

Note:
The carbon footprint
of household

Carbon free constraints

Property developers are walking the path towards zero carbon, but it is a tedious journey. > 4 & 5

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The spectrum of senior homes

Changing environment shifting the public's perceptions



Community bonding is a main attraction of senior homes as the elderly can build relationships with each other to offset feelings of loneliness.

Contributed by **SULAIMAN SAHEH**

ALTHOUGH the concept of senior homes or elderly centres in Malaysia is not a new thing, it still brings much stigma and is perceived as a not-so-desirable option among society at large, particularly elderly parents and their adult children. Should the elderly be sent to live in a senior home, people often judge the children to be ungrateful and irresponsible towards their parents who had sacrificed almost their entire life to raise them.

But the reality of modern life has slowly changed that perspective as people no longer have the privilege to take care of their elderly constantly due to work and family commitments. More so if the said elderly require close to full-time attention and care for medical or physical reasons.

This is where the senior homes of today come into the picture, not as a place of abandonment but as safe, well-assisted homes that provide the elderly with a suitable lifestyle to live a healthy and enriching life. Being more than just a dorm-like setting with some staff on board to monitor the senior residents, the senior home centres of today are well-designed to create a thriving community of senior citizens with daily recreational activities planned out, common lounges for interactions, and customised medical assistance to each individual, on top of a safe living space.

Additionally, families of senior residents are free to visit and bond with their elderly to maintain relationships whilst ensuring that every one of them is

living a healthy life with continuous care.

But what makes a home suitable for senior living and how far of a range does it go? There are many features and factors to making a home suited for senior living and the extent of such features present determines the level of assistance that is provided to the residents. Through this spectrum of assistance and home features, developers are able to offer a range of options whereby independence can still be maintained within a monitored environment, or, if needed, full-time assistance and monitoring for the more critical.

24/7 professional monitoring

One of the most common worries or issues one faces when it comes to daily senior care is constant monitoring. While for some it is not out of necessity, having such a service as we are assured there is always someone on board to take action should any accident or helpless moment occur. This is especially important for seniors who stay home alone in their respective homes during the day or even for most of the week as their family members are pulled away for work or other family commitments. While some may argue having 24/7 monitoring eliminates one's independence, it should be seen more as a safeguard for any potential emergency incidents.

On the professional services itself, it can range from simple daily check-ins to dietician meal providers as well as on-site paramedic assistance. For some senior living centres, residents



(ABOVE) Customised medical assistance to each individual can be arranged in senior homes.

are able to choose according to their needs and preferences, ultimately only paying for what they need as opposed to a one-size package. For seniors who would need daily physical assistance, there is also the option for on-hand, personalised professional assistants in the form of nurses, therapists and trained caregivers. While we may wish to provide such services and care for ourselves, it is important to have such care be given correctly and appropriately to avoid creating more problems unintentionally.

Community spaces and facilities

One other key reason senior homes are at an advantage is the sense of community built within the development. This is done via the provision of common spaces for residents to converge and interact daily and be entertained and well-stimulated by activities carried out by on-hand staff or by utilising the tools and equipment provided. This can be from community Teh Tarik sessions, simple chess tournaments, bingo sessions and full-on exercise routines for all to participate. As loneliness is a common problem many elderly people face in their daily lives, readily-provided communal features and a gathering of senior individuals are the right combinations for creating a thriving lifestyle even when one has reached retirement age. Just as we commonly see the uncles gathering at kopitiam eateries chatting the day away or the aunties exchanging the latest gossip and family updates, the same can be

recreated but in a safe and curated environment.

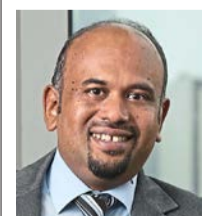
Physically-assisted home features

As we age, more assistance is needed to help us live our daily lives. But instead of actual human assistance, this can also be done by way of interior features designed to be of aid to its user. Common examples are handrails and shower seats in bathrooms, storage spaces in close reach with easily accessible handles and single-floor living spaces to avoid dangerous stairways and ledges. By having these features, senior individuals can conduct their daily routines independently and maintain one's sense of independence despite living in a senior home or centre.

