

## Protecting the wetlands

Wetlands prevent floods, pollution and storm damage, safeguard water supply and provide a home to thousands of animal and plant species but who is protecting them? The first Wetlands Arboretum in Klang Valley will help conserve the Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands.

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# Looking for forests in malls and shopping centres

The diversity of plants is limited by availability of suitable premises.

Green spaces need more than landscaping and aesthetically pleasing plants



"The Secret Garden at 1 Utama is South East Asia's largest rooftop garden," Lee said.



"Malls are increasingly becoming more environmentally conscious," Teo said.

By LIEW JIA YI (YANIKA)  
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**A**S more and more property developers take on the mandate of environmentalism and sustainability, the topic of biodiversity is coming into the forefront as more than just implementing green features.

Biodiversity speaks to the conservation and protection of diverse species, whether flora or fauna, and the concept has become increasingly widespread. While some residential hubs and townships have dipped their toes into biodiversity, has the concept penetrated commercial real estate such as malls and shopping centres?

"As a general planning requirement, buildings including malls have to set aside 10% of land for landscape and open space. Newer malls have included more green areas and landscaping and newer concepts such as plants for shading, reducing solar penetration, urban farming and aquaponics, et cetera," Malaysian Shopping Malls Association president Tan Sri Teo Chiang Kok said.

These sustainability features focus on energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions into the atmosphere, allowing customers to make use of the natural environment as a resource. When a mall begins to promote biodiversity in its corporate strategy, it takes a proactive step in conservation that emphasises on the diverse species in Malaysia.

This remains a challenge in malls. As a commercial area, the shopping centre and its landscape have to be customer-friendly. Teo also pointed out that the variety and range of plants that are selected by these developers have to be selected not only to thrive in urban settings but vicariously contribute to biodiversity.

"Malls are increasingly becoming more environmentally conscious and are doing more than the minimum requirements but the diversity of plants is limited by the availability of suitable premises," Teo said.

While malls are all in various stages of implementation of going greener, this may occur with or without the promotion of urban biodiversity. As it stands today, very few shopping

malls have an emphasis on biodiversity.

One such mall is Klang Valley's 1 Utama, which began its environmental journey in 1995 and continues to improve its initiative to this day. The shopping centre has a rainforest, a secret garden and an urban farm.

The usual plants found on the urban farm include parsley, choy sum and basil. Other urban farms may choose the Asian leafy category, which encompasses a range of species such as mustard, spinach, and kale. These species were chosen because they are more hardy, and can withstand temperature differentials.

"The Secret Garden at 1 Utama is South East Asia's largest rooftop garden where plants are planted with biochar soil for carbon sequestration on a 30,000 sq ft green roof of extensive scientific experimentation," 1 Utama public relations manager Lee Li Lian said.

The garden features around 500 species of rare and temperate plants including cool-climate plants, giant aroids and food plants such as rice, pepper, banana and cocoa. There are also ornamental foliage plants and aquatic plants such as the giant Amazon Water Lily.

Lee pointed out that new plants are tested and planted continuously so the composition of the garden changes from month to month.

Aside from implementing innovative green building practices to conserve water and energy, the mall also introduces meaningful eco-campaigns to encourage recycling and build green attractions like its 4-storey Rainforest enclave with 100 species of forest trees, koi fish ponds, giant freshwater fish aquarium and overhead suspension bridge.

"It was a first-in-Malaysia feature, the Rainforest took years of in-depth research by an expert team of botanists and landscape architects to develop, sourcing rare tree species from Sabah and Sarawak transported into 1 Utama by cranes to form the Rainforest," Lee said.

There were a few challenges when it came to construction. Lee noted that they were constrained by space and the key objective of growing the Rainforest into a functional microclimate habitat.

There were multiple factors to take into account, the key ones being sufficient sunlight,

nutrients and water, which had to be thoughtfully planned for long-term maintenance.

"Needless to say, the Rainforest was a costly project, but the commitment to build, educate and create environmental awareness remains 1 Utama's commitment," she said.

1 Utama's Secret Garden took 5 years to develop before it was finally ready for public viewing on May 25, 2009.

The garden adopts high-performance technologies such as chilled water irrigation sourced from the mall's air conditioning system and rainwater harvesting system to water plants. Both novel technologies are integrated into the mall building, making it energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Having a green roof also insulates and blocks heat from the sun on the rooftop thereby decreasing the air-conditioning load required to cool the building, allowing 1 Utama to conserve even more energy.

The soil in the garden is a mix of biochar and normal soil. Biochar is charcoal in the form of small particles and provides a better environment for root growth than normal soil because it is more open to water and air penetration. Organic fertilisers are also applied regularly.

"The vast amount of carbon stored in The Secret Garden reduces 1 Utama's carbon footprint. (A total of) 800 of 1,600 tonnes per hectare of biochar is used depending on whether the soil is 50% or 100%," Lee said.

"By comparison, the tropical rainforest holds about 300 tonnes per hectare of carbon. Hence The Secret Garden sequesters much more carbon than an equivalent area of tropical rainforest and contributes significantly to the fight against global warming. The plants also absorb large amounts of CO<sub>2</sub> through photosynthesis, providing fresher air to the mall environment," she added.

1 Utama is currently in the midst of planning further renovation and upgrading works for the Rainforest and The Secret Garden, as well as a new recycling initiative, the 1Recycling Centre.

The increasing focus on the conservation of Malaysia's biodiversity places a unique pressure on malls to take a proactive approach. Perhaps in the future, Malaysians will be able to look forward to lush trees and local species even in their shopping centres. 🌿



Actual photo of the Intermediate Egret found at Gamuda Cove. The Intermediate Egret are among the many bird species attracted to the fruits of the Melicope lunu-ankenda tree.

**(LEFT)** An artist's depiction of the Wetlands Arboretum Centre, a multi-function centre in Wetlands Arboretum, Gamuda Cove.

# Going beyond just preserving the wetlands

Creating an arboretum within a wetland, within a township

**W**ETLANDS are touted for their richness in biodiversity with thousands of numerous different species that live in them. More than just providing a home to thousands of animal and plant species, wetlands provide a crucial role in food security, carbon storage, water filtration, and shoreline erosion control.

Acting as transition zones between uplands and deeper water, their unique ecosystems are characterised by their hydrology, soils and vegetation. This allows wetlands to function like natural tubs, storing surface water runoffs.

Realising this importance, especially in recent years when flash floods are becoming imminent, the 90 acres of reserved land in Gamuda Cove, adjacent to Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands, is currently being converted into a Wetlands Arboretum, a living tree museum.

Wetland arboretums, also known as wetland gardens or water gardens, are natural ecological gardens that are designed to showcase wetland environments. These gardens are becoming increasingly popular around the world as more people become aware of the importance of preserving wetlands and the wildlife that inhabits them.

As a wetland sanctuary, it also combats global warming through the sequestration of environmental carbon and carbon-rich organic sediments.

## Listening to the land

As a consultant on the project, landscape architectural firm SD2 Sdn Bhd director Lee Wern Ching was initially quite surprised when Gamuda Land through Gamuda Parks approached the firm to look into the design and restoration of the greenery in the area as the land has been disturbed over the past few decades before Gamuda Land acquired

the land a few years back.

It was a monumental task to first come up with such capital expenditure. Not only to restore nature but also to ensure that the community can spend time in this place to appreciate nature, more so on a buffer zone where most developers would opt to just do the bare minimum.

He commended Gamuda Land for putting in the effort to restore the land by establishing an arboretum for wetlands, stating: "To bring this idea to life and with the neighbouring Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands, it made sense to extend the wetlands into this buffer zone."

Lee and his team of experts designed and provided expert advice on the Wetlands Arboretum as well as on the Wetlands Arboretum Centre, a welcome pavilion for visitors and a multi-function central hub for various activities.

He continued: "The beauty of the Wetlands Arboretum is that it is not focused on just the Centre but the whole Wetlands Arboretum, which is open to the public."

He pointed out that rather than a closed-up area where people do not interact with the environment, visitors get to feel and experience what the arboretum has to offer.

Lee explained that while the arboretum is a built environment, many areas are opened up to allow visitors to view the wetlands without damaging them as proper walkways and paths are built to keep the existing wetlands intact.

"Remember, the arboretum is not an entertainment park. It is to improve the people's understanding of biodiversity and build a deeper appreciation of the importance of wetlands," he added.

As the 90-acre Wetlands Arboretum is easily accessible, residents are able to connect with nature in the Wetlands Arboretum with activities such as jogging, jungle trekking, horse-riding

and bird watching.

In addition, its water features and natural setting enhance the well-being of surrounding communities, while promoting healthy interaction between them and the natural environment.

Meanwhile, the Wetlands Arboretum will catalyse economic growth in the area by creating eco-tourism opportunities and green jobs such as arborists, naturalists, horticulturalists, botanists and more.

## Careful curation of Wetlands Arboretum

"Unlike parks and recreation areas, the arboretum has an educational aspect to it. One of the main attractions of the Wetlands Arboretum is the wide variety of plant life on display. It is a collection of trees and vegetation, some of which are very rare," Lee said.

