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FIGHTING **COVID-19**

THE MULTI-LAYERED WAY

Inside!



PROPERTY CHAT

Covid-19 impact on hospitality industry

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Lesson from Grenfell: Are buildings in Malaysia safe from flammable ACP?

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Like it or not, we have adapted to masking, sanitising, social distancing and even vaccinating in countering the coronavirus, but as it mutates to become more transmissible and deadly, experts are now issuing a clarion call for a fifth must-do to the list.

Read what they so strongly urge on **Pages 6 to 11**.

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MM2H programme to be reactivated in **October – Home Ministry**



The Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme will be reactivated in Oct 2021 with improvements to policies and application conditions, said Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Wan Ahmad Dahlan Abdul Aziz on Aug 11.

This includes the addition of an online application system that could improve the application process, and at the same time, to better keep the MM2H participants' database.

He added that other improvements to the MM2H programme was the setting of a ceiling on the number of participants (including the dependents), at any one time, with not more than 1% of the total Malaysian population.

Other than that, the applicants must reside in

Malaysia for a minimal cumulative 90 days in a year, have an offshore income of at least RM40,000 a month, a fixed saving account of RM1 million, and prove and declare assets of at least RM1.5 million.

He said the MM2H programme is now divided into two categories: those between 35 and 49 years old, and 50 years old and above, with the first category to be more selective on the quality, based on income and career.

Wan Ahmad Dahlan said the duration of the MM2H long-term social visit pass has now been set to five years, compared to 10 years previously, and can be extended for another five and so on, as long as participants comply with the application conditions.



Struggling Jonker Street sees 95% shops closed since January

The once bustling Jonker Street in Melaka is succumbing to the Covid-19 pandemic. Hampered by the prolonged lockdown and travel restrictions, more than 20 businesses have ceased operations permanently, reported Melaka Hari Ini on Aug 9.

The tourist-centred street in the historical city is now like a ghost town with little to no people. Many business owners have stopped operation due to the lockdown restrictions and many shops have put up "For rent/for sale" banners, searching for tenants or buvers.

The report, citing Melaka State Executive Council Member Datuk Wira Gan Tian Loo, said 95% of the stores within the street have been closed since Jan 2021 while the other 5% is struggling to stay afloat.

With high rentals coupled with an extended lockdown, Gan urged the government to decrease the rate of assessment tax to help alleviate the local business owners' burdens.

See Hup seeks to diversify into construction contract business

See Hup Consolidated Bhd, the general cargo transporting and freight forwarding services group, has proposed to diversify into construction contract

In a bourse filing on Aug 11, the company said, this is part of its longterm strategy to improve its financial performance by expanding its existing construction business and reducing its reliance on its existing core business.

For the year ended March 31, 2019 (FY19), See Hup posted a net loss of RM4.56 million on revenue of RM95.83 million. For FY20, it registered a net loss of RM6.62 million on revenue of RM95.56 million, while for FY21 it recorded a net loss of RM3 29 million. on revenue of RM79.66 million.

See Hup said it may be able to enhance its existing business network to secure more construction projects in the future.

Income from e-commerce transactions up 23.3% y-o-y in 2Q2021

Malaysia's income from e-commerce transactions rose 23.3% year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM267.6 billion in the second quarter of 2021 (2Q2021), mainly driven by the manufacturing and services sectors, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM).

In a statement on Aug 11, DOSM said services sector revenue jumped 20.5% y-o-y to RM404.5 billion in 2Q2021 due to the low base effect.

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin said under the services sector, revenue of wholesale and retail trade, F&B and accommodation segments increased 21.8% y-o-y to RM324.6 billion.

This was followed by the information and communication and transportation and storage segment which grew 14.7% y-o-y to RM59.5 billion, he said.

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PHOTOGRAPH BY EDGEPROP SINGAPORE



Ultra-rich buying frenzy supports Singapore home price growth

As the ultra-rich from across the India," adding privacy as another world are eyeing luxury, exclusive and high-end properties for investment, Singapore's home prices have surged 4.1% to US\$24 trusts to conceal their identities billion (RM102 billion) in the first half of 2021, reported Bloomberg on Aug 11.

The report, citing Nicholas Mak, head of research and consultancy at APAC Realty Ltd unit ERA, said Singapore had been on international investors' radar, thanks to the promise of back in 2007.

"That flurry was tamed by the global financial crisis and property curbs. The difference now is that there are more newly-minted ultra-rich people, especially from China and

attractive reason for these international investors.

Although buyers could use during the transactions to prevent their information being disclosed to the public and even the government, this could complicate the process for developers to screen the buyers' backgrounds.

The report, quoting a spokesperson from the Urban casinos and resort developments Redevelopment Authority, noted that the Singapore government is looking at reviewing existing laws to strengthen requirements for developers to guard against money laundering activities in the sale and purchase of uncompleted private properties.

Green light for state tourism a boon to sector, says

Tourism Ministry

The green light for tourism activities within each state involving homestays and hotels for fullyvaccinated individuals under phase two and the subsequent phases of the National Recovery Plan (NRP) can benefit the tourism industry, said the Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri.

A statement by the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture (MOTAC) on Aug 9 said the relaxation would be a boost to all quarters involved to reinvigorate the tourism, arts and culture sectors in the country while also enhancing the confidence of the public to support domestic

"The opening of the domestic



tourism sector which is being implemented in stages depending on the phases is a boon to tourism operators in line with the Tourism Recovery Plan outlined by MOTAC," she said.

Paint to reduce ambient temperature?

A large-scale pilot project will take place in Tampines, Singapore, where heat-reflective paint will be painted on some 130 housing blocks in an effort to reduce ambient temperature by 2°C, reported The Straits Times on Aug 11.

This is part of the 10-year-plan of the Housing Development Board's (HDB) Green Towns Programme to create a more environmentally- and sustainable-friendly town. The first batch of the pilot project will repaint more than 20 housing blocks and pavements in Tampines Street 83 and 84, and is slated to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2022.

This is not the first time



Singapore has tested with cool paint. There have been two small-scale trials by HDB and Nanyang Technological University in Tuas and Bukit Purmei to measure the performance of the cool paint and conventional paint.

Preliminary findings from the trial showed that cool paint could reduce the ambient temperature around the buildings by up to 2°C in the day and night.

Covid-19: Daily new cases breach 20,000 mark again



Malaysia's daily Covid-19 cases breached the 20,000 mark again, with 21,668 new infections reported on Aug 12 its highest daily figure so far - up from 20,780 infections on Aug 11.

Ministry of Health (MOH) director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah added that some 70 pregnant women across Malaysia died due to the complications from the coronavirus, as of Aug 9.

Currently, the number of pregnant mothers registered for the vaccination remained low at 40%, hence, he urged pregnant women to register and complete their vaccinations before entering the final trimester of pregnancy.

As at Aug 11, a total of 16.35 million people or 50.1% of the country's population

had received at least one dose of the vaccine, including 9.51 million or 29.1% who were fully inoculated, according to the latest updates on Twitter by the Special Committee for Ensuring Access to Covid-19 Vaccine Supply (JKJAV).

Meanwhile, the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers has called on the government to open up all economic sectors immediately based on company-level vaccination rates with continued strict adherence to standard operating procedures and periodical screening of workers.

It opined that failing to do so would result in more businesses having to fold up operations with irreparable damage to the economy and the risk of going into a recession with a long recovery period.



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Details

[1] Testing organisation: TEXCELL [France]. [2] Test subject: Novel Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2). [3] Test volume: 45L enclosed box [400 mm × 350 mm × 350 mm). [4] Exposure time: 2 hours. [5] Exposure distance: 15cm.

'Novel Coronavirus causes Covid-19. It does not guarantee consumers' immunity against virus and bacteria. 'Test results may differ subject to the distance and area of air quality exposure.



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A change of air needed

Text Chin Wai Lun & Rachel Chew

ir-conditioned offices, classrooms, restaurants and shopping malls – these are typically regarded the "rich cousins" of their open-window, fan-operated, door-less, open-air and street-side counterparts.

Certainly, a constant 20° C temperature feels more comfortable than a fluctuating atmosphere of heat, wind or splattering rain, not to mention the din and drone especially in an urban area. So, over the years, by popular demand, buildings and public spaces have

been designed to fit mechanically-controlled ventilation systems – with openable win-

dows, well, thrown out the window.

However, while we have become accustomed to working, studying, dining and shopping with-

in sealed spaces, enjoying its regulated airflow, we are now told, in the new normal, that may not be the best idea.

Just as the army of Covid-19 virus has forced us to defend ourselves by avoiding meeting people, keeping our faces behind masks and not going out unless absolutely necessary, we now have to watch the air we breathe in — because they can possibly contain the virus. What about vaccination? Isn't it sup-

posed to shield us with immunity?

As at Aug 11, 75.1% of the adult population in the Klang Valley have received at least one dose of their Covid-19 vaccinations, while 29.1% of the total population in Malaysia have been fully vaccinated. Currently, the Government is racing to have every one vaccinated soonest.

