rentals. These properties clearly market themselves as commercial properties but there are those that are less clear-cut.

Bedazzled by the stylish showrooms, many jump on the bandwagon to purchase Small-offices Versatile-offices (SoVos), Small-offices Flexible-offices (SoFos), Small-offices Lifestyle-offices (SoLos) as well as designer suites and other ambiguous names. But as they say, a rose by any other name will smell as sweet, because these are



all basically commercial office units, some with of residential elements.

Protection

Founder of PW Tan & Associates Dominic Tan says owners of commercial-titled properties do not get the kind of protection that residential-titled property owners do.

“All the protection offered by the Housing Development (Control and Licensing) Act 1966 (HDA) for residential property buyers will not apply to commercial property owners. The terms for commercial

property transactions are purely based on the contractual agreement between the buyer and seller,” he tells TheEdgeProperty.com.

National House Buyers Association (HBA) secretary-general Chang Kim Loong concurs that the many names used to market commercial products have confused property buyers, as the artist impressions used in marketing brochures may look like a residential project and you may not know it is actually a commercial project unless you read the small print.

“If you have little knowledge of what to look out for, it would be unlikely for first-time buyers to spot the difference,” says Chang.

Real estate consultancy firm Henry Wiltshire International (Malaysia) director Vicky How says many are not aware that the developer of a commercial property bears less liability than a developer of a residential property. Hence, one must take more care to deal with reputable developers when buying a commercial property.

The risks

“There are some commercial products that are rather misleading. Many purchasers buy them maybe because of attractive pricing or they think the property is the same as SoHo [Small-office Home-office], which is basically for residential purposes,” says How.

However, commercial properties with residential elements are regulated by different laws and guidelines from residential-use commercial properties such as some SoHos and serviced apartments.

In commercial properties with residential elements, the owners do not have the right to stay overnight in the property if the management does not allow them to. Such developments also do not fall under the jurisdiction of the HDA.

Chang notes that unlike for residential properties, the developers of commercial properties may not need to list down details such as the date of commencement and completion of the project, or the building plan and floor plan, in the Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA) if the developer has not obtained the necessary approvals.

He adds that the developers of residential

properties need to apply for the advertising permit and developer licence (APDL) before they can start placing advertisements to sell their products, while the developers of commercial properties do not.

“In case of dispute, strata homebuyers can bring up their cases to the Strata Management Tribunal. However, for commercial property purchasers, their legal recourse is through the courts and the arguments will be based on the SPA signed by both parties,” Chang says.

PW & Associates’ Tan points out that the rights of commercial buyers are strictly governed by the SPA with the developer. “If the developer breaches the SPA, the buyer will have to file a legal claim against the developer through the dispute resolution mechanism agreed in the SPA,” he explains.

Thus, Tan advises purchasers to engage their own lawyers to look into the SPA to safeguard their interests. “Unlike residential properties, which are governed by the HDA, commercial properties do not have a standard SPA. Therefore, buyers may be subject to unfavourable terms and be placed in vulnerable positions.”

The significance of the HDA

Chang from HBA explains that the HDA (amended in 2012) controls the development of “housing accommodation” and provides protection to homebuyers through Schedule H (for building or land intended for subdivision into parcels) and Schedule I (for build-then-sell stratified property), pursuant to the Housing Development (control and licensing) Regulations 1989 (amended in 2015).

Under the statutory SPA for residential properties, the developer is required to clearly state the details of the development to protect homebuyers. The details include the date of commencement and completion of the project, compensation for late delivery (LAD), the delivery of vacant possession (VP), defect liability period and schedule of payment of purchase price.

Over the years, amendments had been made to the Act to further protect buyers. One of the changes is that the housing minister has the right to prescribe any type of accommodation to become a housing

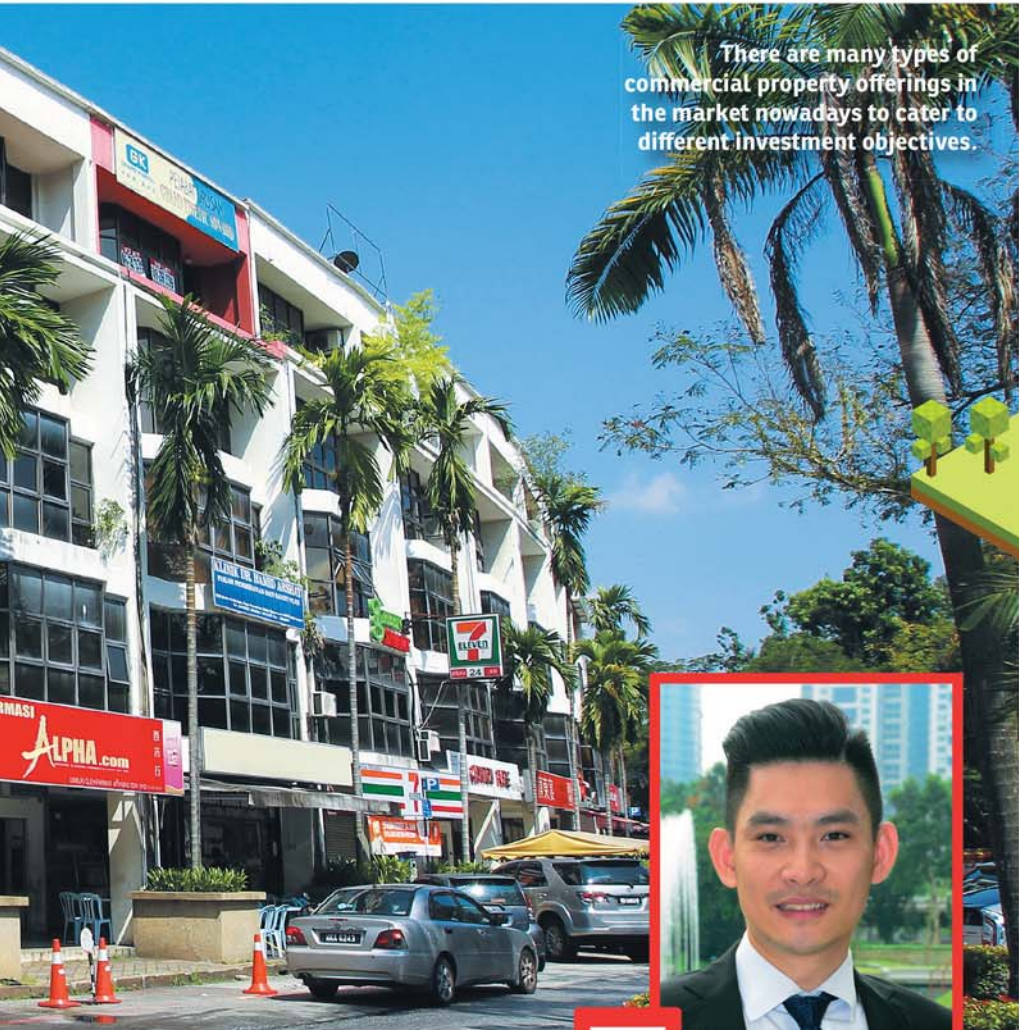
SOURCE: DOMINIC TAN FROM PW TAN AND ASSOCIATES AND VICKY HOW FROM HENRY WILTSHIRE