The Wetlands Arboretum will be home to more than 200 species of flora and fauna. In collaboration with Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), the species were carefully selected, introducing 100% native species and at least 1,000 trees with conservation importance, as classified by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Another partner to the Wetlands Arboretum, specifically on the Wetlands Arboretum Centre, is Universiti Malaya (UM) Faculty of Science's Institute of Biological Sciences senior lecturer Dr Nurul Ashikin Abdullah.

According to Dr Nurul, "The Wetlands Arboretum Centre will display specimens of plants that are specialised for peat swamp habitats. The community can benefit from the knowledge on the importance of each species (such as the usage, medicinal values and more), especially since these species are native to Malaysia. Understanding the ecological



The arboretum has an educational aspect to it, said Lee.



Dr Nurul said the community can benefit from the knowledge gained.

**(BELOW)** Proper walkways will allow visitors to have a closer appreciation of the wetlands.



role and values of such plants will create awareness among the general public which in turn can help protect our natural resources."

Selecting the right species of trees to be planted in peat-soil conditions proved to be one of the main challenges when designing the Wetlands Arboretum. Not only are there limited trees that can withstand long stays in water, but such species are also at risk of being endangered, hence are difficult to source.

One such example is Melicope lunu-ankenda or known locally as Tenggek Burung. It is an evergreen shrub which best fits the profile to be planted in the arboretum but was not an easy find. After a successful attempt at sourcing for the endemic seed, the team propagated and nurtured the tree specimens until it is matured enough to be transplanted.

This led to an indigenous nursery in Pulau Kempas which has produced approximately 10,000 Melicope lunu-ankenda saplings to date for tree planting activities within the Wetlands Arboretum.

The project is envisioned to serve as a seedbank and tree storage as well as recycling of organic, garden and general waste while offering on-ground research and collaboration opportunities for conservationists and others keen to study and explore its natural treasures.

Drawing insights from various scientific research of arborists, the Wetlands Arboretum will be a national biodiversity asset that aims to encourage collaborative efforts among environmentalists and the general public with the aim of fighting climate change and fostering education and biodiversity research.

The Wetlands Arboretum will be opened in phases with the first phase targeted for opening by the third quarter of 2023. 📍

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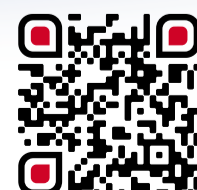


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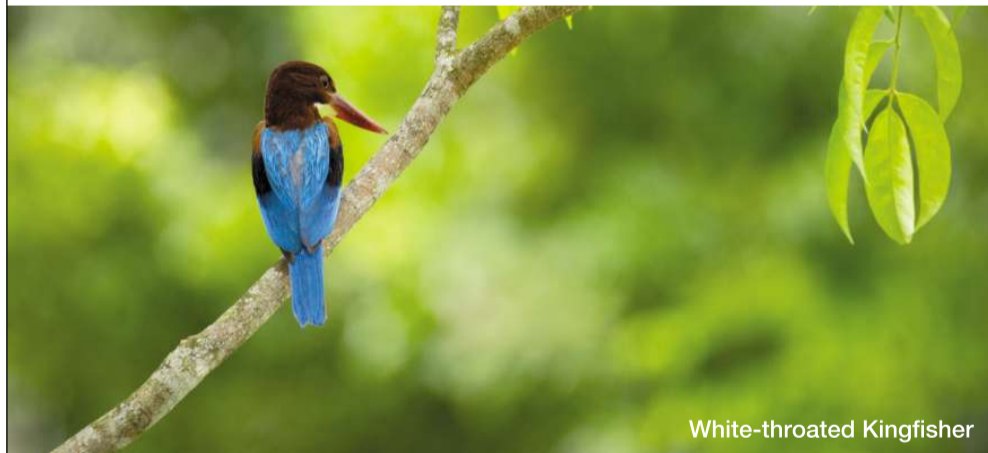
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Actual photo at Gamuda Gardens

**ACTUAL PHOTOS OF FLORA & FAUNA AT GAMUDA GARDENS**



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# Sponge cities: Malaysia's future and international perspectives

It's time to move on from grey infrastructure and onto the green

By LIEW JIA YI (YANIKA)  
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**S**PONGE cities are far from a new concept. It refers to an urban planning and management strategy that aims to reduce the negative effect of urban cities on the water cycle. As the name suggests, the city itself will be able to soak up excess water through its environment, tackling flood risks, water scarcity and pollution.

"The concept behind sponge cities is to design cities and urban spaces in such a way that they imitate the natural water cycle in contrast to conventional 'grey' drainage infrastructure, it focuses on leveraging the natural landscapes in capturing and using rainwater, minimising runoff, and improving infiltration into the earth," Arup Malaysia Cities and Advisory lead Murali Ram said.

Using an advanced digital tool, Terrain, Arup and his team developed the Global Sponge Cities Snapshot, which included Auckland, London, Montreal, Mumbai, Nairobi, New York, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney and Toronto. The report looked at the urban centres of these global cities and assessed the efficacy of their existing natural infrastructure in absorbing rainfall.

According to the report, natural infrastructure is not only extremely effective in managing flood water but also on average 50% more cost-effective than man-made alternatives, delivering 28% more added value.

"This is accomplished through the implementation of a range of nature-based solutions including green roofs, rain gardens, permeable pavements, wetlands, and other forms of green infrastructure," he said.

The term sponge city originated in China, however, other countries refer to the same concept differently. From Europe's green infrastructure (GI), the United State's low-impact development (LID) and Australia's water-sensitive urban design (WSUD).

"In Malaysia, the concept of sponge cities is gaining traction as the country faces increasing urbanisation and the associated challenges and is particularly vulnerable to flooding due to its location in the tropics and high levels of rainfall," Murali said.

Malaysia's own Putrajaya, Murali noted, is a completely new city sitting on brownfield land. The city adopted a stormwater management strategy and water-sensitive land use planning. Examples include wetlands, pollution detention ponds, swale drains, riparian parks and gross pollutant traps (GPT) to treat runoff pollution.

The city has drainage systems which include landscaping and other recreational features that enhance the environmental and social values of its infrastructures.



**(ABOVE)** Putrajaya is a young city which adopted a stormwater management strategy and water-sensitive land use planning.



"Flood and water management should not be viewed as the responsibility of the Drainage and Irrigation Department alone," Murali said.



"Governments are increasingly recognising the importance of sponge cities," Liyana said.

## International success stories

As technology and research continue to improve sponge cities, their implementation becomes more and more refined.

"Governments are increasingly recognising the importance of sponge cities and are implementing policies to support their development," Arup Malaysia senior urban designer Liyana Che Ismail said.

Remote sensing and data analysis tools can manage and evaluate the performance of such green infrastructure, while satellite imagery and aerial photography can identify suitable areas for implementation.

Liyana outlined the example of the Chulalongkorn University Centenary Park in Bangkok, Thailand, which implemented the sponge city concept in an urban park setting. With its design, the park could reduce flood risk to its surroundings by capturing and reusing rainwater, and managing stormwater runoff.

There were multiple factors that contributed to its successful implementation.

"The project involved collaboration between multiple stakeholders including the park designers, university staff, and local government officials. This collaborative approach ensured that the park design and management strategies

were tailored to the local context and needs," Liyana said.

"The park was designed to incorporate a range of sponge city features such as permeable pavements, green roofs, rain gardens and wetlands. These features allow rainwater to be captured and stored, and slowly released back into the environment. This helps to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff and prevent flooding in the surrounding area," she added.

Through public engagement strategies, citizens became aware of the importance of sustainable water management and the benefits of sponge city features. Afterwards, its performance is regularly monitored to ensure efficacy, and that the park is delivering its intended benefits.

"In China, for example, the government is expanding its plans for sponge cities after the success of the 30 pilot cities and has set targets to turn 80% of urban spaces into sponges by 2030 and is providing funding to support their implementation," Liyana said.

Another example included Merlbourne's WSUD policy, which aims to integrate green infrastructure into urban planning and development, with guidelines and requirements for new development projects.

Yet another one in Europe, 2020, when the European Union adopted the Biodiversity Strategy for 2030, which includes a target of restoring at least

25,000 km of rivers to a free-flowing state and the implementation of green and blue infrastructure measures in urban areas. The strategy also calls for a plan which focuses on the restoration of degraded ecosystems.

"To overcome the multitude of issues related to stormwater management of a city, a more holistic and multi-disciplinary approach needs to be adopted to ensure that planning and design decisions are made with full understanding of the environmental, social and economic consequences of the decisions," Murali said.

Developers and government authorities must take into consideration land use planning and water cycle management during the planning stage of all developments.

Murali noted that Malaysia needed a comprehensive set of policies and guidelines for land use planning. From transportation systems to utilities and infrastructure, public spaces should have guidelines for state governments and local councils to implement.

"In essence, flood and water management should not be viewed as the responsibility of the Drainage and Irrigation Department alone," he said.