But the harsh reality is, no one, not even the fully vaccinated, is safe from the virus and this is confirmed in the reported infected cases. As pointed out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), those who have been fully vaccinated could still be infected with Covid-19, albeit less severely, and consequently, the spread of the virus is reduced by more than 80%.

However, the undebatable fact is that the Covid-19 virus can be transmitted not only via droplets but is airborne.

As it is now, most of Malaysia's public spaces and commercial buildings such as shopping malls and offices are within confined spaces and highly dependent on air-conditioning systems. So, what should we do to ensure these shared environments are safe?

IAQ Guidance Note

On July 13, the Government released a guidance note on ventilation and indoor air quality (IAQ) for public, residential and non-residential areas to create awareness on and recommend ways to improve overall ventilation to reduce the risk of airborne virus transmissions.

Some of the key guidelines are to open windows and doors as frequently as possible to introduce fresh air indoors, as well as to use air purifiers to clean indoor air. Noted – these are vital applications for users of existing buildings, but what about buildings under the conception at blueprint stages now?

Continues ON PAGE 8 →



IAQ is crucial as more and more people are going back to office





s the threat of Covid-19 pandemic continues to rage, the importance of prevention and protection by every Malaysian against the attack cannot be dismissed.

The stark reality that the virus - which is reportedly mutating as we speak - is in the very air that we breathe in, calls for urgent attention to indoor ventilation.

Do you realise that we spend an average of 90% of our time indoors? That everyday we breathe in 18kg to 19kg of air? That Covid-19 particles stay in the air in aerosolised form for up to 16 hours?

Crisis-preparedness is one grave lesson from the Covid-19 pandemic which is threatening to bring countries across the globe to their knees.

Hence the urgent need for a guide on the what, why and how-to on ventilation and indoor air quality (IAQ) practices in both existing and new buildings.

On July 13, 2021 the Government unveiled a guidance note on ventilation and IAQ for the residential, non-residential and public areas during the Covid-19 pandemic. Kudos!

Some key Government recommendations include the opening of windows and doors as frequently as possible to introduce fresh air flow. The use of air purifiers indoors is also highlighted. (Government's Guidance Note on ventilation and IAO) While it is vital to mitigate and improve the IAQ of existing buildings, it is imperative that new buildings be designed and built for the new normal.

Moving forward, besides the allimportant location, pricing and sustainable upkeep attributes, investors must tick another box - ask if the building or project has been designed and built for crisispreparedness such as an airborne disease. Is the building truly future-proofed?

Championing IAQ

IAQ is a subject that is actively championed by EdgeProp Malaysia. In fact, the EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards was launched in 2017

EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note on "Improving Indoor Air Quality and **Ventilation in Buildings amid the Covid-19** Pandemic and Beyond"

By Au Foong Yee

Editor-in-chief and managing director of EdgeProp Malaysia



The panel judges of EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards 2021. From left: Datuk Tong Nguen Khoong (deputy president of REHDA), Adzman Shah Mohd Ariffin (president of MIPFM), Tan, Au, Housing and Local Government (KPKT) Minister Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin, Richard Chan (BMAM committee member), Assoc. Prof. Lar. Dr. Nor Atiah Ismail (ILAM vice-president) and Anthony Lee (Architect Centre accredited architect and trainer). Not in the picture is Dr Lim Lan Yuan (president of the Association of Property & Facility Managers Singapore).

with IAQ being one of the Awards' key criteria. The Awards, the first of its kind, is supported by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government and relevant industry

In light of the need for a serious push for IAQ in confined spaces, EdgeProp Malaysia in early July independently curated a Guidance Note on improving IAQ and ventilation in buildings amid the Covid-19 pandemic and beyond.

Not just existing buildings, but new buildings too

The EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note has been prepared based on desktop research from authorities locally and abroad. Input has also been sought from relevant industry stakeholders and experts including Malaysia's key property developers who have been recognised as "Responsible Developers" for their contribution to sustainable development in the country.

Input was also sought from partners and judges of EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards, where the latter have shared past findings on buildings inspected during the Awards judging process in the pre-Covid-19 years.

Some of the buildings inspected were more than two decades old and they were audited for their IAQ adequacy and other sustainable attributes.

The panel of judges comprised Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (REHDA), Malaysian REIT Managers Association (MRMA), Architect Centre, Malaysian Institute of Property and Facility Managers (MIPFM), Building Management Association of

Malaysia (BMAM), Chur Associates founder and managing partner Chris Tan, Association of Property & Facility Managers Singapore, Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia (ILAM) and EdgeProp Malaysia, represented by editor-in-chief and managing editor Au Foong Yee as the chief judge.

It is noteworthy that EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note discusses both existing and new buildings. The importance of fresh air flow indoors, cross ventilation and the use of air-purifying installations or equipment in confined spaces is highlighted.

We also stress that new building designs must be future-proofed and, for instance, provide for a space that can be appropriately converted for selfquarantine purposes.

There must be in-built air-purifiers inside every lift, pantry and place of worship or other confined common areas

In drawing up the Guidance Note, we have taken cognisant of the current economic hardship in the country and the reality that some existing buildings have not been designed and built for IAQ.

Hence, there are recommendations on ways to mitigate the design weaknesses in the most practical manner.

We also suggest the recommendations be implemented complementarily with and in addition to other measures to reduce the disease transmission, such as requiring building occupants to practise safe distancing, wear masks, carry out regular disinfection of high-touch points

within the building and other compliant operating procedures issued from the State and/or Federal Government from time to

The suggestions are neither prescriptive nor exhaustive. Rather, they are intended to assist building owners, building managers, health care facility managers and members of the public in making considered decisions and actions in addressing key concerns with indoor virus aerosol transmissions.

The recommendations are also not intended to trigger a waiver or modification of existing regulatory frameworks and bylaws of each State/Territory of Malaysia. Land is a state matter.

The initiative seeks to examine if the suggestions could or should be adapted to operate complementarily with existing building conditions by-laws, house rules and ownerships.

Critically, creating awareness and a change in mindset is key to our winning this war against the coronavirus.

Read EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note on pages 12 to 21.



In a move of foresightedness, EdgeProp Malaysia has emphasised the importance of IAQ in buildings way back in 2017 when it kicked off the first edition of the EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards. Supported by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the judging process entails detailed inspections, which include IAQ as one of the key criteria of the Awards.

The judges comprise Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia, Malaysian REIT Managers Association, Building Management Association Malaysia, Malaysian Institute of Property & Facility Managers, Singapore's Association of Property & Facility Managers, Architect Centre, Chur Associates, Institute of Landscape Architects Malaysia and EdgeProp Malaysia, represented by editor-in-chief and managing director Au Foong Yee as the

Based on findings from the past inspections of buildings – old and new, and both residential and non-residential – as well as input from relevant industry stakeholders, EdgeProp Malaysia has also drawn up a set of Guidance Note (GN) for the improvement of IAQ and ventilation.

Echoing the Government's guidance note,

EdgeProp Malaysia highlights the importance of fresh air flow indoors, cross ventilation and the use of air-purifiers in existing and new buildings within the pandemic times now and beyond. Read **EdgeProp Malay**sia's Guidance Note on pages 12 to 21.

As pointed out in the GN, IAQ is no

longer an option, but a must-have, for the simple fact that we spend an average of 90% of our time indoors. And considering that Covid-19 particles are reported to stay in the air in aerosolised form for up to 16 hours, good ventilation has become not only non-negotiable, but urgent, as the coronavirus continues to mutate.

EdgeProp Malaysia also calls for crisis preparedness and future-proofing of new building designs to specifically provide for indoor spaces that can be appropriately converted for self-quarantine purposes. There should also be an in-built air-purifier inside every lift, pantry and place of worship in workplaces.

For a clearer picture, EdgeProp.my brings you not one, not two, but four experts who specialise in different fields, but echo the same pressing concerns on IAQ. (Read "Going back to the office" on pg 11)

Single layer protection not enough

Virologist Dr Chan Yoke Fun, who is also the Head of Department of Medical Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Malaya, tells EdgeProp.my poor indoor ventilation contributes to widespread viruses such as coronavirus.

"It is very likely that viruses survive in the air and people get infected by breathing in the air that a positive person has exhaled. The risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection varies according to the amount of virus to which a person is exposed.

"In a systematic review of 24 studies conducted by National Institute of Health Research Health Protection Research Unit in Healthcare Associated Infection and Antimicrobial Resistance in Dec 2020, 17% of air sampled from close patient environments was positive for SARS-CoV-2 RNA, suggesting that viruses are present.

"High viral loads found in toilets and

Continues NEXT PAGE →









Airborne pathogens including coronaviruses are transmitted by small respiratory droplets, which makes it possible to infect large numbers of people even without close contact." Dinesh

bathrooms, staff areas and public hallways suggest that these areas should be carefully monitored for contamination," Chan stresses, adding that "a single layer of protection" is no longer enough to lower the infection risk.

"Each protection strategy has its limitation, and therefore we need to use a multiple-layered approach to protect against the virus, and to keep it from spreading.