Pitfalls to avoid when investing in commercial properties

LOOK OUT FOR	WHAT TO DO	THINGS YOU SHOULD ASK
Problematic developers	Due diligence on the background and credibility of the developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the developer's reputation in the market? • Have there been various complaints lodged by aggrieved purchasers against the developer?
Poorly planned projects	Check the project site using online maps or drive there to see the surrounding environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the development fit into the overall environment? • Is the timeline to deliver vacant possession realistic?
Fancy product descriptions that you don't understand	Check with the marketing representative whether it's a residential or commercial development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you stay in the property? • Is the property to be purchased subject to the HDA? Would you get protection accorded under the HDA?
Agreements with substantial fine print and elaborate legal terms	Check with your lawyer when in doubt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The completion date of the property • Defect liability period • Delivery of VP • Whether LAD is payable by the developer
Unexpected costs	Check with your lawyer or the developer on the utility charges and land status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the annual quit rent like? • How's the utility charges? • Maintenance fees?

SUHAIMI YUSUF | TheEdgeProperty.com

SOURCE: CHANG KIM LOONG FROM HBA | GRAPHICS: NURUL AIDA MOHD NOOR | TheEdgeProperty.com



There are many types of commercial property offerings in the market nowadays to cater to different investment objectives.



Tan: Speak to your lawyer when in doubt as they have the obligation to ensure that your legal concerns are addressed.



How: If you are not signing the agreement under Schedule H, you are definitely not buying a residential property.



Chang: First-time buyers are unlikely to spot the differences between apartments and serviced apartments.

accommodation (HDA (Amendment) 2007).

With this, the HDA could cover any residential property with a commercial title such as serviced apartments as well as any property intended partly for human habitation and partly for business premises such as SoHos, explains Tan.

However, How notes that SoVos and SoFos are not for residential use.

“Do not think you are buying a home when you buy one of these properties. If you are not signing the agreement under Schedule H, you are definitely not buying a residential property, which means you are not protected by the HDA,” How warns.

When purchasing a commercial property, Tan advises buyers to dive into the details of the terms and conditions before signing on the dotted line.

The points to note include the completion date of the property, defect liability period, the delivery of VP, whether LAD is payable by the developer and the buyer’s rights in the event of a breach by the developer.

“The rule of thumb should be this: When in doubt, speak to your lawyers, as they have the obligation to ensure that your legal concerns are addressed and your interests as a client are protected at all times,” he emphasises.

Besides scrutinising the SPA, How advises buyers of landed properties to check the land status on whether it is being subdivided, as well as the annual quit rent, as the charges vary for different property types. “For SoHo, SoVo and SoFo buyers, do ask for a copy of the agreement before making purchase decision,” she adds.

The costs

Some buyers may not be aware that commercial properties require higher maintenance fees, utility tariffs, insurance premiums, assessments and quit rents.

According to Tenaga Nasional Bhd’s website, the minimum monthly electricity charge for low voltage commercial premises is RM7.20, compared with RM3 for a private dwelling that does not carry out any form of commercial activities.

In Selangor, Syarikat Bekalan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd states on its website that the minimum water tariff for commercial

usage is RM36 per month compared with RM6 for domestic usage. Meanwhile, the Shah Alam City Council imposes a 4% and 3.5% assessment rate on landed and stratified residential properties respectively, but the rate for serviced apartments is 5%. For shopoffices and offices, the assessment rate will be 7%. Local authorities have their own rates for property assessment in the areas

Things to note when buying commercial properties

Terms and conditions stated by the developer in the Sale and Purchase Agreement (SPA)

The Defects Liability Period is normally 12 months from VP

In case of dispute, owners will need to appoint lawyers to take legal action

Schedule of payment — owners need to pay when the commencement of work starts based on developer’s written notice

Date of commencement and completion period — whether it is from the date of SPA or date of the approved building plan

Delivery of VP — owners will get the certificate of practical completion by architect but certificate of completion and compliance (CCC) will only be issued after approval from the authorities

provide confirmation of the relevant records in the register upon request and an administrative fee (not exceeding RM50) would be imposed on the buyer pursuant to Section 22D of the HDA.

Still worth the investment

Despite the risks and costs, How believes commercial properties are worth the investment depending on the location and property type. Some could be very attractive.

“For typical shop units, the rental yield can range from 5% to 8%, while retail units in shopping malls can go up to 12%, depending very much on the retail/mall management,” she says.

As for warehouses or small factories with commercial titles, the yields are usually more predictable, ranging between 4% and 6%, as their tenancies are usually longer than for normal shops or retail units.

For properties like SoHos, SoVos and SoFos, the returns are usually within 3% to 5%, depending on location, demand, facilities and management of the property.

For first-time buyers who want to invest in a commercial property, How suggests looking into factories or warehouses with commercial title or stand-alone commercial shop lots with individual titles.

“The reason is that the purchaser owns the unit and does not have to rely on the retail management or the quality of the brands, which determines the quality of the crowd. Moreover, these landed properties are bought with the land value, so it appreciates as long as you hold them,” she says.

under their jurisdiction.

In addition, according to the Royal Malaysian Customs’ guidelines on land and property development, commercial properties are subjected to the Goods and Services Tax.

Besides this, there is no exemption on the Real Property Gains Tax if a commercial property is sold within five years, whereas a residential property is entitled to a “once-in-a-lifetime” exemption.

In terms of transactions, Tan says if the title has been issued, the transaction is similar to a residential transaction. However, if the title has yet to be issued, a developer’s consent is required.

He highlights that for commercial properties, it is the duty of the seller to obtain the developer’s consent as a condition precedent to the sale or assignment. At times, a developer may impose stringent terms and conditions on the parties.

In comparison, in a residential property transaction, it is the developer’s duty to



Five tips to navigate challenging times and excel in life

BY SHAWN NG

KUALA LUMPUR: The economy is not doing well this year and it is not looking good either in 2018, said founder of Mastery Academy of Chinese Metaphysics Datuk Joey Yap.