"The various city departments should play an active role in the design of permeable cities to help absorb as much rainfall as possible using artificial and nature-based interventions," he added. 📌

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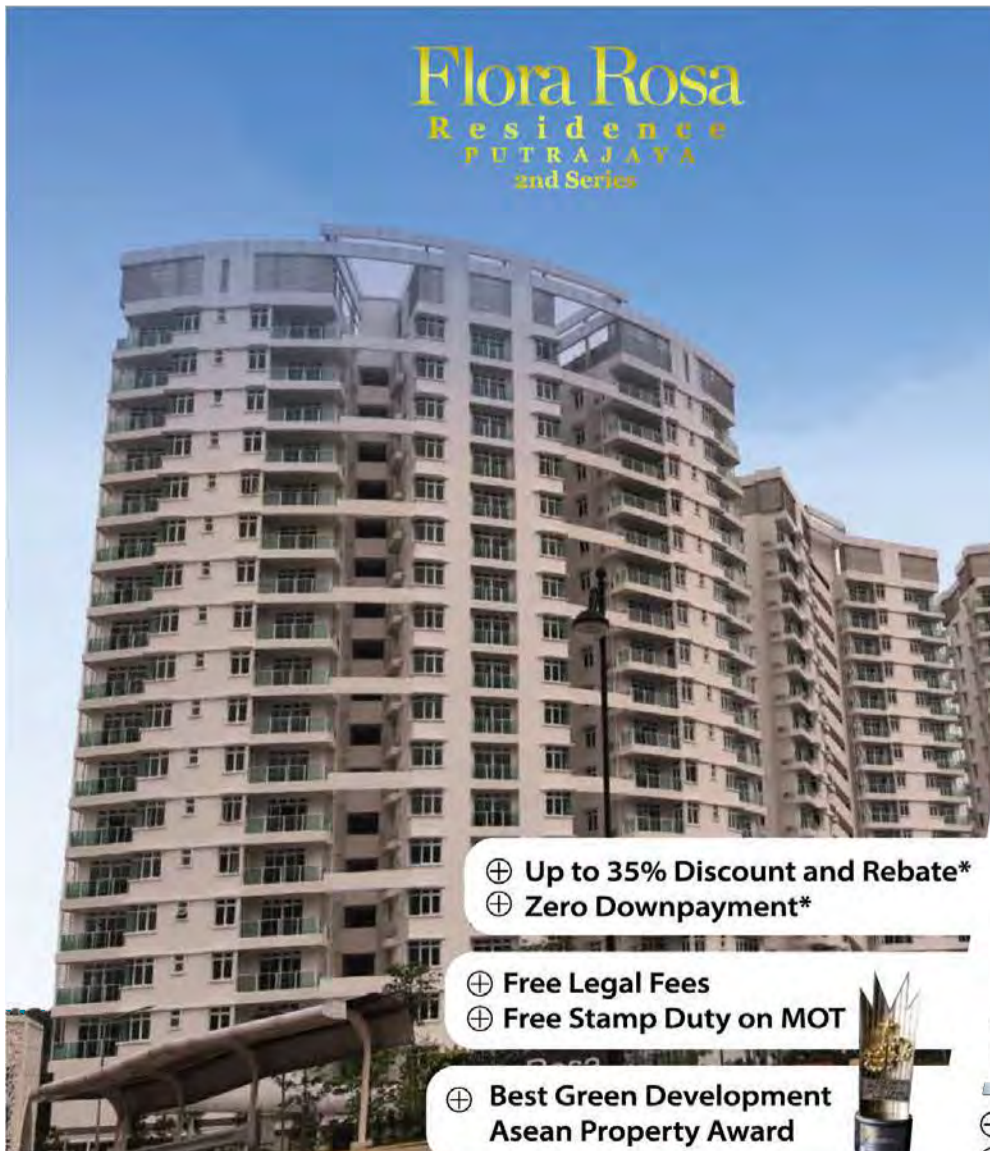
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By JOSEPH WONG  
josephwong@thestar.com.my

THE trials and tribulations experienced in the last few tumultuous years have certainly woken up many governments, organisations and individuals. Add that to the fact that the world population exceeded eight billion people late last year, sustainability has become more than just a buzzword - it has become a matter of survivability.

Considering that the world population was only 2.5 billion in 1950, we have more than tripled that number in less than an average person's life span. This huge growth has an enormous impact on the earth, from housing needs to the feeding of eight billion people.

Making matters worse, the majority of the population resides in cities and most urban areas have developed most of the land where natural biodiversity used to thrive, whether it is to build homes or turn the land to industrial or agricultural purposes. Currently 4.4 billion people reside in cities. Malaysian cities are no exception. Greater Kuala Lumpur, for example, expects to hit the 10 million mark in 2032, from the current 8.62 million. For perspective, the population of Kuala Lumpur in 1950 was 262,000.

While increased human capital and economic growth are benefits of a growing world population, it also makes it more difficult to achieve inclusive and sustainable development in the future. If things continue as they are, we will have exhausted all of the resources and available space on our planet, which is all we have.

Cities contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and utilise close to two-thirds of the world's energy, thus depleting the environment's natural resources.

The loss of biodiversity is mostly attributed to rapid urban growth. Urbanisation caused habitat changes, fragmentation, deterioration of environmental conditions and micro-climatic changes. These effects lowered species variety and population size and ultimately raised the risk of extinction for both flora and fauna. Loss of biodiversity frequently has a domino effect on how an ecosystem functions, affecting things like pollination, pest management and nutrient cycling.

On a brighter note, more and more property developers are toeing the sustainability agenda, playing more actively in their role in becoming a platform where people can experience how sustainability is being applied by the materials used, waste and energy consumption and the use of nature-based solutions.

The experience could encourage people to live sustainably and raise the expectations for others to follow.

In the 2021 Global Sustainability Study, 60% of customers from all continents rated sustainability as an important factor in their purchasing decisions. As more young people enter the housing market as buyers and renters, this trend is anticipated to continue.

Today's purchasers prioritise investing in buying a home in an area that is in sync with nature and where social potential is abundant over location, price, accessibility, and overall, convenience.

### Joining the bandwagon

That more developers are going on the sustainability drive is a good thing. Among them includes Gamuda Land with its Gamuda Cove project in the Kuala Langat district.

The project, which resides next to the 1,111-acre Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands, will now house a Wetlands Arboretum along with many other sustainable aspects, to ensure that the wetlands continue to thrive.



# A much-needed sustainable balance

Making efforts to retain biodiversity for the future generations

Gamuda Land has taken the initiative to undertake a wetlands arboretum project to educate Gamuda Cove's residents and visitors and foster a greater appreciation for the wetlands as well as the peat swamp forest, said Universiti Malaya (UM) Faculty of Science's Institute of Biological Sciences senior lecturer Yong Kien Thai.

He said the project undertaken exceeds that of an arboretum as there were many aspects added to the project. "An arboretum is a collection of trees while a wetland arboretum is more like a wetland garden or water garden," he explained, pointing out that the buffer areas between the Gamuda Cove development and the peat swamp forest are planted with native trees (See page 3).

"As long as they do not interfere with the peat swamp forest which might affect the pH (potential hydrogen) levels, the environment should not degrade further," he said, pointing out that even before Gamuda Land came into the picture, the peat swamp forest had already been degraded.

"These peat swamp forests are important as they lock in carbon due to their low pH levels. If these forests are destroyed or developed over, the carbon will be released

adding to the carbon levels in the environment and speeding up climate change," he said.

### Keeping with demands

Thankfully, other property developers are treading down the same paths as they develop more townships to keep up with housing demands. Maintaining biodiversity is important for a healthy ecosystem for the community, and thus a key area of focus in UEM Sunrise Bhd's sustainability agenda, said its chief executive officer Sufian Abdullah.

"We understand the impact that our developments can affect local ecosystems and are committed to mitigating any adverse effects. Through sustainable land use and development practices and preserving natural habitats, we aspire to promote the long-term health and sustainability of local ecosystems, especially in the areas we operate in.

"Maintaining biodiversity is part of our grander ESG goals, covering not only the environment but also social and governance aspects of maintaining and spreading awareness of it," he said.