Aside from that, services catering towards daily chores such as laundry, cooking and cleaning are also provided for most senior homes. This ensures that the residents are always living in a conducive and sanitary living environment which will then boost their overall mental and physical state. Of course, for senior individuals wishing to do it themselves, such facilities are also provided with consideration given to their safety when using it.

The short answer is yes but to elaborate, the degree of difference can be made into options according to the resident's needs. Through this spectrum, developers and service providers can create a range of homes based on the extent of services provided – from a gated senior home park to professional-assisted senior living centres. And by way of creative interior design, senior homes need not look like hospital wards or living dormitories. Instead, senior living centres are an integrated development with a mix of home and play elements catered to providing its residents with the best lifestyle one can have even at a ripe old age.

With the advancements in technology and diverse lifestyle professionals, we no longer have to face the reality of a lonely, jaded retirement life when a thriving option is available. Ultimately, families can go about their lives comfortably whilst still conducting their filial obligations. It is only a matter of perspective and practicality. 🏠



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Senior homes are more like homes and less like hospital wards but with the assistance of medical staff.

2Fifth Avenue a masterplan of urban eco-lifestyle

First phase Alora Residences is nature-inspired and smart-home ready



THE rainforest is a lively web of diverse living organisms thriving on their interdependence on one another and at the same time, being uniquely individual. Translate the workings of the rainforest into a city habitat and you get 2Fifth Avenue at USJ 25, a masterplanned mixed-use development by MCT Bhd that is eco-conscious, connected to the city pulse and self-sustaining with signature communal and retail spaces.

Located at the juncture of USJ25 and USJ21, with the USJ21 LRT Station just 300m away and the Main Place Mall USJ just across the road, the development enjoys easy access to ELITE Expressway, LDP highway, Federal Highway, and Persiaran Kewajipan. Well-known Subang Jaya amenities, including the SEGI College Subang Jaya, Inti International University and Colleges, Taylor's University, Subang Jaya Medical Centre, USJ Taipan and SS15 Courtyard are all within 10km from the development. 2Fifth Avenue will also provide a covered walkway to the LRT station for the convenience of commuters.

Spanning 13.36 acres with a GDV of RM3bil, 2Fifth Avenue is unveiling its first phase, the Alora Residences serviced apartment. Built on 2.68 acres of freehold land, there will be 770 units in two towers with unit sizes from 932 sq ft to 1,457 sq ft. There also will be eight signature retail units on the ground level, one of which is slated for a drive-through tenant.

Alora Residences' foundational green credential is the GreenRE Gold certification garnered by incorporating extensive energy efficiency measures and green designs. The common areas are fitted with energy-saving light fittings and the blocks use a regenerative lift

system to save energy, while units have outwards-facing living rooms and most of the bedrooms to optimise natural lighting and ventilation. Using architectural coping as a shading feature, heat penetration into habitable spaces is reduced to comply with GreenRE ratings.

Moreover, attention is also paid to the area of water efficiency. Residents will be benefiting from access to good quality water with the provision of ready-to-drink filtered water as well as WELS-rated fittings in the units to minimise water wastage. In addition, Alora Residences will be using the rainwater harvesting method to water the landscape.

Savvy features

For comfort and ease, the units are equipped with smart switches in the living room and have smart-home-ready infrastructure for an upgrade anytime. Another forward-looking feature is the provision of EV chargers to further reduce carbon footprint. Residents will also be using a smart app for security and engaging management services.

At the facility space, greenery is not mere landscaping. To achieve the best verdant quality, the trees and plants are specially selected from local species for better growth and ease of maintenance. Their respective placement and relative density are methodically planned to absorb CO2 and release oxygen for better air quality.

With a total area of more than 32,000 sq ft, the facility podium at level 10 and rooftops are designed to mimic a tropical garden that overlooks the cityscape, featuring a resort-like Horizon Pool, outdoor lounge with swinging chairs by the cascading waters, cubicle bonding pods at the rooftop garden and the sky gym, to name a few in the list of its 26 facilities.