However, we can navigate through the challenging times and achieve our goals, he told participants at the Joey Yap's Qi Men Odyssey 2017 Seminar at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on July 9.

The event saw about 3,000 attendees present to gain some insight from the Chinese metaphysics master. TheEdgeProperty.com is the official media partner for the seminar.

Yap outlined five things to do for Chinese metaphysics followers to help them excel in challenging times. "First is to map your life journey using the Bazi chart, then utilise Feng Shui tools to get to your destination. You also need to identify noblemen to help you in your life, choose the right teammates and, last but not least, identify what stage of life you are in," he told the audience.

"Using a Bazi chart to check your life map is the first thing you should do. This is

because only a small percentage of people know their life goals at a very young age. Most people don't," he said.

Hence, he suggested that one should look at their Bazi chart to find out which area they can excel in and avoid taking the wrong direction in life.

The second strategy is to utilise specific Feng Shui tools that are able to help one navigate obstacles, including Bazi, Feng Shui, Qi Men Dun Jia, face reading and date selection, he shared.

"Subsequently, you need to look for three types of people who can become a guide in your life by looking at the nobleman stars in your Bazi chart. These people are 'mentors', 'coaches' and 'advisers', who can assist you in your life."

After identifying the noblemen, Yap said, one should start looking at the "passengers" who will travel the life journey with us.

There are five types of passengers, namely "minions, glass cannons, tanks, snipers and generals". Each type has strengths and weaknesses.

For instance, minions are people who can be very supportive and work well with others, but can be easily influenced and are not very independent.

Yap outlined five things to do for Chinese metaphysics followers to help them excel in challenging times.



LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com

"You should find out what type of passenger you are to identify your strengths and weaknesses, so that you can know who you should be with to ensure a smooth life journey," said Yap.

Finally, he advised one to find out what stage of life he/she is in now.

"There are five stages in life: idling, lost, bumpy, cruising and auto-pilot. The first stage is idling, where everything looks good but things will start to get bad if you do not do anything to move out from this stage.

"The second stage is lost, which means you are moving but you have no idea where you are heading.

"Then it comes the bumpy stage. In this stage, you would have achieved your first

goal in life, but probably only one aspect of your life is working out while others are not.

"In the cruising stage, most aspects of your life have worked out and you know what you are doing and your direction. And you will be aiming for a higher level.

"Lastly, in the auto-pilot stage, everything is auto-pilot and you get to enjoy freedom. This is where we want to be, so that is why we are using Chinese metaphysics to get there," he said.

One can adopt various strategies to reach each destination in life, so they can achieve a balanced and harmonious life in six aspects — life purpose, financial, relationship, family, wellness and contribution, he concluded.

Lafarge truck design competition entries shortlisted



01

BY RACHEL CHEW

KUALA LUMPUR: Judges of the Lafarge Malaysia #happinesinthecity Truck Design Competition have selected 14 entries to be in the running to win a total of RM6,000 in cash prizes.

The competition is part of Lafarge Malaysia's "Happiness in the City" campaign held for the first time in Malaysia. The aim of the campaign is to tell Malaysians that together, they can build happier cities and make Malaysia a better place. Meanwhile, the truck design competition aims to bring some colour and add "happiness" to the city.

The competition received a total of 42 design submissions from students of 16 universities

in the country, of which 14 were shortlisted by a panel of eight judges on July 10. The judging criteria included creativity, relevance to the "Happiness in the City" theme and the best use of colour.

The judges were Lafarge Malaysia president and chief executive officer Thierry Legrand; vice-president of marketing and pricing Tolga Pekel; Southeast Asia and China head of branding Shirley Low; official media partner TheEdgeProperty.com managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee; official paint partner Akzo Nobel head of marketing Shinta Iswandani; branding agency M&C Saatchi head of planning and managing partner Michael Quay; digital agency Columbus managing director Abby Kury; and event activation

partner YouthToday head of operations Prasan Dhanaganan.

The 14 shortlisted designs were from 10 teams, namely the Chin Family from Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Ji Xiang Ru Yi also from Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Uuhoo the Unicorn from Universiti Utara Malaysia, T Art from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman, Bowtuckle from Multimedia University (four designs shortlisted), Illustration Room from Limkokwing University, Zenu from Universiti Teknologi MARA (two designs shortlisted), Simple2 from Universiti Sains Malaysia, Pantheon from Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia and Caterbillar from Taylor's University.

The shortlisted teams will be given three



02

01 (From left) The judges: Prasan, Legrand, Shinta, Low, Au, Quay, Pekel and Kury.

02 The judges hard at work evaluating the entries.

weeks to paint the actual cement or ready-mix concrete trucks. Pictures of the trucks will then be featured on Lafarge Malaysia's Facebook page for about a week in August for the public to select the winning designs based on votes and likes.

The top three most-liked designs will be announced by mid-August. A special "creative use of colour" award will also be presented by Dulux.

As part of the campaign, Lafarge Malaysia also partnered TheEdgeProperty.com to carry out TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey earlier in May.

The survey received close to 1,800 respondents from the Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru.

PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com



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

Stress and the city

BY RACHEL CHEW

So it's true — Klang Valley folks are less happy living in the city compared with those living in Penang and Johor Bahru. That is according to TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey.

The survey showed that as many as 49% of respondents in the Klang Valley found city life merely "tolerable" while another 9% and 3% were unhappy and very unhappy, respectively.

That's hardly surprising, but what will probably make us sit up more is that only 3% of Penang and Johor Bahru respondents were unhappy/very unhappy living in their respective cities.

Penang seems to have gotten the happiness formula right as 47% of respondents from the state said they were very happy while another 30% said they were happy. As for Johor Bahru, about 24% of respondents from there were very happy and 37% were happy.

Why are Penang and Johor Bahru folks so much happier than those in the Klang Valley?

Could it be something in the air? Or could it be that they are living in a less stressful environment?

TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey found that 54% of Klang Valley respondents felt stressed out living in the city compared with only 7% and 17% Penang and Johor Bahru respondents, respectively.

"Generally, people living in urban areas especially big cities such as Kuala Lumpur face a lot of stress. Stress could come from dealing with traffic congestion, higher cost of living, and demanding jobs and workplaces," says Malaysian Mental Health Association (MMHA) secretary-general Datin Ang Kim Teng.

Ang tells TheEdgeProperty.com that stress is essential to keep one moving forward, but too much stress can lead to mental illness.