"This includes improvements to building ventilation to reduce the spread of disease and lower the risk of exposure. This is on top of the practice of physical distancing, wearing face masks, hand hygiene and vaccination," she shares.

Chan stresses a well-maintained and operated system can reduce the spread of Covid-19 in indoor spaces by improving air flow, increasing the rate of air change, reducing air recirculation and increasing the amount of outdoor air coming in.

"Settings that recirculate the [indoor] air should not be used. HVAC (heating, ventilation, and air conditioning) systems should always be regularly inspected, maintained and cleaned. Read EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note on pages 12 to 21.

"When you are inside [a confined space] with others, open windows or doors whenever possible. For instance, try to get a cross breeze so that air coming in from one window moves across the room and exits through another window. Wearing a mask and filtering the air with a purifier could add layers of protection against Covid-19," she says.

Chan believes Covid-19 is no longer just a pan-

"Covid-19 has become endemic, and regional collaboration to open the economy is needed. There should be political will to accelerate collaborations between Malaysia and other ASEAN countries. Even if Covid-19 goes away, there will be another bug that causes a pandemic.

"Therefore, we should prepare for the future, to ensure we improve our healthcare system and build the right R&D (research and development) for pandemic preparedness.

"Vaccine alone is not the only solution. The world eradicated smallpox with vaccines plus vigorous surveillance to monitor new strains and importations of viruses," she points out.

Airborne virus can infect even without close contact

Dinesh Subedi, post-doctoral Research Fellow of the School of Biological Sciences in Monash University, tells EdgeProp.my that airborne pathogens including coronaviruses are transmitted by small respiratory droplets, which makes it possible to infect large numbers of people even without close contact.

"These droplets contain respiratory secretion and pathogens if expelled by someone with the disease. Viruses can survive in the droplets for hours and depending on the size, droplets can swing around the air for a relatively long span of time.

"A single infectious site might be a source for multiple infections, which will be hard to control. There are several examples that Covid-19 has been transmitted among people quarantining in the same hotel or building, even without any person-to-person contact.

"Double masks can help but there is always the issue of compliance and inconsistency of mask-wearing, therefore it is not the best option," Subedi notes.

Therefore, he believes enhancing IAQ would help to reduce the risk of airborne infections as it avoids accumulation of infectious droplets in enclosed areas.

"Improving IAQ indoors is the best practice to protect people from airborne infections. According to the CDC, ventilation can be improved by opening doors and windows, using exhaust fans, simple fans (such as ceiling fans), as well as portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) cleaners," he recommends.

IAQ no longer an option but a necessity

According to the Department of Occupational Health, National Institute of Public Health, Japan, every day we breathe in 15m3, which works out to about 18 to 19 kg of air, Architect Centre accredited architect, building inspector and trainer Anthony Lee Tee highlights.

"Therefore, the quality of air that is inhaled into our lungs is important for our health, safety and wellness. Due to its importance in buildings, the design and provisions for indoor ventilation (either naturally and/or mechanically) are prescribed in the Malaysian Uniform Building Bylaws 1984," Lee tells EdgeProp.my.

He adds that engineers may refer to Industry Code of Practice on IAQ 2010 and ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2019 for certain types of buildings and requirements.

"Good IAQ must be prioritised to complement the existing standard operating procedures (physical distancing, mask-wearing, handwashing).

"It is a known fact that indoor air contains two to five times more pollutants and germs when compared to outdoor fresh air. [As such,] proper indoor ventilation becomes necessary to ensure that we avoid breathing in contaminants, pollutants and germs (mould, bacteria and viruses) which are harmful to us.

"IAQ in buildings is no longer a 'good-to-have'

EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note covers new and existing buildings





It is advisable to open windows or doors whenever possible when one is inside a confined space with others. (Picture for

but 'must-have' as the Covid-19 virus (and its variants) has been shown to remain aerosolised indoors for up to 16 hours," stresses Lee, who is also one of the judges of EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards.

Architect Centre was one of the main contributors to EdgeProp Malaysia's GN for the improvement of IAO and ventilation in buildings. As the virus and its transmissibility is still unravelling, longer-term measures have been suggested based on recommendations made by the World Health Organization and experts from Architect Centre. Read EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note on pages

He says buildings that have been designed and managed with IAQ, building ventilation and ease of maintainability from the outset have fared much better over others.

"The occupants and maintenance staff in these buildings have been able to 'withstand' the challenges of Covid-19 with minimal changes. These properties have encountered less 'downtime' with pumps, lifts, sewerage, electrical outages and leaks, hence they have not required urgent or important repairs and replacements during the pandemic.

"Buildings (along with their owners and property managers) which have implemented 'crisis-preparedness' from sudden water cuts, burst pipes and more recently, Covid-19 are indeed 'future-proofed'!" concludes Lee.

Growing awareness among stakeholders

A proper guidance note on ventilation and IAQ can educate the public and allay some fears of those who spend most of their time indoors, says Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont'Kiara) Sdn Bhd (HBMK) executive director Low Hon Keong.

"IAQ is significant to businesses, homeowners, building managers, tenants, facilities staff, and employees because it affects the health, comfort, well-being, and productivity of building occupants.

"As we are currently living through the Covid-19 pandemic, most people have to remain indoors. Hence, as a property manager, it is very crucial to ensure IAQ within a development is well maintained, in order to prevent any potential outbreak," stresses Low.

According to Low, the awareness on IAQ has

certainly grown due to the pandemic. Some developers and other stakeholders are giving more attention to and taking steps to improve it.

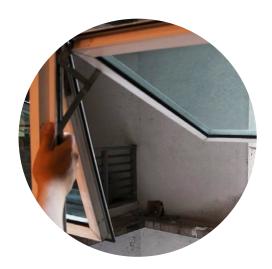
Among the systems installed at properties managed by Low and his team are ventilation fans, specialised and HEPA filtration for air-conditioning systems, and smoke extraction systems. These are on top of efforts to achieve natural ventilation via structural designs.

"As a property manager, HBMK works closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure that such systems are well-maintained and operated at an optimum level.

"We also increase cleaning frequency for filtration systems as well as perform regular air flush to remove any pollutants. Another good practice is to always open windows and doors to create better air circulation, especially for enclosed areas with high foot traffic," notes Low.

In commercial buildings, HBMK also conducts gap analysis and works closely with air-conditioning specialists to carry out regular maintenance based on the Ministry of Health's guidelines.

"We will work with the specialists to see how to further improve IAQ. With regular maintenance and greater reliance on natural ventilation, achieving proper IAQ need not be too costly," adds Low.



Opened windows and doors can increase the rate of indoor air change



IAQ in buildings is no longer a 'good-to-have' but 'must-have' as the **Covid-19 virus** (and its variants) has been shown to remain aerosolised indoors for up to 16 hours."

-Lee



The awareness on IAQ has certainly grown due to the pandemic. Some developers and other stakeholders are giving more attention to and taking steps to improve it."

- *โ.*ow



Each protection strategy has its limitation, and therefore we need to use a multiple layered approach to protect against the virus, and help to keep it from spreading." – Chan

Going back to the office ...

The traffic on the road is building up of late. People are tavelling again as Covid-19 lockdowns are relaxed, but let us repeat: wearing masks, sanitising hands, physical distancing and even inoculation on their own are NOT sufficient to fight the Covid-19 virus.

As we prepare to head back to the office, learning institutions, retail outlets, malls and entertainment centres in the new normal, what must we be aware of? What are the necessary mitigation steps to take?

Virologist Dr Chan Yoke Fun, Head of Department of Medical Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine at the University of Malaya, shares the following in an interview (edited for clarity) with EdgeProp.my:

EdgeProp: How effective are surgical masks? Chan: Surgical masks can contain, and therefore reduce, the dissemination of viruses shed by an infected wearer by up to three to four-fold (approximately 67–75%). When an infectious person wears a mask or face covering, the size of the exhaled breath is also reduced, and this helps to reduce the risk of exposure to those nearby.

EdgeProp: I have been fully vaccinated. Why do I still have to be masked in a confined space? Chan: We can't stop wearing masks for now, until more people are vaccinated. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention US has also recently reinstated the policy to wear masks indoors to maximise protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others.

Studies have shown vaccines can protect us

from severe infection. However, we can still get breakthrough infections after vaccination. Remember that our children population is currently not vaccinated, therefore herd immunity has still not been achieved.

EdgeProp: If I were in a confined space, would I be ok so long as I were masked?

Chan: Each protection strategy has its limitation, and therefore we need to use a multiple layered approach to protect against the virus, and help to keep it from spreading.

In addition to physical distancing, wearing face masks, hand hygiene and vaccination, the multiple mitigation strategies include improvements to building ventilation to reduce the spread of disease and lower the risk of exposure.

EdgeProp: Can people get infected just by breathing in the contaminated air?

Chan: YES, very likely. The risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection varies according to the amount of virus to which a person is exposed. In a systematic review of 24 studies, 17% of air sampled from close patient environments was positive for SARS-CoV-2 RNA, suggesting that viruses are present. High viral loads found in toilets and bathrooms, staff areas, and public hallways suggest that these areas should be carefully monitored for contamination.