Within the larger masterplan, an ecosystem comprising retail precinct and three communal spaces are being planned. With the rainforest as the guiding model, all components have a distinct greenery concept designed to be functional and supportive of the space and its users.

The retail precinct, with relatively heavier footfall traffic expected, will

(ABOVE) 2Fifth Avenue at Subang Jaya is a new masterplanned development with forward-looking green designs.

be balanced by multi-tiered greens resembling the sunken oasis. The Sanctuary Park will be lined with trees to provide shaded areas alongside the open spaces, while two other communal parks, one of which will be the pet-friendly park, will serve as the green lungs for the entire development.

With such care being put into the development, Alora Residences and 2Fifth Avenue as a whole will be a hub for a sustainable and healthy way of living, providing residents a thriving ecosystem to live, shop, play and socialise just like the self-sustaining rainforest.

Alora Residences' unit configuration comes in three bedrooms and four bedrooms, with one or two car parking bays allocated. This allows for a wide range of home buyers from bachelors to small and mid-size families as well as empty nesters looking for a more manageable home that comes with a healthy surrounding.

The units' starting price is from RM694,000 and with completion targeted at Q3 2027. For more information, visit <https://2fifthavenue.com/>.



Scan for more information



An artist's impression of Alora Residences' drop-off lobby which will be managed and secured by technology-assisted system.



An artist's impression of the Horizon Pool designed to be resort-like and overlooks the view of Subang Jaya.

Marching forward towards carbon-free 2050

Real estate industry's multi-pronged approach to reduce GHG emissions

By YIP WAI FONG
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THE Paris Agreement, an international framework committing countries to limit the increase in the global average temperature within the range of 1.5 to 2°C above pre-industrial levels, was signed by 196 countries in 2015. Malaysia followed suit months later in April 2016 and subsequently ratified the agreement in November. In signing the agreement, the international community has agreed to confront a dilemma – that fossil fuel, the energy source that powers the world's rapid development since the Industrial Revolution is fast pulling humanity into an existential calamity through climate change, if its consumption status quo remains. Eventually, and the sooner the better, it has to be phased out.

Citing the threat of rising sea levels to its coastal regions, Malaysia, as an oil-producing nation, committed to reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 45% by 2030. In 2021, former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob stepped up the commitment to achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050 at the earliest.

However, the real estate industry, one of the major GHG emitters, has been

largely left to its own devices in reducing its impact on the environment. Faced with the fact that the industry is still relying on fossil-based energy supplied by the TNB, and the cost of transitioning to renewable energy is prohibitively high, much of the real estate industry's effort has been focused on reducing emissions at the operational phase of the buildings and structures constructed.

"Zero carbon by 2050 is certainly a laudable and aspirational target for all to aim for, including for the real estate industry. However, we have to find the most cost-effective way of doing so, without adding unnecessary costs and burden to homes for the Rakyat," said Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda) president NK Tong.

"For example, the production of all types of construction materials used in the building industry is extremely energy intensive. So for developers and contractors to minimise the impact on the environment, when consuming these building materials in the production of homes, especially for scope 2 and 3 emissions, we need the energy that goes into the production of these building materials to be as green as possible," he said.

Scope 2 emission refers to GHG emitted by the equipment or assets that a company purchased and used, for

example, the company's vehicles. Scope 3 encompasses emissions by those that it is indirectly responsible for such as the contractors and users along its value chain.

According to the Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), the construction sector in 2017 – 2019 generated an average total of 76 million tonnes of CO₂e GHG emission. The country's total emission in 2019 was 312.72 million tonnes of CO₂e, according to the biennial report sent by the Natural Resources, Environment and Climate Change Ministry in 2022. This comes up to emissions by the construction industry at 24% of the country's total. Meanwhile, the energy industries' share is the highest at 78%.

"Until and unless we can move away from reliance on fossil fuel energy, the goal of being zero carbon will either be unattainable, or extremely expensive because of carbon offsets or carbon capture requirements," said Tong.