Citing a survey carried out by the Ministry of Health in 2015, she points out that 39.8% of KL folks have different levels of mental illness, such as stress, anxiety and depression. The figure was lower in Penang and Johor Bahru, at 19.1% and 22.2%, respectively.

"The findings of the ministry's study and TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey correlate, although the latter mentions stress but not mental illness. However, as Ang said, if you are not handling stress carefully, it will slowly transform into mental illness," says MMHA president See Cheng Siang.

See says stress may also come from loneliness and the lack of an extensive family support, especially for those who are not originally from KL.

"KL is a migrant city — many people came here to further their studies and work. Most of them have to depend on themselves without the mental and emotional support



PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com



See: If you are not handling stress carefully, it will slowly transform into mental illness.

of their families," he shares.

Ang also adds that many people choose to face their stress-related problems on their own rather than seek help because of the stigma attached to mental illness.

"There are many reasons for the number of people suffering from serious stress problems and mental illness. I think one crucial problem is that Asians still view seeking help from psychiatrists or even counselors as a stigma," says Ang.

She stresses that mental illness is just like any other physical illness such as fever and flu. "You will go to a doctor if you feel feverish and your throat is sore, but why wouldn't you go to a professional if you are mentally sick?" Besides seeking professional help, other options that Ang and See suggest to de-stress are balancing out the time for work and leisure, talking to people and enjoying nature.

"It is proven that greenery will help you relax. However, I would not say KL people are stressed out because we do not have enough green spaces.

"Green spaces can help people de-stress only if people use them. Many people in the city would rather go indoors in their leisure time," See points out.

Environmental concerns

Centre for Environment, Technology and Development, Malaysia (CETDEM) chairman Gurmit Singh wholly agrees with See.

"Look at the park in front," says Gurmit, pointing at the park near CETDEM's office in SS2, Petaling Jaya. "We have the park but we hardly have people using them. Do you think we really need more green spaces when the existing ones are not even fully utilised?"

However, he does not blame the people for not using the parks. "It is not entirely due to the users; it is also because some parks are not user-friendly enough. Many of our parks do not have enough trees to make the place shady and cool enough. They are also not well maintained and pleasant for people to use."

No doubt, a greener city environment could raise the comfort and happiness levels of those living in the city, Gurmit says, adding that the major cities in Malaysia are still far from their "green" targets.

"It is not only KL, but also Penang and Johor Bahru where the environment is suffering. Our parks are not only underused but also misused as



Gurmit: The government should be the role model and take the lead in adopting green measures.



Ang: Stress could come from dealing with traffic congestion, higher cost of living, and demanding jobs and workplaces.

garbage dumping grounds. River and air pollution are also serious problems," he notes.

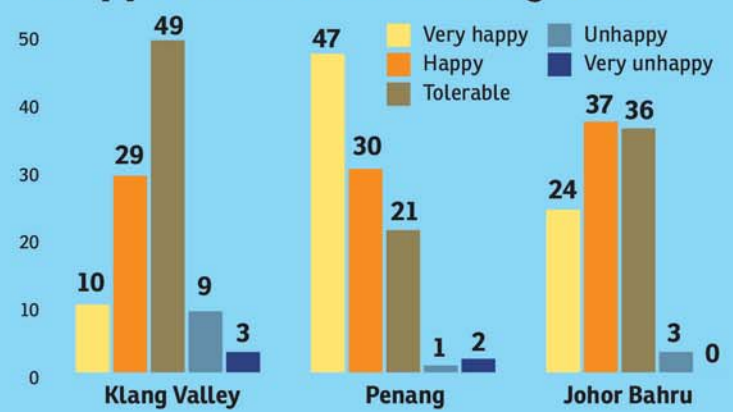
TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey had revealed that as many as 65% of Klang Valley respondents were concerned about air pollution while 31% were worried over rising noise pollution.

There were similar feelings in Penang and Johor Bahru with 50% and 46% of respondents being concerned about air pollution while 33% and 20% were concerned about noise pollution, respectively.

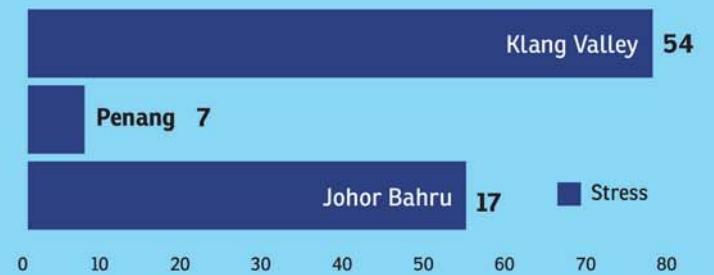
"While some people blame the authorities for not doing their job well in cleaning and maintaining public places and facilities, the users may not realise that they are also contributing to today's environmental situation by taking things for granted — for instance, taking for granted that someone will collect the rubbish thrown in the streets or park,



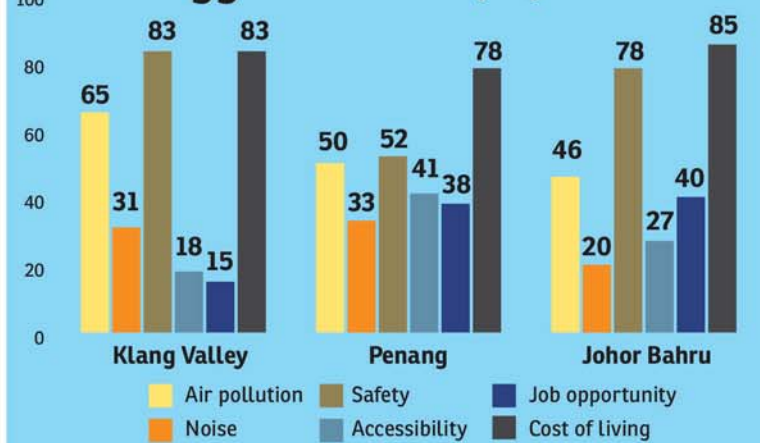
Happiness level in the city (%)



Who feels the most stress? (%)



The biggest concern (%)



or someone will pick up the rubbish floating in the river," Gurmit says.

He stresses that everyone should be playing their role in building a greener and more liveable city. "It is never one person's job. Before you blame anyone else, first take a step back and look at yourself — are you one of the 'contributors' to today's situation?" Gurmit believes it is more important to implement citizen education on the concept of green and sustainable environment before the authorities kick-start mega infrastructure projects.

"The government should be the role model and take the lead in adopting green measures. Then the private sector will follow and eventually the citizens will change their mindset," Gurmit says.