EdgeProp: What can building owners do besides strictly enforcing masking and physical distancing?

Chan: Open windows and doors whenever possible. For instance, try to get a cross breeze so that air coming in from one window moves across the room and exits through another window. Filter the air with a purifer. Read EdgeProp Malaysia's Guidance Note on pages 12 to 21.



IAQ is significant to businesses and homeowners because it affects the well-being of building occupants.

EdgeProp Malaysia's

Guidance Note (GN) for the improvement of indoor air quality and ventilation in buildings amid the SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) pandemic and beyond





This GN is prepared by **EdgeProp Malaysia** and adapted for the Malaysian context after conducting desk research of available literature and publications from WHO, MOH (Singapore), CDC (US), ASHRAE, key Malaysian stakeholders comprising Property Managers, Property Developers, Architects, Engineers and Building Inspectors from Architect Centre, Chur Associates, Department of Occupational Health, National Institute of Public Health Japan and Panasonic Malaysia. This GN has also captured the learnings from Malaysian Ministry of Housing & Local Government-endorsed EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed & Sustainable Property Awards that promotes vigorously IAQ and other sustainable attributes.

Introduction

hile global scientific communities' understanding and knowledge of human-to-human transmission of Covid-19 continues to unravel and evolve, the resurgence of community cases, local clusters and highly contagious variants demand for immediate and enhanced preventative and precautionary measures.

It is widely accepted that the virus spreads mainly when an infected person is in close range contact (typically 1m apart) with another. Transmissibility of this virus is dependent on the amount of viable virus found in respiratory droplets which are expelled from the nose or mouth when an infected person coughs, sneezes, sings, breathes heavily or talks.

It is now known that smaller respiratory droplets expelled from an infected person could spread further through virus 'aerosols' inside crowded and/or inadequately-ventilated buildings.

As the risk of catching Covid-19 is higher in confined spaces, it is critical to mitigate exposure to the virus and reduce the disease transmission by improving and enhancing the air quality and ventilation inside buildings.

This can be achieved with proper operations and maintenance of air-conditioning and mechanical ventilation systems.

This GN provides the knowledge and understanding of building ventilation (naturally and/or



It is widely accepted that the virus spreads mainly when an infected person is in close range contact (typically 1m apart) with another.

Virus could spread through respiratory droplets when infected people:









Cough

Sneeze

Sing

Breathe heavily

Talk





The EdgeProp Malaysia's GN covers three (3) contextual building categories:

- Healthcare
- Residential
- Non-residential buildings

Each category takes into consideration the existing ventilation system/systems (mechanical or natural); and a framework in assessing the current condition(s) with practical recommendations for immediate and longer-term measures.

While the GN is directed mainly at builders, building owners, building manager, health care facility managers and members of the public who are providing home care facilities,

Occupants of residential homes are also recommended to:

- improve home ventilation by opening doors and windows (where possible and safe), especially when hosting non-household guests
- where applicable, fans can be used to promote air circulation

The decision on whether to use mechanical or natural ventilation should be based on:

- Needs
- Resource availability
- Cost of systems to provide the best control to counteract the risks

For new buildings, increasing ventilation and enhancing air exchanges must be part and parcel of the design.

However, there must be regular and proper maintenance and upkeep of all the mechanical initiatives to ensure quality air indoors.





Key information and benchmarks of **EdgeProp Malaysia's GN**

The recommendations in this GN should be implemented as complementary with and in addition to other measures to reduce disease transmission:



Safe distancing



Wearing masks



Frequent disinfection of high-touch points



Comply with govt SOPs

- This GN is not prescriptive or exhaustive. It is intended to assist building owners, building managers, health care facility managers and members of the public in making considered decisions and actions in addressing key concerns with indoor virus aerosol transmission
- This GN is not intended to cause a waiver, or modification but should be adapted to existing regulations frameworks, By-Laws of each State/ Territory of Malaysia, and complementary with existing building condition, bylaws, house rules and ownership as well as the decision-making
- The recommended measures made in this GN are additional good practices based on the selected publications, applicable existing regulations in place and prevailing benchmarks (where available) derived from, among others the following documents:
- Third Schedule of the Uniform Building By-Laws 1984, the set of subsidiary legislations made pursuant to Section 133 of the Street, Drainage and Building Act 1974, in the manner and form as enacted, adopted and adapted (with amendments) by the respective States and Territories of Malaysia
- Industry Code of Practice on Indoor Air Quality 2010 {JKKP DP (S) 127/379/4-9} issued by Department of Occupational Safety and Health of the Ministry of Human Resources Malaysia.
- ANSI/ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2019
- Roadmap to improve and ensure good indoor ventilation in the context of Covid-19 - 2021 from World Health Organization (WHO)
- Updated Guidance Note on Improving Ventilation and Indoor Air Quality In Buildings Amid The Covid-19 Situation from Building Construction Authority, National Environment Agency and Ministry of Health of Singapore 25th May 2021



IAQ now a Must-Have. Not an Option

Indoor air quality (IAQ) tended to be overlooked as the air that we breathe in is often taken for granted.

Studies have shown that we spend an average of 90% of our time indoors such as our homes, workplaces, institutions, community halls, entertainment centres and air-conditioned vehicles. Every day we breathe in about 18kg to 19kg* of air. Poor IAQ could trigger health problems such as:

- Allergic reactions
- Respiratory problems
- Eye irritation
- Sinusitis
- Bronchitis
- Pneumonia
- And the infectious Covid-19 Coronavirus!

Coronavirus particles in the air in aerosolised form for up to 16 hours!

Good ventilation is a MUST!

Therefore, crisis preparedness and future proofing indoor spaces are not only non-negotiable but urgent as the Coronavirus continues to mutate.

A rethink on how to move outdoor fresh air into a building or a room and remove stale indoor air, ensuring the air in the building is healthy for breathing.

*According to Department of Occupational Health, National Institute of Public Health Japan

What is **ventilation?**

Ventilation moves outdoor air into a building or a room and distributes it within the building or room. The general purpose of ventilation in buildings is to ensure that air in the building is healthy for breathing. Where possible, open windows and doors as frequently as possible to introduce outdoor air into the occupied space.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution in a multi-pronged approach to contain Covid-19. Tailored designs and practices are key for all buildings - old and new - to reduce the risk of indoor virus transmission as Malaysia transitions to the new normal.



Crisis Preparedness: Ideal vs Realistic



We appear to be dealing with a moving target in the war against the virus as the science of the virus transmission is still relatively unknown. Up to this point, no silver bullet is within sight.

Add to this, natural ventilation is weather and environment dependent. Under the circumstances, ventilation guidelines to counter the virus threat tended to be transient.

EdgeProp Malaysia's GN provides a reference procedure for improvement of indoor air quality for building operators and homeowners during this pandemic period.

Challenges:

The implementation of IAQ guidelines is expansive, costly and neither realistic nor practical.

Resolution:

Greater awareness on the importance of IAQ and implement good ventilation guidelines.

Some knowledge in building and heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) operation is required, but not essential, to understand the recommendations.



New and Existing Buildings

Commercial, non-commercial and specific use of new buildings:

- Building design, construction and management must take cognisant of the need to be Covid-19-proof
- Use of sensors and systems to monitor outdoor air quality
- Use of exhaust / fresh air supply system for unidirectional airflow in poorly ventilated spaces
- Encourage of cross-ventilation design
- Open windows and doors to enhance air exchange
- Allocate space for convertible self-quarantine purpose
- In-built air purifiers in all lifts, pantries and places of worship in workplaces

Commercial, non-commercial and specific use existing buildings:

- Immediate solution lies in mitigation of inherited building and systems
- Interim solution use of high-efficiency air filter but it does not replace the need for adequate ventilation
- Regular surfacing cleaning and disinfection
- Make sure no undesired air leakage into occupied spaces





Adequacy of fresh outdoor air is a main source of concern in tight and opaque buildings. Indoor space in these buildings is usually devoid of sufficient fresh air from the outdoor.

The way fresh air outdoor is introduced into the interior space differs; it is dependent on the type of air-conditioning and ventilation systems installed.

Suggestions to improve indoor air movement:

- Dilute infectious virus aerosols with fresh air is the backbone in reducing the spread of most pathogens
- Measure indoor carbon dioxide (CO2) concentration pe-
- Upgrade of filtration system to WHO's recommended MERV 14 filter
- Confined space served by split air-con unit without fresh air flow should not be occupied, or installing stand-alone air cleaner with HEPA is recommended
- Stand-alone air cleaners should be operated continuously
- If engineered sizing of air cleaner is not possible, consider a rule-of-thumb air flow capacity of 5ACH
- Conduct pre-occupancy purge of interior space with fresh air two hours prior to the arrival of occupants
- Evaluate building systems in consultations from time to time



Fresh air can be introduced from dedicated air handling plants and distributed in the supply air duct in a centralised system, such as an independent unitary split air-conditioning system.

Note: Feature not regularly available in independent unitary split AC systems commonly installed in residential homes and offices in shop lots.