Green building certifications

Malaysian Green Building Council council member TamilSalvi Mari said despite challenges, the real estate industry has witnessed progress in reducing the carbon footprint. One of its earliest

moves was the formulation of the Green Building Index rating tool as far back as 2009, and by 2021, as many as 389 buildings have been certified.

"Some developers have incorporated renewable energy systems, such as solar panels, into their projects. Others have focused on using energy-efficient materials and implementing green building design principles to minimise energy consumption.

Efforts are being made to raise awareness and educate stakeholders about sustainable practices. Organisations like the Malaysian Green Building Council (MGBC) play a crucial role in promoting sustainability in the real estate industry through training programs, conferences, and knowledge-sharing platforms," said TamilSalvi.

Tong said that green building certification is a long-term, more sustainable approach and a win-win situation that addresses both the environmental and social aspects through reduced energy costs.

"Rehda developed the GreenRE green rating tool which was adapted from the Singapore BCA's (Building Construction Authority) Greenmark rating tool, and has been localised in accordance to Malaysian Standards," he said, adding that Greenmark's technical panel continue to be a part of GreenRE's

"Green building certification addresses both the environmental and social aspects through reduced energy costs."

– NK Tong



Leong said the industry should look into sustainable construction policies and practices.



Digitalisation of the construction process plays a significant role in reducing the carbon footprint, said TamilSalvi.



Developers are exploring renewable energy to power buildings, said Azril.



Solar panels' life cycle is limited and there are issues of disposing them safely, said Yong.

technical panel, alongside other established green building professionals to guide technical updates of the rating tools and project certifications.

"Energy efficiency is the largest pillar in GreenRE's assessment of a green building, and therefore GreenRE certified buildings will have a lasting impact in reducing energy consumption, and therefore assist in the goal towards zero carbon.

Since GreenRE's introduction 10 years ago (2013), a portfolio of projects encompassing 150 million sq ft have been certified," he said, adding that another 150 million sq ft is expected to be certified GreenRE in the next three years.

Reducing emission at pre-construction

In recent years, the adoption of IBS and digitalisation to improve efficiency also play a role in reducing GHG emissions in the planning and pre-construction stages. Examples of IBS adopters are Gamuda Land, Malaysian Resources Corporation and Mah Sing Bhd, with many other developers adding IBS to their digitalisation plans.

"The digitalisation of the construction process plays a significant role in reducing the carbon footprint. This includes utilising virtual design and construction, digital project management, remote collaboration, and communication tools. Prefabrication, energy management systems, building performance monitoring, and asset management can also be optimised through digital technologies. By implementing these strategies, developers and contractors can contribute to a more sustainable built environment while achieving operational efficiencies," said TamilSalvi.

Tackling carbon beyond buildings

Another approach is carbon sequestration, implemented through the conservation and rehabilitation of

biodiversity. It is also increasingly tied to the creation of a lifestyle that is closer to nature. Sime Darby Property, with its land bank consisting mainly of plantation land, replanted trees of the Endangered, Rare, and Threatened (ERT) species as well as others to reintroduce diversity in its townships. According to its 2022 annual report, the developer has sequestered 13,072 tCO₂e from tree-planting efforts since 2011. Yet another example is Gamuda Land, which has converted 90 acres of its reserved land in Gamuda Cove, sitting next to the Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands into an arboretum, creating a buffer zone between the Gamuda Cove township and the wetlands which the residents can also enjoy at a short distance from their homes.

While the real estate industry is going in the right direction in doing its part to meet the carbon-free 2050 goal, the outcome is by no means clear, as long as reliance on fossil energy remains the elephant in the room. Also, the multi-faceted strategies mentioned above remain limited to major industry players who have the resources to coordinate their value chain. The government is yet to step in to direct and enforce an industry-wide energy efficiency or climate-change regulation, leaving much to voluntary adoption by the industry stakeholders.

"While the zero-carbon target by 2050 in the real estate industry is a necessary goal, it faces critical challenges that must be addressed. Overcoming the complexity and fragmentation of the industry, addressing financial barriers, strengthening supportive policies, and promoting a holistic approach to sustainability are crucial steps. Achieving the target requires a critical examination of the current practices and a genuine commitment to implementing systemic changes that go beyond mere carbon offsetting. Only through concerted efforts and critical analysis can the real estate industry make meaningful progress towards a sustainable and low-carbon future," said TamilSalvi.