According to TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey, the majority of Klang Valley folks do not think the urban environment will improve in

future. Only 22% of Klang Valley respondents expect the city in which they live will be more beautiful while even fewer (15%) believe it will be greener in 10 years. In contrast, 56% of Penang respondents believe Penang will become more beautiful in 10 years and 47% believe it will become greener over the same period, while in Johor Bahru, it was 53% and 41%.

"Building a greener, more liveable city and a happier city life is never the job of solely the government. It can only be achieved if every citizen sees the importance of improving their current life and change their lifestyle," says Gurmit.

TheEdgeProperty.com-Lafarge Happiness in the City Index 2017 survey was conducted from April 28 to May 28 covering the Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru. There were 1,273 respondents from Klang Valley, 202 from Johor Bahru and 321 from Penang.



WGBC: KL has its own route towards sustainability

BY RACHEL CHEW

How far has Kuala Lumpur city progressed when it comes to creating a sustainable built environment? Not too bad, it seems.

World Green Building Council chairperson Tai Lee Siang believes KL's green building standards are moving towards the levels of first-tier Asian cities.

"If we are saying that Singapore and most of the Japanese cities and Hang Zhou in China are sitting at the top range of Asian cities that have mature green built environments, then KL should be at a high position on the second tier," Tai told TheEdgeProperty.com in an interview on the sidelines of the World Sustainable Built Environment Conference 2017 held in Hong Kong from June 5 to 7.

Tai estimated about 10% of Asian cities have established mature green built environments and about 30% of Asian cities are still working towards the target, while the rest (60%) have not seen significant action in building green yet.

He defined cities with mature green built environments as those that have green features and concepts in place even as the city continues with its upgrading and enhancement process.

"Although the public transportation system and infrastructure in KL started later than Singapore, we have seen KL [environment and liveability level] improve a lot in the last 20 years. The infrastructure is being put in place and it has better road planning today, or else the traffic could be worse," Tai commented.

Describing KL as unique in its push towards a greener built environment, he said: "Every city and country has its own unique approach. For KL, its strength is its strong ground-up enterprises that are capable of developing massive green and sustainable township projects.

"It is very different from Singapore, which has extreme top-down control [by the government] to turn the whole place into a singular model.

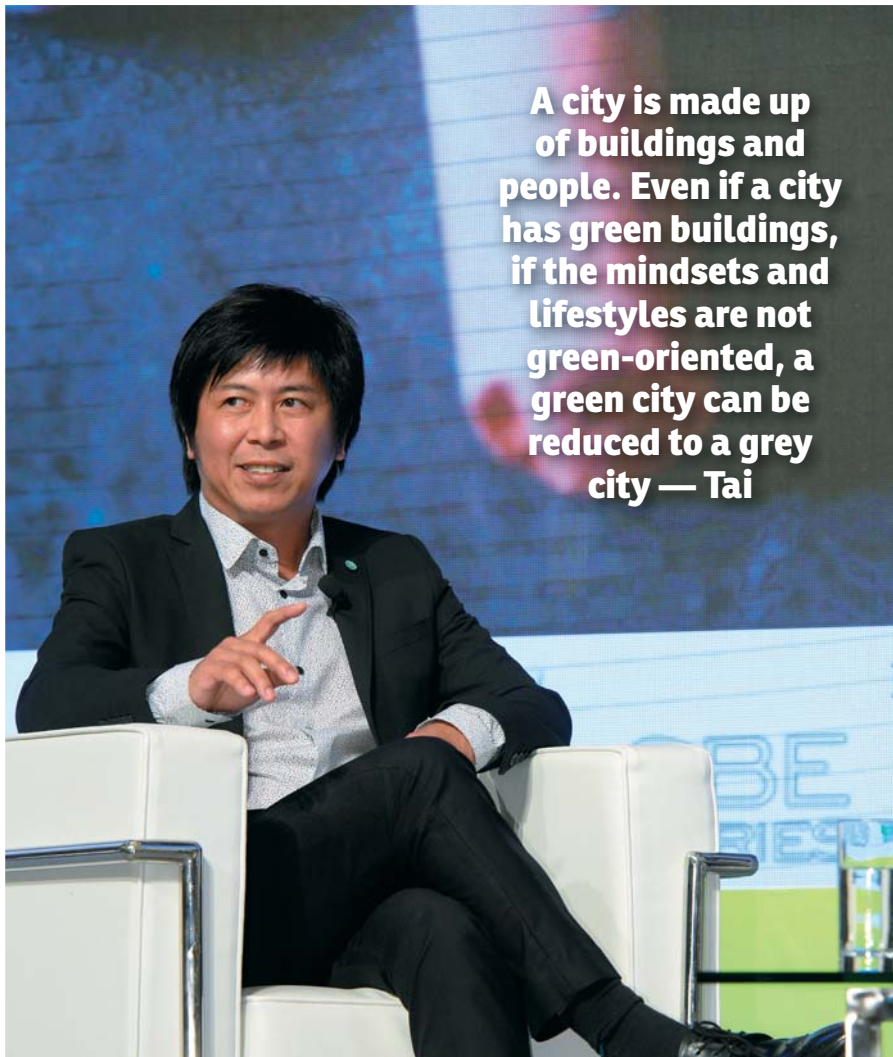
"Malaysia is very diverse. Malaysian cities can have more sustainable township developments to form micro cities that hopefully, when they merge, will bring positive change and influence to the surrounding older parts of the city and eventually make the entire city a greener place."

Increased awareness

Generally, Tai said, the organisation has witnessed the improvement in global environmental awareness and knowledge.

"On a scale of one to 10, we are [globally] at the level of two to three compared with 20 years ago when it was just one."

It may not seem like much but according to Tai, the improvement is significant and is achieved via constant communication and campaigns. "It is also with the help of the media in portraying issues of climate change," he added.



A city is made up of buildings and people. Even if a city has green buildings, if the mindsets and lifestyles are not green-oriented, a green city can be reduced to a grey city — Tai

Globally, cities and governments now have a high level of awareness of the importance of green building and the need to reduce our carbon footprints. Tai cited Dubai, one of the biggest oil producers in the world but has been very supportive in the production of renewable energy as well.

"This shows that the country knows what is right to preserve the environment for the future," Tai said.

He also noted that the focus today is not just on green buildings but also on green cities. "In the past, we only looked at one building at a time, as a standalone entity. Today, the challenge is more complex because people are not just living in the building, but within a city," he added.

Engaging the developers to get them to adopt green and environmental-friendly building concepts took some time as questions like cost and demand have to be answered.

"The market has proven that developing a green building does not cost that much and the end-users have begun to recognise the value," he explained. "Now, it is time to build greener cities, not just buildings."