Improving indoor air movement

Fresh air from the outside may be affected by local conditions for example, environmental pollutants, smog or haze. Treatment of the air may be required.

Installation of exhaust fans to extract the internal air out, creating internal low pressure for external fresh air to come into the indoor space.

A measurable carbon dioxide (CO2) exhaled by occupants can determine the recommended safe occupation limit of an indoor space.

The installation of portable handheld CO2 sensor is a convenient method to measure the indoor concentration.

Reduce total number of occupants if exceed the maximum recommended concentration of indoor CO2 of 1,000 parts per million (ppm).

Confined spaces served by split air-conditioning units without (or inadequate) external windows, or fresh air ducts.

At best, these spaces should not be occupied. If unavoidable, the installation of stand-alone air cleaner with High Efficiency Particulate Air (HEPA) filter is recommended.

Note: Stand-alone air cleaners do not replace ventilation in any circum-



Non-Residential Buildings with Central Air-Conditioning

Proper operation and maintenance of air-conditioning system.

Daily measurement is recommended and should not breach these criteria:

- · Indoor temperature: 22 oC 26 oC
- Indoor relative humidity: 50% 70%
- Maximum CO2 concentration: 1000 ppm

Where possible, purge the interior space with outdoor air two hours before daily occupancy.

If not, operate the air-conditioning system with outdoor air intake dampers at fully opened position for two hours prior to daily occupancy. The outdoor air fan shall be operated at the rated capacity.

In-built air purifiers inside every lift, pantries and places of worship in workplaces should be considered.

Replace existing recirculated air filter with MERV 14 (as recommended by WHO) or better.

Consider portable air cleaner (MERV 14 or better) if replacement.



Central System with CO2 Demand Controlled Ventilation

By-pass the CO2 system controls and open the outdoor air dampers fully. Operate the outdoor air fan at its rated speed - can be executed at the Building Management System workstation.

Central System without CO2 Demand Controlled Ventilation

Manually open the outdoor air dampers fully. Operate the outdoor air fan at its rated capacity.

Central System without Outdoor Air Supply

Manually open any windows (if safe to do so). Introduction of in-room HEPA type portable air cleaner is recommended if opening of windows is unsafe or not possible.

* Filter to be sized according to the numbers of occupants and the area of the occupied space.

Operate toilet exhaust system during occupied hours.

Review air filter capacity

- Minimum of MERV 14 (as per WHO recommendations)
- If condition cannot be met:
 - Replace existing filter with MERV 14 or better
 - Install MERV 14 portable air cleaner or better
 - Install a portable in room HEPA type air cleaner (for room without outdoor air)



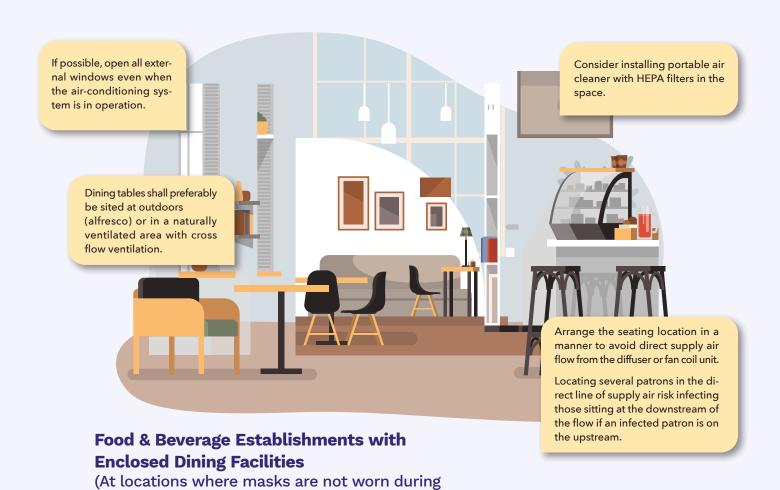


Pre-occupancy air purge

- Purge the interior space with outdoor air two hours before daily occupancy
- When purging is not possible: Operate
 the air-conditioning system with outdoor
 air intake dampers at fully opened position for two hours before daily occupancy.
 The outdoor air fan shall be operated at
 the rated capacity

meals/drinks)





Highlight: Cross-ventilation is significantly more effective

than single-sided ventilation.

← From PREVIOUS PAGE

Residential buildings/landed property with split unit air-conditioning

(condominiums, landed homes, detached structures, shophouses)

Let's start at home

the same can be applied to other indoor spaces as well, where permissible.

Air supply and exhaust/fresh system can be aligned to provide unidirectional airflow in poorly ventilated space.

e.g. Place a fan towards the window to create a breeze (if only one window in the room).

Bad example: Opening two windows positioned closely to each other will prevent air from flowing through the entire room.

All air-conditioning system must be properly maintained with scheduled inspections and servicing. Ensure filters are thoroughly cleaned with regular in-

The use of air-conditioning should be reduced or turned off when doors and/or windows are opened.

spection.

Note: Do not open windows or doors if the air quality of the outdoor air is poor (e.g., odour, contaminated etc). Install a portable HEPA air cleaner instead.

Preferably negatively pressurised with airflow in one direction from clean (safe) area to dirty (unsafe) area. If possible, install an exhaust fan

to the external while ensuring

the negative flow.

If isolation room is attached to another room (landed homes), consider installing a portable HEPA filter in BOTH the isolation room and the occupied space NEXT to the isolation room.

High risk spaces: residential property with self-quarantined occupant(s)

(condominiums, apartments, landed homes)



Isolation room - Consider the provision for a space that can be appropriately converted for selfquarantined purposes should the need arises.



For high-rise, identify an isolated space preferably with external windows and which can be cross-ventilated.

If cross-ventilation is not possible, identify a room with window(s).

Air supply and exhaust/fresh system can be aligned to provide unidirectional airflow in poorly ventilated space.

e.g., Place a fan towards the window (if only one window) or opened door to create a breeze. 🗈

S'pore is top destination for overseas real estate investments in 1H2021



Text EdgeProp.my

ingapore's real estate investment growth doubled to US\$4.7 billion (RM20 billion) in the first half of 2021, a surge of 97% compared with a year ago, reported Business Times on Aug 11, 2021.

The report, citing Real Capital Analytics (RCA) newly released report — "Asia Pacific Capital Trends 2Q2021", said over half of the total capital inflows are from international investors.

This also enabled Singapore to top the list of overseas investment destinations for the first time ever.

RCA noted that the investment capital is mostly flowing into the office and industrial sectors. The firm also highlighted the Swire Properties' recent deal of a freehold residential development Eden for US\$220.2 million as a "rare apartment deal" which contributed to the 1H2021 capital inflow.

The report said Singapore's strong real estate investment market performance in 1H2021 is in line with a continued recovery in the Asia-Pacific region, which saw steady sales growth in almost all major markets in the second quarter this year.

According to the report, investment activity across the Asia Pacific region increased to US\$77.6 billion in the 1H2021, up 8% from the same period in 2020.



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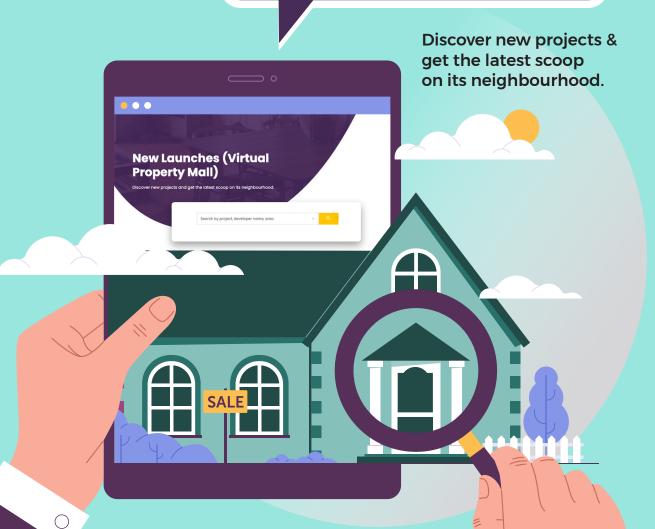
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Text Chelsea J. Lim

n June 14, 2017, 72 lives were claimed by the fire tragedy at Grenfell Tower (UK) in the wee hours. The fire, which had sparked from a malfunctioning fridge on the fourth floor at 1am, quickly spread to other levels. By 3am, the whole building was engulfed in flames.

Since the tragedy, the construction industry across countries has been rocked by the usage of Aluminium Composite Panel (ACP), which was the main contributor to the fire intensifying to other floors. Although concern on the usage of ACP has been raised over the years, the tragedy served to catapult this issue into the spotlight.

This is the kind of tragedy that will be imprinted in the minds of the worldwide population as it highlights the pertinence of fire safety measures in our ACP-covered high-rise buildings.

But what exactly is ACP?

ACP is one of the commonly used types of cladding for buildings worldwide due to its characteristics of being lightweight, durable and cost-friendly.

In Malaysia, its primary usage is to provide an external protection of building walls against environmental elements like rain, sun and wind while also being aesthetically pleasing visuals for the buildings.