Barriers to renewable energy

While the importance of transitioning to renewable energy is undeniable, Malaysia is, unsurprisingly, slow in making the shift. The National Energy Policy 2022 – 2040 (DTN) spelt out the reason why – our current fossil-based energy industries contribute 28% to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Petroleum-related income contributes 31% of fiscal income while energy exports form 13% of total export value. The industries account for 25% of the total workforce and supply power to 10 million customers in the country.

According to DTN, renewable energy supply in the country currently comprises mainly hydroelectric, solar and bioenergy, collectively constituting 7% of the total primary energy supply, with a national target to increase them to 17% by 2040.

Veritas Design Group principal and director Azril Amir Jaafar observed that in the real estate sector, besides deploying passive design to reduce overall energy consumption, developers have also explored renewable energy to power the buildings.

"The installation of solar panels and other renewable energy initiatives is increasing due to more affordable cost," he said.

Universiti Malaya Institute of Biological Science senior lecturer Yong Kien Thai said as our energy cost is relatively low, people are less inclined to make a drastic move to switch towards renewables. He also questioned the efficacy of solar panels and hydroelectric and their long term benefit to the environment.

"Solar panels have a limited lifespan. After their life cycle is exhausted, we are faced with the issues of disposing them safely without harming the environment. As with hydroelectric, we know that dam construction is destructive to the ecology," he said.

Yong's observation echoes a recent BBC report on the proliferation of solar panels globally, which experts estimate amounting to 2.5 billion panels, and poses a monumental waste crisis given the current lack of recycling chain and infrastructure.

Malaysian Institute of Architects deputy president Alice Leong Pek Lian said for now, the industry should look into sustainable construction policies and practices.

"Developers and contractors must be able to accept and adapt to efficiency enhancing technologies i.e. renewable energy technology, enhancing existing building utilization, using low carbon cement etc. in order to help to shrink down carbon footprints and minimize energy costs," she said, adding however, it is not an easy task.

"Of course, it is not an easy task in reducing the carbon footprint in the industry. We are aware that most humanity lives in the built environment. Nearly everyone sleeps, eats and works in buildings. The alternatives of low carbon materials and construction techniques that are cost effective and readily available are a major hurdle still. Plus, the existing infrastructure and building codes often prioritize traditional practices, making it more difficult to adopt sustainable alternatives," she said.



Building sensibly is the way forward.

Contributed by **JOCHUM LEDGISTER**

WE can - almost easily - almost easily - imagine a world without oil and gas, without nuclear weapons, without fast fashion, social media and - maybe especially - any basic service which has become an industry. But, can we imagine a world without wildlife, clean water, thriving oceans, healthy forests or even bees?

On January 18, 2022, scientists from the Stockholm Resilience Centre (SRC) confirmed that we have crossed a 5th planetary boundary - the chemical pollution boundary. The other four which were also crossed are climate change, loss of biosphere integrity, land-system change and altered biogeochemical cycles. But there are no prizes for each boundary which we cross, there are only penalties.

According to the United Nations, climate change "refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. Such shifts can be natural, due to changes in the sun's activity or large volcanic eruptions. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas".

Loss of biosphere integrity results in the loss of local and regional biodiversity, which makes ecosystems more vulnerable to changes in climate and ocean acidity, reported The Circularity Gap Report (CGR) 2023 on the Planetary Boundaries Framework.

"Today, the global extinction rate far exceeds the rate of speciation. If the current extinction rate is sustained, an undesired system change is highly likely," it said.

The Stockholm Resilience Centre noted that land-system change occurs when land is converted to human use all over the planet. "Forests, grasslands, wetlands and other vegetation types have primarily been converted to agricultural land. This land-use change is one driving force behind the serious reductions in biodiversity, and it has impacts on water flows and the biogeochemical cycling of

carbon, nitrogen and phosphorus and other important elements," it said.