"Our designers, engineers and other professionals will use the SDDG (Sustainable Development Design Guidelines) as a

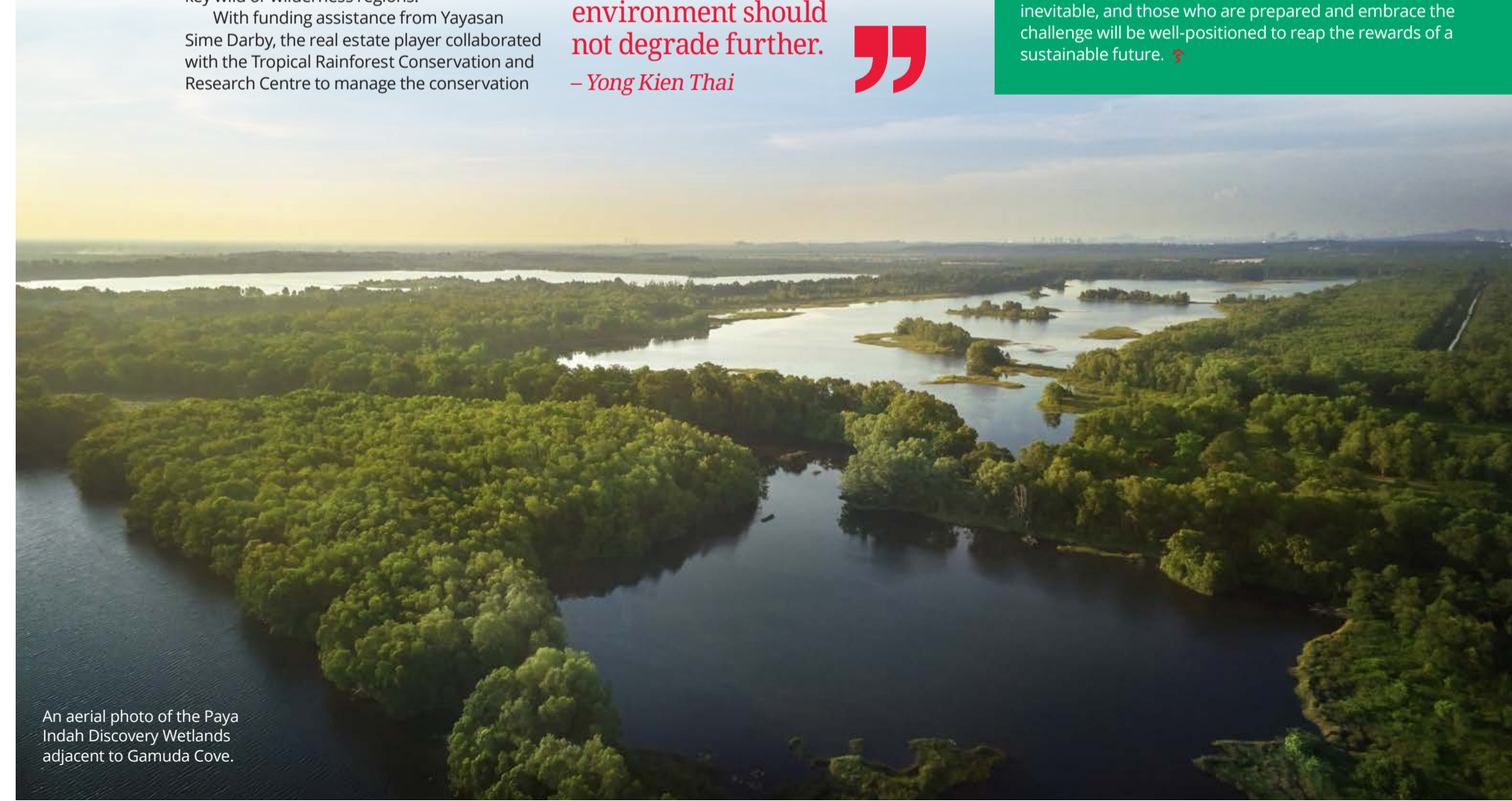
reference guide to ensure that our designs are socially responsible. We actively promote biodiversity preservation, with involvement in the SIREH Park project, where we target to plant 25,000 trees to help sequester 300,000 kg of carbon dioxide per year.

"We also planted 1,738 trees in SIREH Park and have collaborated with government agencies, NGOs and corporations in tree-planting activities. We also promote green spaces in urban areas and have planted 316 trees in the Kiara Bay development in 2022. On the social front, we also raise awareness of biodiversity to our communities and customers through community engagements," he said.

On the same bandwagon, Eco World Development Group Bhd (EcoWorld) have also dipped their feet into the biodiversity waters. Their Eco Grandeur township is located in the Asian-Australasian Flyway, which is of global significance for avian biodiversity as a substantial population of migratory birds use the flyway corridor to escape winter.

"In 2017, we began working closely with an academic and environmental researcher to develop a Biodiversity Master Plan to ensure the migration pathway is not disrupted. The master plan was later expanded to also

(ABOVE) The preservation and sustainability of biodiversity in property developments is growing in importance.  
- MOHD SAMSI SUMAIRI/The Star



An aerial photo of the Paya Indah Discovery Wetlands adjacent to Gamuda Cove.

## The quest to achieve net zero emissions

The global push towards achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions has gained momentum in recent years, with an increasing number of countries announcing their pledges to achieve this goal. Malaysia has also joined this movement and has pledged to become a net zero greenhouse gas emissions nation by 2050 at the latest. To achieve this, the Malaysian government has set a target to reduce carbon intensity by 45% by 2030, compared to the levels of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2005.

As part of its efforts to prepare for the global energy transition, the government has been proactive in introducing forward-thinking policies. One such policy is the National Energy Policy 2022-2040 (DTP 2040), which was introduced on September 19, 2022. DTP 2040 aims to achieve the Low-Carbon Nation Aspiration by increasing the proportion of clean and sustainable sources in the country's primary energy mix. This presents opportunities for both the public and commercial sectors to explore new growth in low-carbon paths.

The policy recognises the vital role that energy plays in driving socioeconomic development in Malaysia's key industries. The move towards net zero has the potential to create new opportunities for economic growth and job creation, provide dependable and affordable energy, and maximise the value of the country's domestic oil and gas resources. The policy also serves as a guide for industry participants and decision-makers to strike a balance between sustainability, affordability, and energy security.

However, experts warn that the pledges made by governments to date, even if fully achieved, are not enough to bring global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions to net zero by 2050. This means the world may not be able to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5 °C, which is essential to mitigating the worst effects of climate change.

Therefore, it is crucial for governments and stakeholders to accelerate their efforts and work together towards achieving net zero emissions as soon as possible. This will require strong leadership, collaboration, and investment in research and development to identify new and innovative solutions. The transition to a low-carbon economy is inevitable, and those who are prepared and embrace the challenge will be well-positioned to reap the rewards of a sustainable future. 



"These peat swamp forests are important as they lock in carbon," said Yong.



Work on BER is currently underway and is expected to be opened in stages, said Liew.



"Maintaining biodiversity is part of our grander ESG goals," said Sufian.

include the creation of a network of terrestrial and aquatic Biodiversity Education Ribbons (BER) at various localities within the township.

"Apart from contributing towards the enrichment and preservation of native biodiversity, BER can serve as open classrooms to create awareness and educate residents and visitors to Eco Grandeur on the importance of biodiversity conservation. It will also offer a 2km experiential learning opportunity with walking trails amidst nature," said EcoWorld deputy chief executive officer Liew Tian Xiong.

Work on BER is currently underway and is expected to be opened in stages this year, he said. "Right now, nature lovers and the local community can find out more about it by visiting the Green Wall at the EcoWorld Gallery @ Eco Grandeur or the 62-acre Dragonfly Park at the township," he added.

Sime Darby Property is also successful in the biodiversity area by anticipating customer trends and taking feedback into account when making decisions about its operations for its City of Elmina.

The 6,500-acre township is the focal point of the property developer's greatest rewilding initiatives, which aim to conserve biodiversity and restore ecosystem health by preserving key wild or wilderness regions.

With funding assistance from Yayasan Sime Darby, the real estate player collaborated with the Tropical Rainforest Conservation and Research Centre to manage the conservation

initiatives at the Elmina Rainforest Knowledge Centre.

Sime Darby Property can have a consistent supply of native forest trees for planting in its townships thanks to the ERKC and its adjoining Elmina Living Collection Nursery, as well as allowing outside parties to carry out forestry initiatives.

A total of 210,000 trees, of which 10% will consist of trees that are assessed as endangered, rare and threatened by the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species, are expected to be planted throughout the City of Elmina by 2040. Almost 50,000 trees have already been planted in the municipality, 6,579 of which have outstanding conservation potential.

With property developments such as these, the biodiversity in many places may continue to thrive alongside growing townships.

**"As long as they do not interfere with the peat swamp forest which might affect the pH (potential hydrogen) levels, the environment should not degrade further."**

- Yong Kien Thai

# J.Satine SOHO crafts contemporary chic for urban dwellers

Experience unparalleled versatility with these work-home spaces

**W**HEN it comes to urban living, the modern emphasis on flexibility makes traditional accommodation feel old-fashioned and uninspiring. Especially in the age of work-from-home, urbanites are looking for a living space that is not only conducive to work but also creates a warm and welcoming living space for its residents.

In the midst of this cultural shift, Gandingan Jakel is stepping up to provide the best of both worlds. Its new development, J.Satine SOHO, aims to provide balance to achieve a fresh, restorative residence through passive environmental design and masterful accessibility, for both investors and those looking for personal use.

At a J.Satine SOHO unit, residents can step out of their shoes and into urban practicality. Further complemented by its prime location in Setapak, Kuala Lumpur, J.Satine SOHO has a gross development value of RM234mil with a starting price of RM328,000.

Essential to the vibrant and bustling routine of its surrounding neighbourhood in Kuala Lumpur, the development places a unique emphasis on the rental potential of its project, with lifestyle features that provide its residents a reinvigorating change from the traditional apartment concept.