He stressed that green cities are not built overnight as both the hardware and people's mindsets have to change.

"A city is made up of buildings and people. Even if a city has green buildings, if the mindsets and lifestyles are not green-oriented, a green city can be reduced to a grey city," Tai said.

He cited London as an example. "London is the classic example in promoting sustainable lifestyle. The government is sending the message: 'We

provide the public transportation for your everyday transit. If you still want to use the road, then cycle.' So they are making the already narrow roads less favourable to vehicles," he shared.

Tai concluded that changing the people's lifestyle is now the main focus of green city advocates. "We have to relate the green concept to the people. This is the main focus moving forward — to let the people know that green buildings provide a happier and healthier environment for them," Tai said.

Towards that goal, the use of data is very important in convincing the end-users. "We engaged with researches that have come up with fairly conclusive data that green building improves health and productivity."

One such research was on "Building the Business Case: Health, Well-being and Productivity in Green Offices", published in October 2016. The report listed eight features that will make offices healthier and greener. Such data can be very convincing as it affects the end-users.

Tai also pointed out that the Asian region is crucial to the success of green cities worldwide.

"Asia is unique because we have a larger population than the rest of the world. We have seen more mega cities as well as environment problems in Asia over the past 20 years.

"But Asia is blessed by two things — its population and strong economic base. I believe if Asia can get it right, it can be the model for the world in developing sustainable cities and buildings," Tai concluded.

SOURCE: WORLD GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL
GRAPHIC: NURUL AIDA MOHD NOOR | TheEdgeProperty.com

8 features that make healthier, greener offices



WHY?

1 Indoor air quality and ventilation

Healthy offices have low concentrations of CO₂, VOCs (volatile organic compounds) and other pollutants, as well as high ventilation rates.

101% increase in cognitive scores for workers in a green, well-ventilated office

2 Thermal comfort

Healthy offices have a comfortable temperature range which staff can control.

6% fall in staff performance when offices are too hot and 4% if too cold

3 Daylighting and lighting

Healthy offices have generous access to daylight and self-controlled electrical lighting.

46 minutes more sleep for workers in offices near windows

4 Noise and acoustics

Healthy offices use materials that reduce noise and provide quiet spaces to work.

66% fall in staff performance as a result of distracting noise

5 Interior layout and active design

Healthy offices have a diverse array of workspaces, with ample meeting rooms, quiet zones, and stand-sit desks, promoting active movement within offices.

Flexible working helps staff feel more in control of their workload and engenders loyalty

6 Biophilia and views

Healthy offices have a wide variety of plant species inside and out as well as views of nature from workspaces.

7% - 12% improvement in processing time at one call centre when staff has a view of nature

7 Look and feel

Healthy offices have colours, textures, and materials that are welcoming, calming and evoke nature.

Visual appeal is a major factor in workplace satisfaction

8 Location and access to amenities

Healthy offices have access to public transport, safe bike routes, parking and showers, and a range of health food choices.

€27 mil savings through cutting absenteeism as a result of Dutch cycle-to-work scheme



Googolplex plans expansion

BY LUM KA KAY

Googolplex Holdings Bhd was set up only four years ago but it is making large strides in its core business of project marketing.

Co-founded by Christopher Liang Tian Kiat, his brother and a friend in 2013, Googolplex is anchored by its project marketing agency Gplex Realty Sdn Bhd.

Having achieved RM1 billion sales last year, the group is aiming to triple that sum this year. It is also working on expanding beyond project marketing. It has an array of businesses in the works such as property development, property management, boutique hotel chains and co-working spaces.

"For 2015, we achieved RM1.3 billion sales, while in 2016, it went down a little where we achieved RM1 billion sales. The slowdown in the property market affected us last year," says Liang, who is Googolplex Holdings' group CEO.

"But I would like to think that we have done well so far, consid-

ering that it was a tough market. We are confident we can achieve RM3 billion this year. It may sound like a ridiculous target but we are bullish about it. We have achieved over RM1 billion sales so far," Liang tells TheEdgeProperty.com.

Gplex Realty currently has nine offices in Malaysia — four in the Klang Valley and one each in Johor Bahru, Melaka, Ipoh, Kuantan and Penang.

It is looking to open another

four to six offices in Malaysia, earmarking locations such as Sabah, Sarawak, Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur city centre, Mont'Kiara (KL) and Setapak (KL).

Gplex Realty focuses on project marketing for developers, and the key to setting itself apart from other players in the industry lies in the company culture.

"To compete with others, we realised that we need to be different, if not outstanding. So the company culture is very important to us."

Googolplex's company culture emphasises on integrity and professionalism, as these values help

Googolplex's company culture emphasises on integrity and professionalism.
— Liang



PICTURE BY LOW YEN YEING | TheEdgeProperty.com

propel the company's vision and ambition in being a leader in its business relationships, he says.

"The turnover rate here is very low because we have created a positive culture including providing training for our staff to have a continuous learning environment," he adds.

Liang attributes the high retention rate to its fair operating system, positive company prospects, ample promotion opportunities and benefits.

Prior to Googolplex, Liang was in the telecommunications industry and had set up his own business as one of the marketing partners of

Telekom Malaysia Bhd. The accounting graduate then ventured into property marketing after trying it out with several major property developers and realised the huge potential in the business.

He was named among Malaysia's Top 100 Most Influential Young Entrepreneurs by the Ministry of International Trade and Industry in 2016.

Liang admits that there were quite a few challenges during Googolplex's rapid expansion but he believes the culture and system in the company have helped kept it in good stead.

"A good system and culture that

is duplicable will ensure consistency in each of the new offices that we have set up, so we usually assign one of the project marketing leaders from our headquarters here in Petaling Jaya to set up the new office," he explains.

Moving into property development and hospitality

Besides opening new project marketing offices, Liang said Googolplex Holdings is also looking to launch three themed hotels under its hospitality arm, Googolplex Hospitality, in 2018.

"For 4Q2017, we will be opening a boutique hotel in Sungai Lembing, Pahang, as it is a tourist hotspot. We are still finalising details of the other two themed hotels but our hospitality business is heading in the eco-tourism direction.

"In 2H2018, we aim to launch our first condominium project in Broga Hill [in Negeri Sembilan] via a joint venture," he says, declining to reveal details of the development.

Googolplex's ultimate goal is to be listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange by 2021, says Liang, adding that Gplex Realty is planning to venture into markets in Southeast Asia such as Vietnam, Indonesia and Cambodia early next year.