Altered biogeochemical cycles, according to CGR, occur when nitrogen and phosphorus, both essential elements for plant growth, make their way to the sea and can push marine and aquatic systems across ecological thresholds of their own while impacting human health.

In the face of so much apparent end-of-the-world bad news, how do we move past the solastalgia and instead focus on positive action for the future? There are some key questions with much potential for active engagement which are the I, You and Them. The questions are how can we contribute to positive change, what is the potential of the construction industry in leading the positive change, and how are governments able to drive transformation and empowerment?

How we impact the shape of a greener future:

- Accept that we are one with the natural environment - live mindfully
 - Make time to read and think deeply - take public transportation where available
 - Build community - remain connected with those who really care about us
 - Savor enchanted moments- pause to observe, relish, and enjoy
 - Let frugality be a watchword- reduce, reuse, recycle
 - Engage with your responsibilities to society- participate in the democratic process
- How designers can impact the shape of a greener future:
- Circular design - embrace the principles of the circular economy by creating products that are designed for reuse, repair, and recycling. prioritise modular designs, disassembly, and easy material separation
 - Sustainable design - focus on recycled and biodegradable materials, minimise waste in the manufacturing process, and design for longevity and reparability
 - User-centric design - design intuitive interfaces, engaging experiences, and persuasive communication which encourage sustainable behaviour among users
 - Nature-inspired design: design products,



Jochum Ledgister heads the Veritas Design Group's Special Projects and, with his broad experience on many building typologies, is able to bring a holistic collaborative impetus to complex projects.

buildings, and infrastructure that mimics nature's efficiency and resilience, leading to more sustainable and regenerative outcomes

How developers can impact the shape of a greener future:

- Sustainable architecture and urban planning- build buildings and communities with sustainable features such as green roofs, solar panels, rainwater harvesting systems, and efficient waste management.
- Thoughtful design-led process - prioritise energy-efficient designs, the use of sustainable materials, and green spaces to promote a healthier environment
- Eco-friendly construction practices - adopt construction practices that minimise waste generation and reduce carbon emissions, and make recycling key
- Renewable energy integration - incorporate renewable energy systems into projects, such as solar panels which help to reduce reliance on fossil fuel-based energy sources and contribute to a greener energy mix
- Smart technology solutions- leverage smart technology to optimise energy use, enhance efficiency, and reduce environmental impact through integration of the Internet of things within core processes
- Sustainable infrastructure - which can involve building and integration into eco-friendly transportation systems, including electric vehicle charging stations, bike lanes, and pedestrian-friendly pathways, as well as implementing sustainable water management practices
- Envision true life-cycle practices - use environmentally friendly building

(BELOW) More species are dying off faster than the evolution of new ones.



materials and energy-efficient construction techniques to lower the embodied carbon in construction projects

- Tangible results of the initiatives are: Save the bees by building roof gardens
- Maintain biodiversity corridors by building green bridges
- Support sustainable forest husbandry by building with timber

How government policy can impact the shape of a greener future:

- Renewable energy incentives - implement policies that provide incentives for the development and use of energy sources such as solar and wind, and include tax breaks, subsidies, and grants to encourage the transition away from fossil fuels
 - Transparent carbon pricing and emissions trading - introduce carbon taxes or cap-and-trade systems, putting a price on carbon emissions thereby creating economic incentives for industries to reduce their emissions and invest in cleaner technologies
 - Sustainable transportation policies - invest in public transportation systems, cycling infrastructure, and walkability to reduce reliance on private vehicles
 - Energy efficiency standards - set high energy efficiency standards for buildings, appliances, and industrial processes to encourage the use of energy-efficient technologies and practices to reduce energy consumption
 - Conservation and natural resource management - establish more protected areas, national parks, and wildlife sanctuaries to conserve biodiversity and ecosystems alongside policies that promote sustainable land use, reduce deforestation, and the protection of water resources
 - Operate long term - ensure the many is preferred over the few
 - Plan sustainably- appreciate that the world continues when we have ceased to
- The future is always much further away and much closer than we imagine on a day-to-day basis, and the hope for any version of a greener future rests not in idle hope but in our combined actions today. 🏡



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SPECIAL FEATURE



The top performers in project marketing of 2022 hold their awards during the company's awards appreciation night.