## Versatile and open

The unit offers a stylish, compact solution to the work-life balance by creating a space perfectly tailored to your needs. With the goal of ultimate versatility, investors will find a wide range of rental potential for these units, whether for entrepreneurs, small business, freelance at a much lower cost than the traditional office.

Comprising a total of 661 units, with a range of available layouts, its built-up area ranges from 546 sq ft to 966 sq ft. Its flexibility minimizes the investment risk of owning a J.Satine SOHO unit, whether for the short or long term. Those interested in personal use will delight in the range of options, from a compact home, an office or both.

Even with today's emphasis on



wellness, an active lifestyle can be difficult to achieve in the city. In both the units and the communal spaces, the development excels in cultivating a healthy environment.

Destress with a shopping experience in close proximity to the unit, or make use of J.Satine SOHO's many lifestyle facilities, including the swimming pool, pool deck and BBQ area. Meticulously designed to foster personal health and development, these open spaces are ideal for keeping up-to-date with friends and neighbours. The outdoor fitness area and sky garden provide venues for tranquillity and comfort while safeguarding the health and wellness of its residents.

Of course, no development would be complete without a security system for the safety and peace of mind of its residents. J.Satine SOHO is equipped with a multi-tier security system, consisting

of an RFID system, car plate recognition system, closed-circuit television (CCTV) surveillance, guard patrol and emergency assistance system. There will also be extra precautions with the lift lobby access control and lift level access control, allowing residents to have full privacy while having access to retail outlets on the ground floor below.

## Smart home technology

Leveraging on the innovative strides in home technology, J.Satine SOHO goes beyond just its security system, providing a holistic approach to security with its JaGaApp. The app provides residents with greater freedom in the way it manages everyday interactions as a smart community. From visitors to unit management, JaGaApp allows residents to book facilities, pay maintenance and more.

## (ABOVE)

J.Satine SOHO offers urbanites a chance to live in the much-coveted Setapak address.

Its strategic location in the centre of Kuala Lumpur creates excellent connectivity for its residents, who are perfectly situated to access the nearby central business districts and commercial hubs. Whether through its links to the city, or the abundance of public transport options. Benefit from seamless convenience with connections such as LRT Wangsa Maju, LRT Sri Rampai and LRT Taman Melati. Surrounded by a mature neighbourhood, commercial outlets such as Setapak Central Mall, Giant Hypermarket Setapak and Wangsa Walk are all within close proximity.

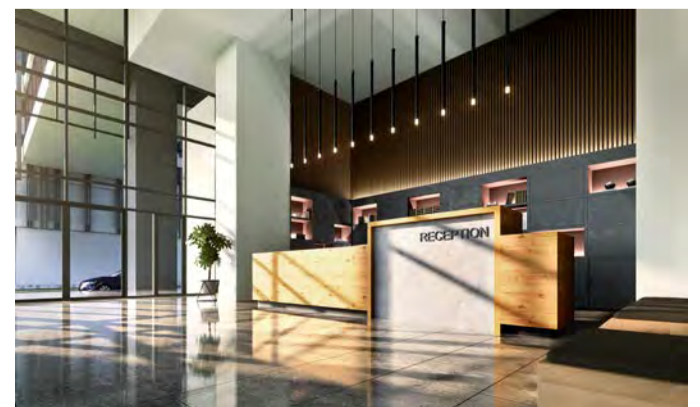
J.Satine SOHO exemplifies urban living with its accessibility of work and lifestyle. The development is slated for completion in October 2027. For more information, visit <https://www.jsatine.com.my/j-satine-soho/>.



Ideal for a chic, modern lifestyle, the apartment comprises a total of 661 units



These open facilities are ideal for cultivating an active lifestyle.



The development goes beyond typical security with a smart app.

# J.Satine SOHO



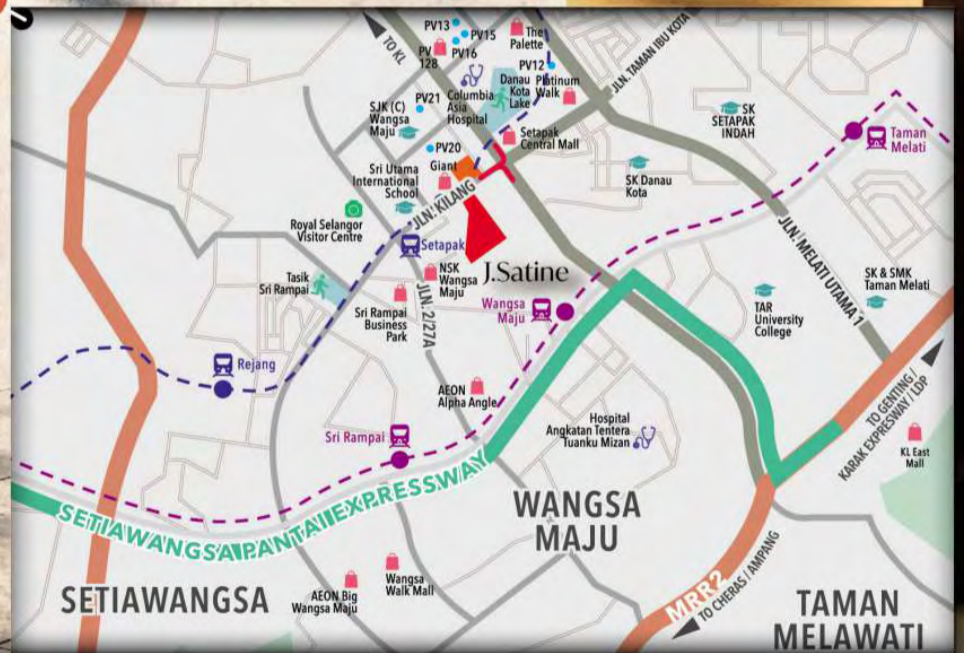
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# Slow progress in construction safety despite guidelines

All stakeholders must be held accountable for progress to be made, expert says

By LIEW JIA YI (YANIKA)  
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**T**HE construction industry has long been known as one of Malaysia's largest industries, acting as one of the country's top three major economic sectors. On the flip side, it is unfortunately also known as the sector consistently leading in occupational fatalities.

The sector has generally remained number one when it comes to occupational fatalities, with analysis from the DOSH noting that this had remained a long-term stable trend over the past decade.

"A variety of up-to-date training programmes, guides, coaching, and supervision on high-risk activities are made available to the construction industry," Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) president Oliver HC Wee said.

"However, training alone may not be sufficient as strict compliance and effective communication are also necessary to ensure that workers understand the instructions given to them such as the Dos and Don'ts at the construction site," he added.

"Enhancing awareness and safety culture is also crucial in promoting safety in the construction industry. Safety culture is driven by stakeholders and everyone, and they must have the initiative to impart such culture at the construction site. A top-down approach is a must in ensuring safety is prioritised in all construction development and projects.

"Besides that, safety should also be incorporated as the core value of a company's branding strategy. By making safety a top priority, construction companies would not only be able to improve safety conditions for construction workers but also uphold their reputation in the construction industry," he said.

## Designing for safety

While Wee considered the current regulations for safety in the construction industry to be sufficient, he noted that it was the approach and compliance to such regulations and acts that needed to be enforced.

"Trainers should ensure that all information and knowledge is well delivered to the participants and that the employer should evaluate the employees on the application of the training to ensure that the training is effective and suitable," Wee said.

"On-the-job training should also be encouraged, where toolbox talks and pre-task briefings are conducted before the undertaking of any work in the construction site as well as the close supervision on high-risk activities," he added.

When it comes to Malaysia's construction sector, much of the onus



A construction worker with safety equipment to prevent falling from height at construction site.

is placed on the workers themselves to learn and create a safe environment. External factors such as their managers, the site itself and equipment are seldom taken into consideration.

However, the construction of projects can be designed to be safer from the outset. Safe by design is the process of integrating safety measures early into the design of the project, including facilities, equipment, materials, layout, and more. A safe design incorporates not just the safety of the intended customer base, but also those who work on it such as construction staff.

Designers, referring to architects and consulting engineers, are required to comply with their OSH duties by advising their clients on the importance of incorporating safety and health features in the project not only at the design stage but also during the construction stage, OSH Dynamics managing director Wan Hock Leong said.

These measures could include building designs that take into account the position of electric lines and designing components that can be assembled off-site to reduce working from a height.

"In my opinion, more attention should be directed to the following stakeholders to enhance safety and health compliance, enforcement, monitoring and performance in the construction sector," Wan said.

He pointed out that many clients leave the safety of projects to the main contractors even though the Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health In Construction Industry (Management) 2017 requires the client to make suitable

arrangements for managing the project's safety and health legal requirements.

"Since this is not complied with earnestly, the responsible authority should make clients accountable by enforcing the guidelines strictly. Construction industry associations should also actively promote occupational safety and health (OSH) compliance by their members," Wan said.

"Though OSH compliance is mandatory, numerous main and sub-contractors execute their construction projects with inadequate safety and health planning, implementation, inspections, supervision, training and commitment," he added.