Consisting of three layers, its outer layer is made up of aluminium sheets bonded together by an inner layer made up of polyethylene (PE). While the aluminium layers are fire-proof, the PE compound is highly-flammable.

Another type of ACP is the Fire-retardant (FR)-rated ACP which is safer but more costly than the PE type as the core has an added inert mineral filler.

For the ACP (PE), improved standards have been

introduced which is the MS2517:2017, a move taken following the aftermath of Grenfell in order to curb the use of sub-standard ACP material.

Awareness among Malaysians

While non FR-rated ACP is a common building material used overseas, Architect Centre accredited architect and trainer Anthony Lee Tee observes that in Malaysia, the usage of this type of ACP is more commonly found in commercial properties rather than residential properties as it matches the design direction of commercial buildings.

Even with ACP increasingly popping up in so many of our commercial buildings, Malaysia does not have a history of ACP cladding-related fire incidents. The latest fire incident that caught a lot of attention was the fire that happened at the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) building in Jalan Gasing, Selangor, says Lee.

"Although the cladding that caught fire was related to another type of combustible material used on its facade, it nonetheless has certainly highlighted the awareness of such dangers."

What's worrying is that an increasing number of mixed developments are using non FR-rated ACP and many residents may not be aware that their buildings contain ACP components or they might not understand what the hidden dangers of this material are.

"As the design and specification of regulated FR-rated ACP and the installation and supervision for buildings occur during the construction, most would be unaware of ACP cladding panels once installed on the facade unless highlighted in our inspection reports," he explains.

Lee stresses such mixed-developments should obtain or renew their Fire Certificates (FC) annual-

Continues **NEXT PAGE** →



Although the cladding that caught fire was related to another type of combustible material used on its facade, it has certainly highlighted the awareness of such dangers."

— Lee



Architects must also take into account the level of fire safety of the building by obtaining prior approval from the authorities like the fire department before they can install this material,"

— Edwin

← From **PREVIOUS PAGE**

ly, so that these developments will continue to comply with Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (JBPM) regulations and ensure standard fire safety systems are in place.

However, leaving no stones unturned, Lee has also suggested that besides getting the FC, homeowners, building owners and property developers should also take proactive steps by getting a professional inspector to check the quality and safety of the claddings installed on their properties.

Regulations already in place

Fortunately, JBPM recognises the risk of fire associated with the flammability of PE and has already set a regulation in place for ACP usage since 1997.

The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers – Aluminium Manufacturers Group of Malaysia was one of the groups that had raised its concern following fire accidents related to ACP in several countries even before 1997, leading to the enactment of the regulation then.

The stipulated regulations include:

- The usage of ACP with a combustible core is only limited to buildings at 18m and below with the approval from JBPM.
- The usage of ACP with a non-combustible core is allowed to be used on buildings 18m and above in height with the approval from JBPM.

"Additionally, the manufacture, specification, installation and supervision of ACP cladding is regulated by several standards, namely the Uniform Building Bylaws (UBBL), MS 2571 and lately BS 8414 that describes onerous fire tests to be conducted on cladding facade installation," says Lee.

He adds that under the UBBL, the distance between the constructed buildings needs to be at a distance of more than two metres as this will ensure that any fire accident will not easily spread to other buildings.

Meanwhile, the director of JBPM's fire safety division Edwin Galan Teruki acknowledges the risks that ACP has brought to the table and reiterates that careful steps have to be taken from the beginning all the way from the architect to ensure its safety.

"Architects must also take into account the level of fire safety of the building by obtaining prior approval from the authorities like the fire department before they can install this material," adding that any intended usage of ACP must go through and pass the BS8414 test.

BS8414 is a test to examine the resistance performance of an ACP when exposed to external fire.

Authorities keeping buildings in check

With the necessary precautions in place to regulate the usage of the material, Edwin believes the probability of a fire caused by ACP is little to none. Echoing Lee, he shares that there has not been any ACP-related fire in Malaysia.

Additionally, the fire department authorities do not just bear the responsibility to the stipulated regulations. Instead, there are certain procedures that will be taken by the authorities if they found a building not compliant to the regulation.

"Any buildings, before it is allowed to be opened to the public, must receive the Certificate of Completion and Compliance (CCC) as this ensures that the building is safe for the public to enter. Due to this, it is very unlikely

that you will find an ACP-covered building not complying to the required standards imposed."

"But there may be some cases where, upon receiving the CCC, the owners decide to install ACP thereafter. So what happens then? The fire department authorities will request for proof of approval from JBPM to install the material. If there is no approval, then we will retract their FC and instruct them to take down the ACP within a set period of time."

Although regulations by JBPM exist to ensure the safety of our buildings, Lee stresses that there should be a certain degree of responsibility among homeowners and building owners to regularly have their fire security checked.

Therefore, he hopes there is a stronger awareness to drive both home and building owners to get professional inspection to comply with the regulations of JBPM.



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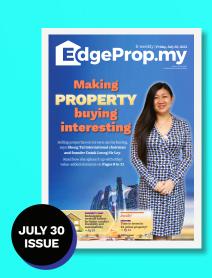
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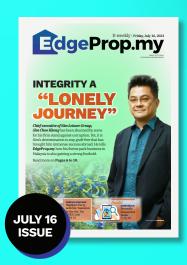
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Covid-19 impact on hospitality industry



he global pandemic has confronted the hospitality sector with an unprecedented challenge. Whilst the industry is no stranger to black swans, the tenacious grip this pandemic has on hotels has been especially damaging.

Measures to flatten the Covid-19 curve such as sporadic lockdowns and travel bans have created a precarious business climate and significantly decreased demand.

With tourism being the third largest contributor to Malaysia's gross domestic product, the impact of the virus has been far-reaching and continued to ripple throughout the economy as more and more hotels can't help but shutter.

Reflecting on 2H2020, hotels were just beginning to see gradual signs of recovery with domestic tourism and "staycations" creating a positive trajectory for demand. The respite, however, was short-lived, with the second wave of cases calling for stricter re-implementation of a Movement Control Order since December.

Hotels have since been grappling with occupancy rates hovering below 20% and predicted rates of 21% and 28% in the third and fourth quarters of 2021 respectively. Subsequent manpower rationalisation in the form of unpaid leaves, pay-cuts or even retrenchment has also reduced the workforce by 6-10%.

In total, the hotel industry is estimated to have lost over RM5 billion in revenue since the start of 2021.

Despite such troughs, Malaysia's accelerating inoculation programme shines a light at the end of the tunnel, with greater herd immunity increasing the chances for domestic and international tourism recovery by 4Q2021 and 2H2022 respectively.

As demand wanes, the government has continuously been of vital financial support. Towards the end of 2020, Tourism Malaysia and Shopee with the Malaysian Association of Hotels launched the "Cuti-cuti Malaysia" initiative which spent RM466,000 towards subsidising hotel deals.

As a result, RM1.89 million sales were made, driven by pent-up demand from prior lockdown fatigue. This is in addition to the PEMERKASA stimulus package tourism initiative, which exempts services taxes for hotel accommodations until 2022.

The economic relief package has also provided one-off RM3,000 grants for 5,000 tour agencies as well as cash assistance of RM600 for 4,000 homestay operators.

A 10% discount in electricity bills for hotels, shopping malls, theme parks and airline offices has also been undertaken -- although the industry asserts a discount of 15% minimum is much needed.

Issued under the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, the Gamelan and Sokongan grants have also been key supporters of the sector, with a ceiling of RM300,000 for hotels, travel agencies, and any other tourism associations to apply for.

Since the pandemic, 28% of hotels have reduced their manpower by more than half, signalling a massive drain of talent in a heavily service-based industry.

In response, the government has introduced a wage subsidy programme of RM600 to RM1,200 for each employee earning less than RM4,000 monthly.

However, with the spiralling number of hotel closures, layoffs and furloughs, the general consensus is that the 15–30% subsidy of their existing wages for only 437,000 workers out of 3.6 million involved in tourism was insufficient.

Instead, workers are asking for the government to adopt a similar model to Singapore or Hong Kong whereby the government pays a higher 50–75% of their existing salaries for every local employee with a salary up to SG\$4,600 (RM14,354) or HK\$9,000 (RM4,890) respectively.

As an industry with high financial and operating leverage, the downwards demand has thus tested the resilience of hoteliers who must engage in creative revenue channels to stay afloat.

Since the pandemic, 28% of hotels have reduced their manpower by more than half, signalling a massive drain of talent in a heavily service-based industry.



Dash Living partners 20 hotels to pilot long-stay option



The Sheung Wan by Ovolo in Hong Kong.

●Text Charlene Chin EdgeProp Singapore

o-living player Dash Living is partnering 20 hotels in Singapore and Hong Kong, where some portion of the hotels' inventory will be set aside for Dash Living's long-stay customers. Over 250 allotted hotel rooms will be available for booking through Dash Living's website. The hotels include hotel group Ovolo, Hotel ICON, Travelodge Central, TUVE, and Xi Hotel in Hong Kong; and KēSa House and Wanderlust, The Unlimited Collection by Oakwood in Singapore.