The top sub-sales performers of 2022 hold their awards at Gather Properties' annual dinner.

Gather Properties records new high

Sales in 2022 increased by 40%

REAL estate agency Gather Properties has achieved new heights, showing better sales results in 2022 by 40% when compared to the preceding year, amid its rapid growth with numerous branches being set up in Peninsular Malaysia.

Gather Properties founder Vincent Tan pointed out that the company's sales have reached a new high and attributed the achievement to the efforts of every Gatherians.

He said that Gather Properties has opened up new branches in the growing areas in Malaysia, namely Kuala Lumpur, Selangor, Penang and Johor. The new branches are in Pudu, Equine Park, Balakong, George Town and Mount Austin respectively.

This addition means that Gather Properties now has more than 15 branches including those in Perak, Negeri Sembilan

and Melaka.

To celebrate its many successes, Gather Properties recently held the company's annual dinner, hosting 65 tables at the HGH Convention Centre Sentul, with the theme Together We Achieve Miracles.

Gather Properties is a diversified real estate business that encompasses various sectors such as factory, commercial land, residential properties, shophouse sub-sales and project marketing.

"Gather's vision is to help everyone fulfil their dreams in a simple and joyful way through real estate, providing our agents with a comprehensive platform to easily complete transactions and have multiple ways to earn income," said Tan.

Among its collaborative efforts are Gather Building Management (GBM), GTR Auction House, Gather Global (MM2H) and VS Home Management.

GBM specialises in property management services and is responsible for business development in this field. With an impressive portfolio of approximately 30 buildings and housing schemes in key areas like the Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru, GBM ensures efficient and effective management of these properties.

As a startup venture, GTR Auction House undertakes the auction business. Its dedicated team is committed to providing exceptional auction services and aims to grow and establish itself as a prominent player in the industry.

Gather Global (MM2H) specialises in the Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H) programme. Through MM2H, agents and negotiators refer their foreign clients to Gather Global and earn a generous referral fee. "We assist clients in navigating the MM2H programme, making the process seamless and convenient," said Tan.

The VS Home Management focuses on

Airbnb services, offering comprehensive solutions to landlords seeking to maximise their rental yields. With the agency's expertise in property management, it ensures that landlords can optimise their rental income through efficient management and seamless Airbnb hosting.

In addition to its diverse range of services, Gather Properties has also introduced a revolutionary system designed to enhance the way companies conduct data searches. This innovative platform aims to improve the accuracy and efficiency of agents searching for customer information, ultimately streamlining their operations and enhancing their overall productivity.

"At Gather Properties, we are dedicated to transforming the real estate industry and providing exceptional services to our clients. Through our collaborative efforts and innovative solutions, we strive to exceed expectations and contribute to the success of our agents and customers alike," said Tan.

A new award for MDA 2023

The Joint Development trophy has been added to the Special Awards

As the countdown to the Malaysia Developer Awards (MDA) 2023 starts to tick, organisers FIABCI-Malaysia and StarMedia Group (SMG) have added a new trophy to the prestigious event.

FIABCI is the French acronym for Federation Internationale des Administrateurs de Bien-Conselis Immobiliers which in English is The International Real Estate Federation, founded in Paris in 1940.

The new Joint Development Awards is for developers who have joined forces and expertise to leverage on each other's capabilities to develop at least one property. The joint venture (JV) can be two or more Malaysian developers, however, the participating JV can also be between a Malaysian developer and a foreign developer, provided that a consortium has been formed for the project. In addition, the foreign partner must not hold more than 50% of the consortium.

With this new award, the Special Awards has been expanded to four accolades, alongside the International, Transformation and Rising Star Awards.

Developers who have managed to penetrate markets beyond their country of origin, and garnered exceptional success through new ideas and concepts while inspiring their peers will be recognised in the International Awards category.

As for the Transformation Awards, this category acknowledges developers who have transformed projects from the rescuing of abandoned projects to



the rejuvenating of old and dilapidated buildings or converting mining, quarry, disused or derelict land into a grand development.