## Adhering to guidelines

Wan noted that construction project managers should be required to attend at least a two days OSH course outlining their duties and responsibilities. It should also be mandatory for every construction site supervisor to attend OSH training once every year. As the immediate superior, the site supervisor can play a very significant role in monitoring its compliance by workers.

The project manager should ensure that Safe Work Method Statements are prepared for all scopes of work and that workers are to be instructed to execute their tasks following proper work procedures.

"Within the last 25 years, DOSH had introduced many new OSH Regulations and Guidelines to cater for the challenges brought about by Malaysia's growing economy. A number of fatalities

**"Enhancing awareness and safety culture is also crucial in promoting safety in the construction industry."**

– Oliver HC Wee



It is important for heavier penalties to be imposed on those that have been convicted of OSH offences, Wan said.

involving workers and the general public however were recorded. In my opinion, it is important for heavier penalties to be imposed on those that have been convicted of OSH offences," Wan said.

"This alone can trigger a change in mindsets that it is important for employees to work in a safe and healthy environment,"

With consistent fatality numbers across the years, Wan called for stricter punishment by the Construction Industry Development Corporation (CIDB), wherein those convicted for a safety offence, especially involving a fatality, should be penalised and blacklisted, including the downgrading of their grade. ↗

Year	Construction	Overall Sector	Percentage
2018	118	260	45%
2019	84	259	32%
2020	66	213	30%
2021	65	174	37%
2022	59	186	31%

Source: DOSH. Fatalities in reported occupational accidents



# Hunting against time

Three years after first MCO, house buyers still looking for pandemic bargains

By YIP WAI FONG  
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**W**HILE the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020 – 2021 was a dark period for the real estate sector, some certainly saw a glow in the darkness. Plunging demands cracked open a rare buyers' market for those who have deeper pockets than others to net choice properties at steep discounts.

But home hunters should be wary that times are again changing, with the price of homes shifting back towards pre-pandemic levels.

"Bungalows at the Tropicana area with land sizes of 8,000 sq ft – 10,000 sq ft and built-ups of 6,000 sq ft – 8,000 sq ft were being sold at RM3.5 to RM4.5 million during those days. Similar properties were transacted in 2019 for close to RM6 million," explained Gather Properties team manager Vincent Liaw.

"Today, prices have recovered to about RM5.5 million. We are still receiving a good number of enquiries but transaction is certainly not as strong as in the past," he added.

Liaw, who specialises in the secondary market of Tropicana Golf and Resort and its surrounding area, including Ara Damansara and Kota Damansara, said buyers are mostly owner-occupiers who wish to have more spacious homes after experiencing several rounds of Movement Control Orders (MCO). The secondary market is almost the default market for landed properties in Liaw's coverage area since there has not been any new launch.

"Sellers, on the other hand, were either those who needed to unlock the

value of their properties for cashflow, or retirees who wanted to downsize to high-rise homes nearby. The market was such that we had buyers as young as 30s or 40s, for the bungalows," said Liaw.

Liaw added that terrace houses remained the most demanded type of property even to this day. With prices recovering and renovation costs soaring, deals have slowed compared to 2020 – 2021.

"The asking price for terrace houses in Ara Damansara during 2020 – 2021 used to be in the RM700,000 – RM900,000 range. Now it has recovered to RM1 – RM1.2 million," he explained.

## HOC a jolt for primary market

With the Home Ownership Campaign (HOC) in force from 2020 to 2021, bargain hunters at the primary market were akin to being handed their wish list with all the items checked. They were entitled to either full or partial stamp duty exemptions, house price discounts and other developer offers on top of the HOC. However, the HOC applied to primary market buyers only.

"It was a great boost for the market during the trying period," said Forward Realty senior project director Cindy Lee, who specialises in new projects at Bangsar, Bangsar South and Damansara Heights.

Similar to Liaw, who covers affluent areas, Lee's buyers also were looking for spacious homes albeit for high-rise developments and have continued to be so.

"Most of them are owner-occupiers and want three bedrooms or more. So

the homes would be at least 1,200 sq ft," she said. "Many of the buyers are upgraders, with a mixture of small or bigger families."

"Homes that offer more resort-like facilities or design or have more green area or green landscape also tend to attract more interest and enquiries," she noted.

Lee expressed hope for a campaign similar to HOC to drive sales this year. "2023 is not picking up yet in terms of transactions, compared to last year. We are hoping that it will be in the second half of the year. We hope that there will be a campaign like the HOC," she said.

Firdaus & Associates group manager Hafezul Latif concurred with Lee about HOC being an effective incentive for house buyers to make the purchase decision during 2020 – 2021. Specialising in various government affordable homes schemes as well as the sub-sale market in Klang Valley, he said inventories that moved quickly during the period were priced at RM300,000 and below.

"After 2020 – 2021, prospective buyers are enquiring about homes priced at RM300,000 to RM400,000. They expect the net price to be at RM250,000 to RM350,000 so that they can have zero-down payment," he said.

"Buyers will try to get the best for

**"Right now, buyers are still monitoring the market and waiting to see whether the government will announce an initiative to help property hunters.**

– Hafezul

pricing, locations and sizing among the affordable schemes. For example, Rumahwip units are preferred for being located closer to the city centre, in areas such as Cheras, Bandar Sri Permaisuri and Sentul. PR1MA homes, although not as near, are popular because the units are both spacious and affordable," he added.

"Buyers are young families or singles who have plans to get married not long after. Many of them prefer a co-working space in their development's facility list," he pointed out.

## Buyers holding back

"Right now, buyers are still monitoring the market and waiting to see whether the government will announce an initiative to help property hunters," Hafezul said. "I'm also worried about the impact of the discontinuation of the My First Home Scheme (on April 1) and the latest hike in OPR (announced on May 3) on the market."

With prices and other factors continuing to normalise to pre-pandemic level, Liaw said he is doing more to educate his prospective buyers to seal the deal before it is too late.

"I'm telling them, if you don't act soon, the prices will keep rising," Liaw said. "But some prospects are still asking for lower prices from sellers. They are still looking for deals that were found during the pandemic times."

However, now that these buyers found themselves being governed by a new administration that prioritises inflation fighting, it is likely that their window for bargain hunting will close soon. 🏠

# Puteri Ariana a modern nest in a connected township

New homes by PKNS to be the ideal life-long residence

A new series of family homes by the Selangor State Development Corporation (PKNS) offers house buyers, especially young families, the opportunity to own a contemporary home in a quietly rising township. The series, Puteri Ariana, comprises 72 units of double-storey terrace homes at Kota Puteri, a township envisioned to become a nurturing enclave for harmonious families.

The homes, with land sizes of 20 ft x 70 ft and 22 ft x 75 ft, come with four bedrooms and three bathrooms and are designed with the aspiration of young families, looking for a homely nest with just the right amount of space for easy maintenance and functionality for raising their children.

As the built-up range from 1,979 sq ft to 2,258 sq ft, all bedrooms are spacious enough to fit at least a queen size bed and a double-panelled wardrobe. The kitchen is also sufficiently sized to accommodate family cooking and baking, and is thoughtfully allocated at the back of the house for good ventilation. On the first floor, a family area is available which can be turned into a multi-purpose area as a study or children's play zone.

The comfort factor is ingrained in the units' passive design, where window design and placements and the pitched roof optimise natural lighting and ventilation. Coupled with the open plan concept for the units' living, dining and kitchen space, one immediately senses a roomy and well-planned home upon entering the unit. In addition, a balcony is available for the master bedroom for an added sense of openness and quiet enjoyment.

Puteri Ariana, occupying 39.5 acres of the township, is also situated nearest to the township's lake, allowing residents easy access to the relaxing landscape. The township at the northern Klang Valley is accessible via the Latar Expressway, Guthrie Corridor Expressway and Jalan Kuala Selangor, with the nearest exit at



The homes maximise space for both comfort and practical functions.



the Ijok Tol Plaza. It is located in the neighbourhood of other mature towns such as Rawang, Puncak Alam and Bestari Jaya. Future planning for this up-and-coming township includes an industrial park and more schools in addition to its current amenities such

as a primary school, police station, grocery shop, eateries and the Selangor University at Bestari Jaya.

The leasehold development is attractively priced from RM590,000 and is open for sale. Early birds can take advantage of attractive packages

**The attractive offers, thoughtful design and a highly connected location surrounded by several mature neighbourhoods make Puteri Ariana a strategic choice for both own use and investment.**

**(LEFT)**  
The units are designed to suit young and growing families.

including the developer's offer to bear the Sales and Purchase Agreement legal fees and the Memorandum of Transfer and other special packages.

The attractive offers, thoughtful design and a highly connected location surrounded by several mature neighbourhoods make Puteri Ariana a strategic choice for both own use and investment. For more information, visit <https://pknsputeriariana.com/> and <https://www.pkns.gov.my/>.

Note:  
Pictures are artist's impression only



The open plan concept in Puteri Ariana allows a sense of spaciousness.



The family area on the first floor is a multi-purpose area that can be made into a study or a private relaxation space.

# PUTERI • Ariana

## 2-Storey Link House

### The Definition of Tropical Urban Living

Have a dream home with a tropical modern design concept. With spacious and comfortable spaces and easy access to major highways, Puteri Ariana promises the best experience for you and your family.