Over 90% of 130 rooms in Ovolo Hotels have been booked by members within the first few weeks of launch, says the business.

"Long-stay customers could become a crucial part of the hotel customer mix and Dash certainly gives us the confidence that they can generate the demand for us. There is no better time than now for hotels to explore new avenues like this as a solid solution to a healthy revenue stream into the post-pandemic scene," says Michael Tsang, director of TUVE.

Property Chat

← From PREVIOUS PAGE

Some hotels have worked with the government to convert themselves into quarantine centres whilst others have ventured into food catering as a stable source of revenue – with all festivals now being celebrated at home.

Whilst large conventions and meetings are still at least a year away, many city hotels have also offered work-from-hotel packages, utilising empty conference rooms as co-working spaces.

As working from home has brought upon greater stress, resorts have also tapped into this venture by creating stay packages with a wellness and fitness component.

Not only does the current down-period present itself as an opportunity for owners to renovate or refurbish their hotels, it also allows managers to work on activities that are usually pushed forward such as security plans, social media presence or corporate social responsibility.

For example, the rise of eco-tourism has increased hotel interest in achieving the numerous environmental, social and governance permits to gain green accreditation for consumers who want to see hotel compliance with environmental sustainability.

Like many other industries, hospitality will also see substantial shifts as businesses and people in their everyday lives get acclimated to this new reality. Changes to business operations need to be constant and dynamic to enhance customer willingness to patronise their hotels.

Hotel operators should think innovatively about new functions within the same physical spaces for post-Covid-19 asset management – such as encouraging broader use of outdoor settings.

Hotels are also expected to instil a sense of confidence in their guests by showing their commitment to hygiene in line with ensuring employee and customer safety.

Seamless connectivity across digital platforms will play a dominant role for safety perception, with automated check-ins, food or laundry service apps and mobile transactions minimising contact between staff and guests.

To accommodate more foot traffic amidst uncertainty, hotels should also consider less stringent cancellation policies and greater standard operating procedure transparency to adapt their approach towards the new traveller.

Walking into a new era of a post-crisis world, stake-holders will need to prepare for when the economy fully awakens and pent-up demand unleashes a robust recovery.

Undoubtedly, this would be heavily dependent on the success of the national immunisation programme to reach substantial herd immunity.

Until then, monitoring safety precautions, readjusting marketing to focus on domestic clientele, and managing human capital are just some of the challenges facing the horizon.

Although the home stretch will be long and perhaps take a greater toll on the industry than we expect in 2022, resiliently-adapted players will rise and better navigate the next crisis.





RM95,000/mth

Shah Alam Industrial, Shah Alam, Selangor

Type: Factory Tenure: N.A Built-up: 50,000 sq ft

John Leong (PEA 1132)

KNIGHT FRANK MALAYSIA SDN BHD (VE (1) 0141)

+6016 599 2699



RM27,000,000

Star Central, Cyberjaya, Selangor Type: Office Tenure: Freehold

Built-up: 36,959 sq ft

Salim Mustam (REN 10674)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452)

+6017 280 0026



RM7,500,000

Infinity Beachfront Super Condominium, Tanjung Bungah, Penang

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold

Built-up: 8,000 sq ft **Bedroom:** 6 Bathroom: 9

Serena Tan PRO (REN 22794)

PG PROPERTY ANGEL (E (3) 1601)

4 +6016 496 7718

Rented for

RM33,000/mth

Two-storey semi-detached factory at Shah Alam, Selangor



Concluded by: SK Yeo (PEA 2977) Esprit Estate Agent (+6017 232 6337) When: June 2021



- Freehold
- Built-up: 12,777 sq ft
- Unfurnished
- · Larger warehouse area close to 10,000 sq ft on the ground floor
- Fasy accessibility via Federal Highway, Persiaran Kerjaya and New Pantai Expressway



The Temasya Industrial Park is located next to the Glenmarie Golf and Country Club and Wisma DRB Hicom in Glenmarie, Shah Alam, Selangor. Developed by Temasya Development, there are fewer than 100 units of factories here.

According to the agent, SK Yeo from Esprit Estate Agent, the previous tenancy agreement had expired and the tenant had decided to move out from the premises.

The current tenant was looking for a bigger warehousing space for his business expansion. He also preferred the location in Glenmarie as his existing warehouse was also located in this area, he said, adding that the tenant sealed a three-year rental agreement with the owner.

"Therefore, this unit perfectly matched the demand of the current tenant's requirements at the right timing as the factories or warehouse units in Glenmarie are always limited in the market due to high demand in this area," noted Yeo.

As at early Aug 2021, there were 302 rental listings of Shah Alam factories on **EdgeProp.my**, with an average asking monthly rent of RM48,410 or RM1.72 psf.

Meanwhile, there were 237 sale listings with an average asking price of RM589 psf or RM14.5 million.



RM570,000

Setia Mayuri, Semenyih, Selangor Type: Residential land Tenure: Freehold Land size: 9,494 sq ft

Tony Yap PRO (REN 23582) AMBER REALTY (E (3) 1482) +60115 646 8129



RM2,550,000

Amelia Garden Homes, Desa ParkCity, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,632 sq ft Land size: 1,826 sq ft Bedroom: 4 Bathroom: 4

Cassandra Thong (REN 31208)

CORNERSTONE XSTATE SDN BHD (E (1) 1851) +6012 779 8238



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RM850,000

Bukit Tinggi 2, Bandar Bukit Tinggi, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,200 sq ft Land size: 2,240 sq ft Bedroom: 4 Bathroom: 3

Mike Woon (REN 00557) ECOLAND REALTY (E (2) 1679/1) +6012 271 6838



RM3,500/mth

1 Bukit Utama, Bandar Utama, Selangor

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold **Built-up:** 1,918 sq ft

Bedroom: 3 **Bathroom:** 3

Wendy Loh (REN 04055)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (EE (1) 0452)

+6012 387 1478



RM2,600,000

Jalan Setia Nusantara, Setia Eco Park,

Type: Bungalow Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 4,400 sq ft Land size: 5,248 sq ft

Bedroom: 5 **Bathroom:** 6 Veronica Ong (REN 32833)

HARTAMAS REAL ESTATE (MALAYSIA) SDN BHD (E (1) 1439) +6012 273 2570



RM43,850,000

Telok Gong, Pulau Indah, Selangor

Type: Industrial land Tenure: Leasehold **Land size:** 974,456 sq ft

Kheng Fatt PRO (REN 04422)

CHESTER PROPERTIES SDN BHD (E (1) 1321/15)

+6012 329 6931

Rented for

RM150,660/mth (RM1.80 psf)

Warehouse at Bandar Metro Puchong, **Puchong, Selangor**



Concluded by: Danny Gan (REN 12196) Propnex Realty Sdn Bhd (+6017 356 1886) When: January 2021

Noteworthy

- Built-up: 83,700 sq ft
- Unfurnished
- Large open space with ample loading bay
- · Easy access via North-South Expressway Central Link (ELITE), South Klang Valley Expressway (SKVE), Damansara-**Puchong** Expressway (LDP) and Shah Alam Expressway (KESAS)



Bandar Metro Puchong is within easy reach of the main Puchong town centre with a full range of amenities such as hypermarkets and shopping malls, restaurants and entertainment outlets, medical centres and more.

Propnex Realty Sdn Bhd real estate negotiator Danny Gan said the warehouse and factory in Bandar Metro Puchong is popular due to its centralised location and the many surrounding amenities.

The tenant, who is a major player of international online shopping platforms, liked the warehouse for its large open space that allowed shipping containers to move around, as well as a huge loading area that can easily fit in 30 to 40 three-

In view of the strong demand on e-commerce activities, the tenant is urgently looking for a suitable and sizeable warehouse to meet the company's future needs. Thus, a three-year lease was sealed with the owner – a company with a proper facility management team.

"We have managed to pre-qualify the tenant and secure the space within a month for the landlord," Gan shared.

As at early August, some 92 warehouses or factories in Puchong were listed for rent in **EdgeProp.my** at an average asking monthly rental of RM31,649 or RM1.89 psf.

Meanwhile, 150 warehouses and factories in Puchong were listed for sale at an average asking price of RM9.26 million or RM685.15 psf.