The Rising Star Awards seeks to uncover and highlight new and budding developers who have just set foot into the industry but have set themselves apart from their peers by demonstrating their potential to develop into leading voices.

To participate in the Malaysia Developer Awards 2023, property developers must submit their entries online before the deadline on July 12 this year.

Meanwhile, the Bursa Malaysia-listed property developers who are eligible for the Top-of-the-Charts (TOTC) are being invited to participate in this year's rankings. The TOTC is divided into two tiers, namely for companies

with a market capitalisation of RM1bil and above, and for those with a market capitalisation of below RM1bil. This is to ensure a more even playing field for the smaller participating companies.

The TOTC is by invitation only while the Special Awards is by submission. The closing deadline is July 12, 2023. The MDA 2023 submission kit can be downloaded from the Malaysia Developer Awards website. [🔗](#)

(ABOVE) Last year's TOTC winners together with (front centre, left to right) SMG group chief executive officer Alex Yeow, then Housing and Local Government Ministry secretary-general Datuk M Noor Azman Taib and FIABCI-Malaysia president Datuk Firdaus Musa. - GLENN GUAN/The Star

Raising professional standards in the real estate industry



Contributed by **MATT TIAN**

It was recently reported that property agents in Singapore will have to meet a higher training requirement to renew their licences from October 2025 in a move by the Council for Estate Agencies (CEA) to raise professional standards in the industry.

A total of 16 hours of training a year is an increment from the current six to nine hours required. Property agents will be under structured learning with courses

in areas including laws and regulations, property market updates and other related real estate knowledge.

In a similar move in Malaysia, on Sept 26 last year, the Malaysian Institute of Estate Agents (MIEA) had an audience with the Executive Committee of the Board of Valuers, Appraisers, Estate Agents and Property Managers Malaysia (BOVAEP), the regulators of the real estate profession in Malaysia and submitted a memorandum addressing key issues and recommended solution.

One of the items in the memorandum addresses the issue of Education with syllabus expansion, examination and raising the bar in minimum requirement to be certified as a Real Estate Negotiator (REN).

Presently, for one to become a Real Estate Negotiator (REN) certified by BOVAEP with a REN Number, one must complete a two-day Negotiators Certification Course (NCC) as the base educational requirement. There have been proposals for a test to be conducted to ensure the learning is effective with a full understanding of the course modules. MIEA proposes a revision of the

two-day NCC to a 16-Module Course expanding the scope of knowledge, especially in the areas of laws and regulations, finance, property market data analytics and ethics, with examination. This move is necessary to progress the profession, particularly in the area of fiduciary duties. The present NCC syllabus is already 10 years old.

The proposal also includes raising the bar of minimum entry to be certified, beginning with SPM/O Levels with timelines to raise the minimum entry to Diploma/Degree qualification. Though education level accounts for only a part of an individual's success in the industry, it is nonetheless a necessary component as a base.

MIEA is ready and committed to working alongside the regulators, BOVAEP, on the necessary move and action to raise professionalism in the industry. In the long run, this will bring a higher level of trust and confidence in members of the public toward real estate practitioners.

Personally, I believe this is a good move and it should be implemented as soon as possible. Many people perceive the real estate business as an easy endeavour, assuming it merely involves opening and closing doors for property viewings, engaging in negotiations and ultimately securing sales to earn lucrative commissions.

However, the reality is that the profession demands an immense

workload and consistent effort across various areas, including administrative tasks, marketing, sales, accounting, education, photography, videography and now even expanding to encompass skills such as drone operation, 360 virtual tours, website management, landing page creation, Google advertising, and social media promotions.

Furthermore, RENs must also possess knowledge of finance, laws and regulations, market updates, trends and other relevant subjects. This breadth of expertise is crucial for them to be competent and professional, particularly considering the significant financial responsibilities involved in real estate transactions.

While education level may only contribute partially to an individual's success, it remains important to train and educate RENs from a young age, before they enter into the real estate industry. This preparation ensures that they acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to deliver excellent practices and

provide trusted services to their clients. [🔗](#)



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