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A proper coating system is important

1 One of the major tasks in property management is the repainting of a building façade. The immensity of the work, especially in high-rises, has led managements to favour coatings that have longer durability.

Asked for a tip, Nippon Paint Malaysia group managing director Yaw Seng Heng says: "A good painting system helps reduce the need for repainting as it lasts much longer. For example, Nippon Paint's Weatherbond Solareflect is made to withstand the natural elements of the Malaysian weather for 10 years compared to cheaper options that may cost more in the long run."

To ensure the paint quality is as per the recommended lifespan, it is important to engage applicators that can provide reliable workmanship and service. The paint quality itself may last 10 years, but less experienced applicators may diminish its durability.

To minimise such drawbacks, Nippon Paint offers training and consultancy to their customers, such as applicators to ensure the proper coating system is applied on surfaces.

As part of its value-for-money quality coating system, Nippon Paint provides a comprehensive range of services that include colour scheme consultation, site inspection, technical support, warranty and maintenance service packages. In addition, customers are presented with a guided walk through 3D rotate video which allows them to see colours in different dimensions to better visualise the proposed colour scheme.

"We are the total coatings solution that offers coatings from roof to floor and everything in between," says Yaw.



Manage your building through Nippon Paint hassle-free painting service package. Call us at 1-800-88-2663 to find out more!

Prevention is better than cure

One of the keys to a best-managed property is exercising foresight, whereby problems are solved even before they emerge. To borrow the metaphor "fighting fire", excellent property managers know that fighting a fire does not start from the moment the blaze breaks out, but rather even before the flame has a chance to see the light of day.

In view of that, we list here three weighty concerns in property management, along with their recommended preemptive measures.

PICTURES BY MOHD IZWAN MOHD NAZAM, HARIS HASSAN + SAM FONG | TheEdgeProperty.com



Yaw: A good painting system helps reduce the need for repainting as it lasts much longer.



Soo: Malls should pre-plan essentials to support the [food] trade from the design planning stage.



Lee advises owners to hasten the formation of the Joint Management Body and to promptly commission independent professional inspections.

Take note of latent defects in common areas

2 Latent defects in buildings, which emerge only after the expiry of the typical 18- to 24-month defects liability period (DLP), often leave property owners and managers in a quandary, especially if they require major remedial works.

Architect Centre Sdn Bhd (ACSB) accredited architect and trainer Anthony Lee Tee points out that owners normally inspect only their own units upon vacant possession. "Common areas are left uninspected because they don't know they should, they don't have access to areas such as the lift motor room or the electrical room, and they don't possess the technical expertise."

Generally, by the time develop-

ers hand over total management to the Management Corporation, the DLP may well be over. By then, the defects have likely become too costly to fix, remaining as unfixed defects. He says ACSB, a 100% subsidiary of the Malaysian Institute of Architects, has often been sought by managements only after the equipment or facilities break down. He cites many cases of inferior fire-doors and faulty fire-fighting equipment that render properties unsafe.

Since its formation in 2008, Lee says, ACSB has inspected hundreds of buildings. Other common latent defects are leaking roofs, water seepage, faulty lift systems, cracked façade and flawed electrical wiring. They usually arise out of sub-standard materials, erroneous construction and poor labour practices such

as inadequate waterproofing. Other serious consequences include falling wall plastering, burst pipes, structural cracks, collapsing walls and subsided foundations.

To optimise the DLP, Lee advises owners to hasten the formation of the Joint Management Body and to promptly commission independent professional inspections from architects and engineers. "The process can be quickened if property managers start taking photos and logging in the defects they discover first."

"The longer you wait, the harder it becomes to prove the defects were there from the first day, because developers can argue they arise from misuse," he cautions.

Anyhow, Lee highlights that if an inherent defect appears after

the expiry of the DLP, the Limitation Act (Act 254) gives owners the right to pursue rectification within six years from the day it is detected, regardless of how late.

GRAPHICS: NURUL AIDA MOHD NOOR



Food operators in malls need prior planning

3 Both regulators and patrons of eateries may have closed an eye to the sightings of cockroaches, but the recent discoveries of rats in food outlets of well-known shopping malls should elicit a more proactive response than merely raised eyebrows.

Savills Malaysia Sdn Bhd deputy chairman Allan Soo stresses that it is incumbent on malls to do their due diligence because the mall's reputation is at stake.

Soo, who has had 30 years of experience in mall management and consultation, reveals that many mall managers are not aware of food safety and hygiene standards. Some old malls randomly fit in food outlets in areas not properly catered for them, giving rise to problems such as next-door boutiques smelling of curry, water seepage in adjacent shops, constantly clogged sinks and food waste carted in public escalators. "In one of the worst cases, toilet

waste even dripped through the ceiling onto food servings," Soo discloses.

In addition, there is currently no standardised requirement on food handling in Malaysia. He says the more reputable ones, such as Suria KLCC, will enforce stringent prerequisites on their F&B operators, requiring them to have Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point (HACCP) accreditation. Functioning like an eatery auditor, HACCP advocates an internationally recognised food safety management system including production, transportation, preparation, water supply, storage, handling, cooking, packaging and serving. Meticulous details such as using non-porous chopping boards are part of its guidelines. The certification, done by an independent party approved by the Ministry of Health, is reviewed and renewed annually.

Soo, who was responsible for the planning of The Curve in



Mutiara Damansara, well-known for its culinary street, stresses that malls should pre-plan essentials to support the trade from the design planning stage. For example, there should be service corridors, which he dubs "the back of the house", to cater for waste disposal and delivery of raw ingredients. The layout should also facilitate food storage, gas supply, exhaust emission, washing area, grease traps and water inlet and outlet. As such, he says it is best to segregate the outlets involving

cooking from other retailers.

In well-planned malls like Suria KLCC, it is mandatory for would-be F&B tenants to seek professional consultations right from the planning stage, he adds.

"For added credibility, get accredited certifications such as the globally recognised Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance (LRQA)."

LRQA is an independent provider that carries out thorough assessments of managements before awarding them with certificates of approval. In the food industry, they include the HACCP certification and the FSSC 22000 Food Safety Management Scheme certification (an expanded certification of the ISO 22000, ISO 22003 and ISO/TS 22002-1).

He also recommends enlisting reputable consultants where food companies can obtain training and advice on food safety and food quality issues.



REUTERS

Upgrade slums, expand rentals to ease urban housing crisis, say researchers

BY SOPHIE HARES

TEPIC, MEXICO: Booming cities in developing nations should upgrade slums, build on underused land and promote rental choice to tackle a fast-growing crisis caused by a shortage of affordable housing, researchers said on Wednesday.