4 Bedrooms,  
3 Bathrooms



Open Space  
Concept



Modern Tropical  
Design



Easy Access via  
Major Highways

Within the township of:

**KOTA PUTERI**  
CROWN CITY

\*Artist impression only

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Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor  
PKNS OFFICIAL



Perbadanan Kemajuan Negeri Selangor

Bahagian Jualan Hartanah, Tingkat 3, Blok B, No.2, Jalan Indah 14/8, Seksyen 14, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Developer's Licence No: 9062/11-2023/0780(A). Validity Period: 04.11.2021 - 03.11.2023. Sales & Advertising Permit No: 9062-121/04-2025/0403(N)-(L). Validity Period: 05/04/2023 - 04/04/2025. Approving Authority: Majlis Perbandaran Selangor. Ref. No: Bil (12) dlm. MPS.3/2-1371/455 (OSC) PB (A) F4C. Tenure of Land: Leasehold 84 years expiring on 14 September 2104. Land Encumbrance: Nil. Expected Date of Completion: December 2025. Type: 2-Storey Link House. No of Units: 24 units (20' x 70'). Price Min: RM649,000. Max: RM822,800. No of Units: 48 units (22' x 75') Price Min: RM738,100. Max: RM838,200. Restriction in Interest: Alienated land cannot be exchanged, leased, or mortgaged except with the permission of the state authorities.

THIS ADVERTISEMENT HAS BEEN APPROVED BY THE NATIONAL HOUSING DEPARTMENT.



Contributed by DATUK CHANG KIM LOONG

**B**OTH the Tenth and Eleventh Malaysia Plan (MP) have stated that housing development will focus on the provision of adequate housing as well as ensuring a safe, healthy and harmonious living environment equipped with complete public amenities and quality recreational facilities.

A National Housing Policy (NHP) was then drafted and launched in the year 2018 to provide the direction and basis for the planning and development of the housing sector by all relevant ministries, departments and agencies at the federal, state and local levels as well as the private sector.

To ensure that the housing sector will achieve the desired development and positively contribute to continuous economic growth, the NHP is expected to be able to solve the problems and challenges pertaining to the quality of construction, the issue of abandoned housing projects, affordability to own or rent houses via an effective distribution system in the people's housing programme.

To fulfil these needs, factors such as affordability of the buyers, development cost and selling price persistently influence the supply and demand in the housing sector.

Based on the current situation, housing development is concentrated in urban and suburban areas, where the purchasing power is higher and the market is extensive. To address the current housing needs, both the government and the private sector must play their respective roles to fulfil their social obligations, especially to the low-income (B40) and middle-income groups (M40).

The then Ministry of Housing and Local Government, now renamed Ministry of Local Government Development (KPKT), has been monitoring the implementation of housing development projects by the private sector and enforcing the Housing Development Act (Control and Licensing) 1966 [Act 118] and its Regulations to ensure housing projects are implemented according to the schedule and completed within the stipulated timeframe.

KPKT has also been taking steps to revive abandoned projects through the Special Task Force for Revival of Abandoned Housing Projects (STF). The STF focuses on efforts in reviving abandoned housing projects, solidifying the legal aspects and ensuring more effective enforcement, as well as establishing the direction and policy of the housing industry.

# Is the blueprint on track?

## Issues and challenges surround the National Housing Policy aka Dasar Perumahan Negara (2018 – 2025)



### Issues and challenges

To ensure that the housing sector achieves healthy development and continuously contributes positively to the nation's economic growth, various issues and challenges related to the housing sector need to be effectively addressed.

- Among the issues identified are:
- Quality of the houses built.
- Abandoned housing projects.
- Affordability and accessibility of the people to own or rent houses.
- Demand exceeding supply for low-cost and medium-cost houses.
- Construction of Affordable Public Housing (APH) at non-strategic

locations.

- Distribution of APH.

Although most houses built have met the minimum quality requirements set, there are still developments which have not met the standard requirements and that leads to low-quality construction. The use of low-quality construction materials and lack of skilled workers also contribute to the low quality of houses built. Low usage of state-of-the-art technology in construction and high dependency on unskilled and cheap foreign manpower also contribute to the decline in the quality of houses.

Before a housing project commences, it has to go through the application and approval processes at the land office and the local authority. KPKT is responsible for the issuance of housing development licences and advertisement and sale permits after the development order and building plans are approved by the local authority. If there is a glitch in any of the processes, the whole system or development process would be disrupted and the project would not start on time.



Datuk Chang Kim Loong is the honorary secretary-general of the National House Buyers Association (HBA), a non-governmental, not-for-profit organisation manned by volunteers.

### Weaknesses in control, monitoring and enforcement

There are various laws which apply to housing development. Amongst them are the National Land Code 1965 (KTN), Housing Development Act (Control and Licensing) 1966 [Act 118], Local Government Act 1976 [Act 171], Town and Country Planning Act 1976 [Act 172], Street, Drainage and Building Act 1974 [Act 133] and a host of other state regulations and land laws. The need to abide by these legal aspects and regulations is vital to be understood and complied with to ensure housing projects are implemented based on the issued approvals. However, there are still weaknesses in the control, implementation and enforcement of these laws.

In building APH, there are several agencies and bodies involved such as PR1MA Corporation Malaysia, Syarikat Perumahan Negara Bhd (SPNB), statutory bodies and State Economic Development Corporations (SEDC). Coordination amongst these agencies is needed so that the construction and distribution of these houses can be executed in a more orderly, systematic and just manner in each state. In this regard, the NHP proposes that the role and collaboration among agencies and related bodies are further strengthened.

The implementation of the NHP Action Plan (2018-2025) will involve various ministries, departments, agencies and the private sector responsible for various aspects of the housing sector as a whole. The main agencies (lead agencies) and implementing agencies for each action and implementation period have also been identified. The implementation period set out under the NHP Action Plan (2018-2025) is as follows:

Estimated time of execution	Year
Short-Term plan	2018-2020
Middle-Term Plan	2021-2023
Long-Term Plan	2024-2025

One of the five policy statements that was outlined was NHP 3.3: Encouraging the BTS concept in the housing provision system whereupon a timeline was formulated for year 2019 (transition from Sell Then Build (STB) to BTS 10:90 concept) and year 2023 (transition from STB to absolute BTS ie 0:100 concept). However, it appears that the timeline imposed in the blueprint of the NHP has not been adhered to.

### Bad apples

Abandoned housing projects in the country continue to be a dampener to the hopes of many house buyers and their families from realising their dream of being owners of their own homes. Its continued presence remains a thorn in the housing industry that does not bode well for the well-being of the affected house buyers; neither the lack of and lax enforcement program by KPKT nor the reputation of the errant developers.

Although the majority of developers have fulfilled their delivery promises to



(LEFT) One of the issues is the usage of low-quality construction materials which contribute to the low quality of homes built.



# MDA 2023 now open for submissions

Newly introduced Joint Development Awards added to Special Awards



Scan for more information

**T**HE Malaysia Developer Awards 2023, one of the most prestigious property awards in the country, is now open for submissions from property developers across Malaysia. This event is a celebration of excellence and innovation in the property industry, recognising outstanding achievements and contributions to the development of Malaysia's built environment.

The Malaysia Developer Awards (MDA), organised by Star Media Group and FIABCI-Malaysia, is open for the Special Awards categories, namely International Awards, Joint Development Awards, Rising Star Awards and Transformation Awards. Developers, large or small, who have contributed to the property industry in Malaysia through their exceptional projects, designs and innovations may be eligible with their respective developments.

This year sees the introduction of the new Joint Development Awards. This category is for developers who have joined forces and expertise to leverage on each other's capabilities to develop at least one property. In the normal circumstance, 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.

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 transformation projects from the rescuing of abandoned projects to the rejuvenating of old and dilapidated buildings or converting of 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. The MDA 2023 submission kit can be downloaded from the Malaysia Developer Awards website.

The entries will be judged via a panel comprising industry leaders and professionals. With the submission process now open, developers are encouraged to showcase their innovative and exceptional projects and designs, and to compete for the prestigious awards.

Meanwhile, for the Top-of-the-Charts Awards, the invitations to the eligible property developers will be sent as of June 1, 2023. Divided into two categories, namely for companies with a market capitalisation of RM1 bil and above

and for companies with a market capitalisation below RM1 bil.

This year's criteria have also undergone some tweaking to streamline and strengthen the assessment process. The quantitative attributes will now hold a weightage of 50% against last year's 70% while the qualitative attributes, which are also valued at 50%, have given more weight towards the environmental, social and governance (ESG) attribute with the addition of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) and carbon-free footprint aspects. ↗



## > FROM PAGE 18

house buyers, there are still some bad apples that have reneged on their end of the bargain when they abandoned projects.

Besides causing a dilapidated environment, abandoned projects also cause unnecessary hardships to many people as they need to continue with their monthly bank instalments for their housing loans, and in many cases, unless the projects are successfully revived, there will be no end in sight as to how long they have to bear their ordeal. Some victims of abandoned housing projects have to suffer in silence for more than 22 years.