RM818,000

Damansara Foresta, Bandar Sri Damansara, Selangor

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold

Built-up: 1,610 sq ft Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 3

Emily Yap (REN 22792)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E(1) 0452)

+6017 887 8893



RM6,000,000

Taman Industri Alam Jaya, Kuala Selangor, Selangor

Type: Factory Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 11,700 sq ft Land size: 27,000 sq ft

Anderson Lim PRO (REN 10023)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (PUCHONG) SDN BHD

(E (1) 0452/8) **\ +6011 1133 2123**



RM998,000

Sri Penaga, Bangsar, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 1,175 sq ft

Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 2

Sue Ahmad (REN 42239)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452)

+6011 632 82769

Spotlight – Listings for sale and rent



EdgeProp.my

AUGUST 13, 2021



RM650,000

PUJ 8, Puncak Jalil, Selangor Type: Shoplot Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 2,600 sq ft Land size: 1,400 sq ft Bathroom: 4

Agnes Aloysius (REN 04450) REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (PUCHONG) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452/8) +6012 326 3379



RM998.000

Taman Midah, Cheras, Kuala Lumpur Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,275 sq ft Land size: 1,430 sq ft **Bedroom:** 6 **Bathroom:** 4

Michelle Yeap (REN 15000) REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E(1)0452) +6012 288 8483



RM588,000

231 Tr, Bukit Bintang, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 960 sq ft Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

Laura Ho PRO (REN 10675) REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452) +6016 916 6068



RM2,300,000

Mandara, USJ Heights, Selangor Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Land size: 3,200 sq ft Bedroom: 5 Bathroom: 6

Susan Gwee PRO (REN 01156)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (SJ) SDN BHD (E(1) 0452/2) +6012 289 1337



RM1,400,000

One Sierra, Selayang, Selangor Type: Semidee house Tenure: Leasehold

Built-up: $3,300 \ sq \ ft$ Land size: $2,880 \ sq \ ft$ **Bedroom:** 6 **Bathroom:** 6

Chris Tang (REN 32877)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452) +6018 278 9330

Pro Agents,

get your listings featured here!

Email support@edgeprop.my or call

+603 7733 9000







RM15,000,000

3S Showroom Jalan Hulu Kelang, Ampang, Selangor

Type: Shop office Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 10,000 sq ft Land size: 22,679 sq ft

Michael Sl Wong (REN 09493) DYNAMIC REALTORS (E (3) 0100) +6012 519 8688



RM2,880,000

Casa Idaman, Setia Alam, Selangor

Type: Bungalow Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 5,048 sq ft Land size: 7,556 sq ft Bedroom: 7 Bathroom: 7

James Yim (REN 24129) PROPERTY EXPRESS (E (3) 1205) ****+6012 687 4892



RM460,000

Ivory Residence, Kajang, Selangor Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 1,288 sq ft

Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

Cassidy Loo PRO (REN 43106)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452) +6012 948 0742



RM10,611,570

Suria Industrial Park (SIP), Sepang, Selangor

Type: Industrial land Tenure: N.A Land size: 3 acres

Neel (REN 04411)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (PUCHONG) SDN BHD (E(1) 0452/8) +6012 219 1124



RM3,800,000

Taman Universiti, Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Type: Bungalow Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 5,780 sq ft Land size: 5,700 sq ft Bedroom: 6 Bathroom: 6

Steven Tiong PRO (PEA 2648)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452)

+6019 862 8182



RM360,000

Villa Mewah Apartment, Salak Selatan, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Apartment Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 800 sq ft

Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

Michelle Yeow (REN 43852)

PROPNEX REALTY SDN BHD (E (1) 1800) +6016 239 2819



RM2,300,000

Long Branch Residences, Kota Kemuning, Selangor

Type: Bungalow Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 4,942 sq ft Land size: 4,424 sq ft Bedroom: 5 Bathroom: 7

Ong CY (REN 22613)

POLYGON PROPERTIES SDN BHD (E (1) 1714)

**** +6012 210 8687



RM720,000

Puisi 2 Alam Sari, Bangi, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,400 sq ft Land size: 1,870 sq ft

Bedroom: 4 **Bathroom:** 5

Siti Hawa (REN 33683)

RESCOM REALTY (VE (3) 0244)

4 +6012 290 6169



RM3,700,000

Ukay Seraya, Ampang, Selangor

Type: Bungalow Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 6,414 sq ft Land size: 9,421 sq ft Bedroom: 7 Bathroom: 8

Jesnin Kee PRO (REN 01550)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452) +6019 387 7298



RM3,000,000

Taman Melaka Baru, Batu Berendam, Melaka

Type: Bungalow Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 6,000 sq ft Land size: 17,302 sq ft Bedroom: 8 Bathroom: 6

William Tan PRO (PEA 1315)

IQI REALTY SDN BHD (E (1) 1584) +6014 313 1931



RM480,000

Taman Johor Jaya, Johor Bahru, Johor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold

Land size: 1,540 sq ft Bedroom: 4 Bathroom: 3

May Lim (REN 34237)

ROYCE PROPERTIES (E (2) 1742)

4 +6010 793 3113



RM1,198,000

1 Bukit Utama, Bandar Utama, Selangor

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,020 sq ft

Bedroom: 4 Bathroom: 3

Ganesh M (E1310)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452)

****+6016 223 9000



RM385,000

Sea Park Apartment, Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Type: Apartment Tenure: Freehold

Built-up: 950 sq ft Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 1

Yew Long PRO (PEA2276)

RIDGEWELL PROPERTIES (E (3) 1809)

**** +6019 352 5930



RM26,888,000

Seremban 2, Seremban, Negeri Sembilan

Type: Factory Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 72,000 sq ft Land size: 3 acres

Ronn Goh (REN 38324)

CID REALTORS SDN BHD (E (1) 1855/7)

4 +6011 1011 3829



RM1,840,000

Type: Semidee house Tenure: Freehold **Built-up:** 3,500 sq ft **Land size:** 4,058 sq ft **Bedroom:** 5 **Bathroom:** 5

Christina Lesslar (REN 00284)

Jelutong Heights, Bukit Jelutong, Selangor

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (SJ) SDN BHD (E(1)0452/2) +6016 906 6898



RM540,000

Danau Permai Condominium, Taman Desa, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium Tenure: Leasehold **Built-up:** 1,243 sq ft Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

Phyllis Lim (E 1670)

JOYLAND PROPERTIES (E (3) 0743) +60113 337 8623



RM350,000

Taman Laman Indah, Gelang Patah, Johor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 1,380 sq ft Land size: 1,080 sq ftBedroom: 3 Bathroom: 3

Mazurul (REN 46061

MN ASSOCIATES (JOHOR) SDN BHD (VE (1) 0143/1)

4 +6018 777 0715



RM725,000

Putra Heights, Subang Jaya, Selangor Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold

Land size: 1,650 sq ft**Bedroom:** 3 **Bathroom:** 3

Karen Ong (REN 46143)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (PUCHONG) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452/8) +6012 328 7184



RM399,999

Jadite Suites, Kajang, Selangor Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 947 sq ft

Bedroom: 2 Bathroom: 2

Ivy Sim (REN 27962)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452)

+6012 576 7868



RM858,000

USJ 11, Subang Jaya, Selangor Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,200 sq ft Land size: 1,650 sq ft

Bedroom: 4 **Bathroom:** 3

Siew Kim PRO (REN 04485)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (SJ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452/2)

**** +6012 210 2858



RM850,000

Taman Bukit Mewah, Kajang, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,648 sq ft Land size: 2,181 sq ft Bedroom: 5 Bathroom: 3

Bird Lim (REN 09250)

PROPNEX REALTY SDN BHD (E (1) 1800) +6012 252 3173



RM420,000

1Harmonis Condominium, Gombak, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Condominium Tenure: Freehold

Built-up: 1,100 sq ft Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

Calvin Kwok (REN 40208)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (HQ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452) +6012 605 8308



RM1,250,000

Paragon Heights, Bukit Jalil, **Kuala Lumpur**

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 3,388 sq ft Land size: 1,760 sq ft Bedroom: 6 Bathroom: 6

SK Kee (REN 01764)

REAPFIELD PROPERTIES (SJ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452/2)

+6012 211 3763



RM550,000

Bandar Nusaputra, Puchong South, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 2,000 sq ft Land size: 1,400 sq ft **Bedroom:** 4 **Bathroom:** 3

Jamil (REN 20289)

IM GLOBAL PROPERTY CONSULTANTS SDN BHD

(VEPM (1) 0253) +6012 935 5226



RM880,000

Taman Bukit Mayang Emas, Tropicana, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold

Land size: 1,400 sq ftBedroom: 4 Bathroom: 3

Eugene Koo (REN 00311)

I-PROP REALTY (USJ) SDN BHD (E (1) 0452/2)

**** +6017 212 3948



RM13,500/mth

Plaza Sentral, KL Sentral, Kuala Lumpur

Type: Office Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 2,500 sq ft

Henry Chin (E1833)

PROPERTY EXPRESS (E (3) 1205)

\(+6012 377 8306



.....

RM320,000

Taman Seri Mewah, Klang, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 800 sq ft Land size: 1,200 sq ft Bedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

Anuar (REN 26671)

ALAM HARTA REALTY (E (3) 1687) +6014 992 2042



RM998,000

Taman Putra Impiana, Puchong, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Leasehold Built-up: 2,629 sq ft Land size: 2,240 sq ft Bedroom: 5 Bathroom: 5

KK Sah (REN 23736)

IPG REALTY SDN BHD (E (1) 2002) +6016 637 5097



RM505,000

Jalan Setia Perdana U13/25, Setia Alam, Selangor

Type: Terraced house Tenure: Freehold Built-up: 868 sq ft Land size: 1,400 sq ftBedroom: 3 Bathroom: 2

HARTAMAS REAL ESTATE (MALAYSIA) SDN BHD (E (1) 1439) +6014 626 4929

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