About a third of people in developing-world cities live in informal settlements, where they often lack access to basic services, said a report from the Washington-based World Resources Institute (WRI).

Globally, 1.6 billion people in urban areas are expected to need affordable homes by 2025, up from 1.2 billion today, as cities attract more migrants, it added.

“We think it’s a crisis when one-in-three households — one-in-three citizens that live in cities — don’t have adequate, secure or affordable housing,” said Robin King of WRI’s Ross Center for Sustainable Cities.

According to the report, 56% of Africa’s urban population live in slums — rising as high as 90% in some countries like Ghana — while in India, it is 24%.

Report co-author King told the Thomson Reuters Foundation that if action does not begin now in some cities in Africa and South Asia, “the problem will be much, much worse.”

Mid-sized cities in particular, which tend to have the fastest expansion rates, need to respond quickly before it’s too late, she added.

Improved housing would help boost cities’ economic growth, reduce their environmental impact and lower social inequality, the report said.

Moving families from slums to poorly serviced new communities on the fringes of sprawling cities has often left them isolated and with limited job options, forcing them to undertake costly commutes each day for work, it said.

To cope with the housing shortage, slums should be made part of the solution by involving residents in programmes to upgrade them and providing better

safety, jobs, health and education, it added.

Schemes are underway to improve favelas in Rio de Janeiro and slums in Indonesia, for example.

“Poor people can improve their lives through incremental upgrading of their homes — and that can only be possible if they feel some sense of security,” said Sheela Patel, chair of Shack/Slum Dwellers International, a network of community-based groups for the urban poor.

For that to happen, governments must provide amenities and ensure land tenure, she told a call for journalists.

Revamping and strengthening the home rental market while offering rent subsidies could help informal workers struggling to meet requirements for entry-level home loans, said WRI.

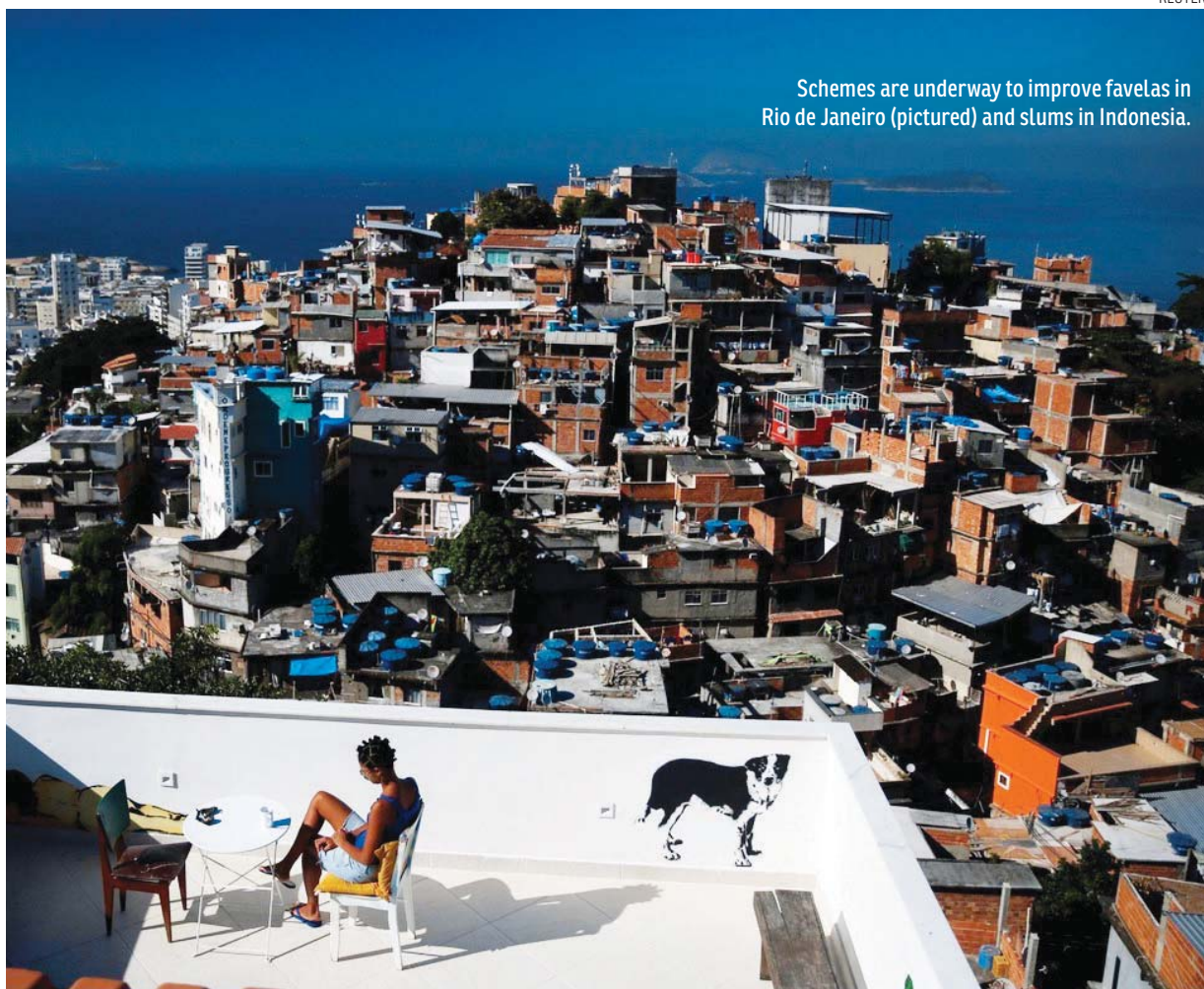
Ways to open up more shelter in cities include regulations to better protect tenants and landlords, easier access to arbitration, and rule changes so that people can rent a single room or even “hot-bed” for a few hours, said the report.

Moves by South Africa’s Gauteng province to legalise hundreds of thousands of “back-yard rentals” — often shacks or rooms tacked onto the backs of houses — have helped ease Johannesburg’s housing problem, said WRI.

Rent-to-own deals and collective ownership schemes can also expand choices, it added.

Other options to help poor people find affordable homes include incentives for developers to build low-cost housing as part of urban regeneration schemes and techniques to increase housing density like those used in São Paulo.

“Land in cities is worth an awful lot, especially [in] fast-growing cities, even if incomes are low,” said Diana Mitlin, professor of urban development at Britain’s University of Manchester. “There is often a problem in ensuring well-located land is allocated to low-income groups.” — Reuters



Schemes are underway to improve favelas in Rio de Janeiro (pictured) and slums in Indonesia.



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