The National House Buyers Association (HBA) had previously urged the government to make good the implementation of the Build-Then-Sell (BTS) 10:90 system as the industry's housing delivery model from 2015 as was recorded in the Parliament Hansard. HBA has previously urged the government not to deviate from the original roadmap to implement the BTS 10:90 system put in place under the Housing Development (Control and Licensing) Act and Regulations. The laws have been amended to adopt the BTS 10:90 model since 2012 with the introduction of Schedule I and Schedule J sales and purchase agreements.

Under the BTS 10:90 system, house buyers only need to fork out the initial down payment of 10% when buying a house and do not need to make any further payment until the vacant possession of the property is delivered to them. As such, the servicing of the

end-financing loans does not kick in until the houses are completed with all the certifications obtained and keys with vacant possession are presented to the buyers.

The government's abandoned project revival efforts do not seem to be able to match or counterbalance the fresh problematic projects that have been labelled as sick or delayed that continue to recur to add to the statistics of abandonment.

The BTS 10:90 is a far safer mode of home delivery system and the government should without further delay, compel the housing industry to adopt the system as we believe it will drastically if not totally eliminate cases of housing projects being abandoned.

This is precisely why the government is encouraging it and offering incentives to developers who opt to adopt this mode of selling their products. But it fell short of compelling the industry to adopt this BTS 10:90 concept concurrently.

HBA now urges the current government to make BTS 10:90 mandatory for all new housing projects to safeguard the interest of the people and to eliminate the scourge of abandoned housing projects.

### Phase-In period

The government could consider a gradual phase-in period, to avoid a big paradigm shift in the housing market, after taking into consideration of the time freeze and drawbacks during the



Coronavirus-19 pandemic. HBA suggests:

- By 2023 - BTS 10:90 mandatory for the affordable housing category
- By 2025 - mandatory 50% BTS 10:90 concept to be adopted for all housing developments
- By 2027 - all housing developments mandatorily adopt the BTS 10:90

Even though the Twelfth Malaysia Plan (2021 - 2025) has been launched with the slogan A Prosperous, Inclusive, Sustainable Malaysia and the papers reiterated the same aspirations and vision vis-à-vis the housing aspect,

the question remains: Has there been a marked difference towards improvement?

We wait for the government to take the bull by the horns and lead the country forward vis-à-vis eradicating abandonment of housing projects and saving people's life and hardship. Lest the government may have forgotten the NHP, the National House Buyers Association feels that many things are often forgotten and distracted. Hence, this is our best way to document them for posterity. ↗



# MIDA

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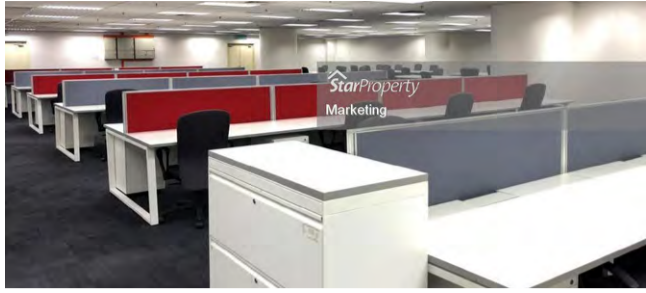


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**Wisma Hamzah Kwong Hing, Pudu**  
**RM 65,359 per month (For rent)**

- Office
- N/A
- 9,337 sq ft
- Fully Furnished
- N/A
- N/A

**Marketing KHG**  
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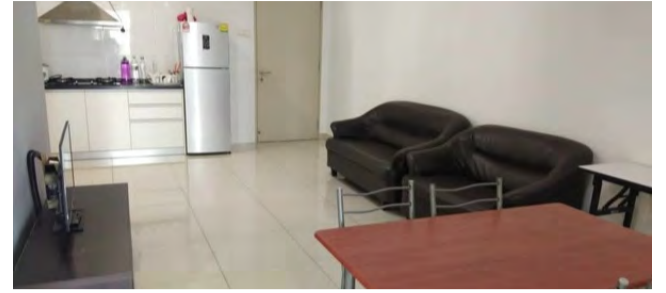


**KL Gateway Premium Residences, KL**  
**RM1,180,000 (For sale)**

- Service Residence
- 3 Bedroom
- 1 Carpark
- 1347 sq ft
- 3 Bathroom

**Joanne Than**  
 +6016 6268226  
 HARTAMAS REAL ESTATE (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD. E(1)1439

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**The Regina, UEP Subang Jaya**  
**RM600,000 (For sale)**

- Service Residence
- 3+1 Bedroom
- 1 Carpark
- 1,313 sq ft
- 2 Bathroom

**Calwin Chai**  
 +6012 9358719  
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**Balik Pulau**  
**RM1,380,000 (For sale)**

- 3-sty terrace/link house
- 6+1 Bedroom
- N/A
- 3,608 sq ft
- 3 Bathroom

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**Tiara Mutiara 2, Old Klang Road**  
**RM1,500 per month (For rent)**

- Service Residence
- 3+1 Bedroom
- 933 sq ft
- Semi-Furnished
- 2 Bathroom
- 1 Carpark

**Eugene Goh**  
 +6019 7744656  
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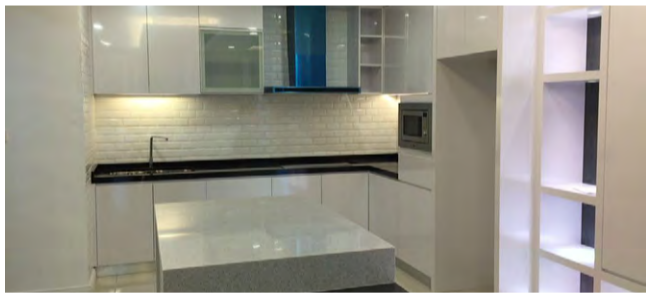


**Port Dickson**  
**RM400,000 (For sale)**

- Apartment
- 3 Bedroom
- N/A
- 1,300 sq ft
- 2 Bathroom

**Kamal AG**  
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 AG REALTY SDN BHD E(1)1931

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**Setia Sky Residences, KLCC**  
**RM3,000 per month (For rent)**

- Condominium
- 2 Bedroom
- 1,281 sq ft
- Fully Furnished
- 2 Bathroom
- 1 Carpark

**Rachael Khor**  
 +6019 2632779  
 MAXXAN REALTY SDN BHD E(1)1766/4

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**Sri Gading**  
**RM660,000 (For sale)**

- Semi-D
- 4 Bedroom
- N/A
- 2,355 sq ft
- 4 Bathroom

**Taayun Amin Manjaya**  
 +6010 2455271  
 ACEAKL ESTATE AGENCY (SOUTH) SDN BHD E(1)1697/1

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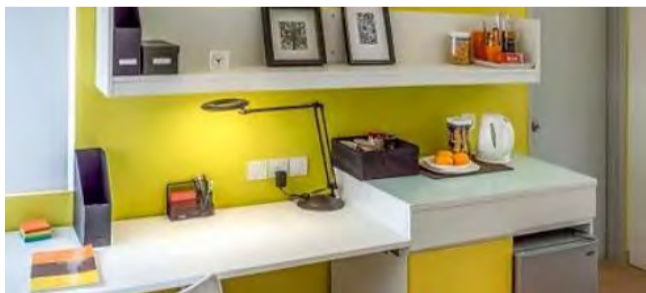


**Forest Heights, Seremban**  
**RM650,000 (For sale)**

- Landed House
- 4+1 Bedroom
- N/A
- 2,300 sq ft
- 4 Bathroom

**Apple Lau**  
 +6018 2551311  
 RT SUCCESS REALTY E(3)1886

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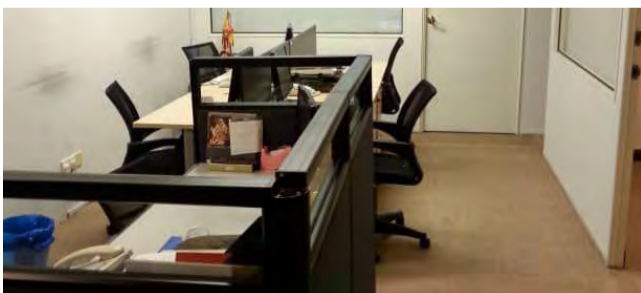


**UniVillage, Semenyih**  
**RM390,000 (For sale)**

- Apartment
- 4 Bedroom
- N/A
- 964 sq ft
- 4 Bathroom

**Savi Rajagopal**  
 +6013 3475391  
 RIDGEWELL PROPERTIES SDN. BHD E(3)1809

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**Damansara Intan, Petaling Jaya**  
**RM 1,900 per month (For rent)**

- Office
- N/A
- 883 sq ft
- Semi-Furnished
- N/A
- N/A

**David Wong Lai Kwong**  
 +6019 3330573  
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**Seringin Residences, Kuchai Lama**  
**RM1,380,000 (For sale)**

- Condominium
- N/A
- N/A
- 1,707 sq ft
- N/A

**David Ting**  
 +6018 3823866  
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