



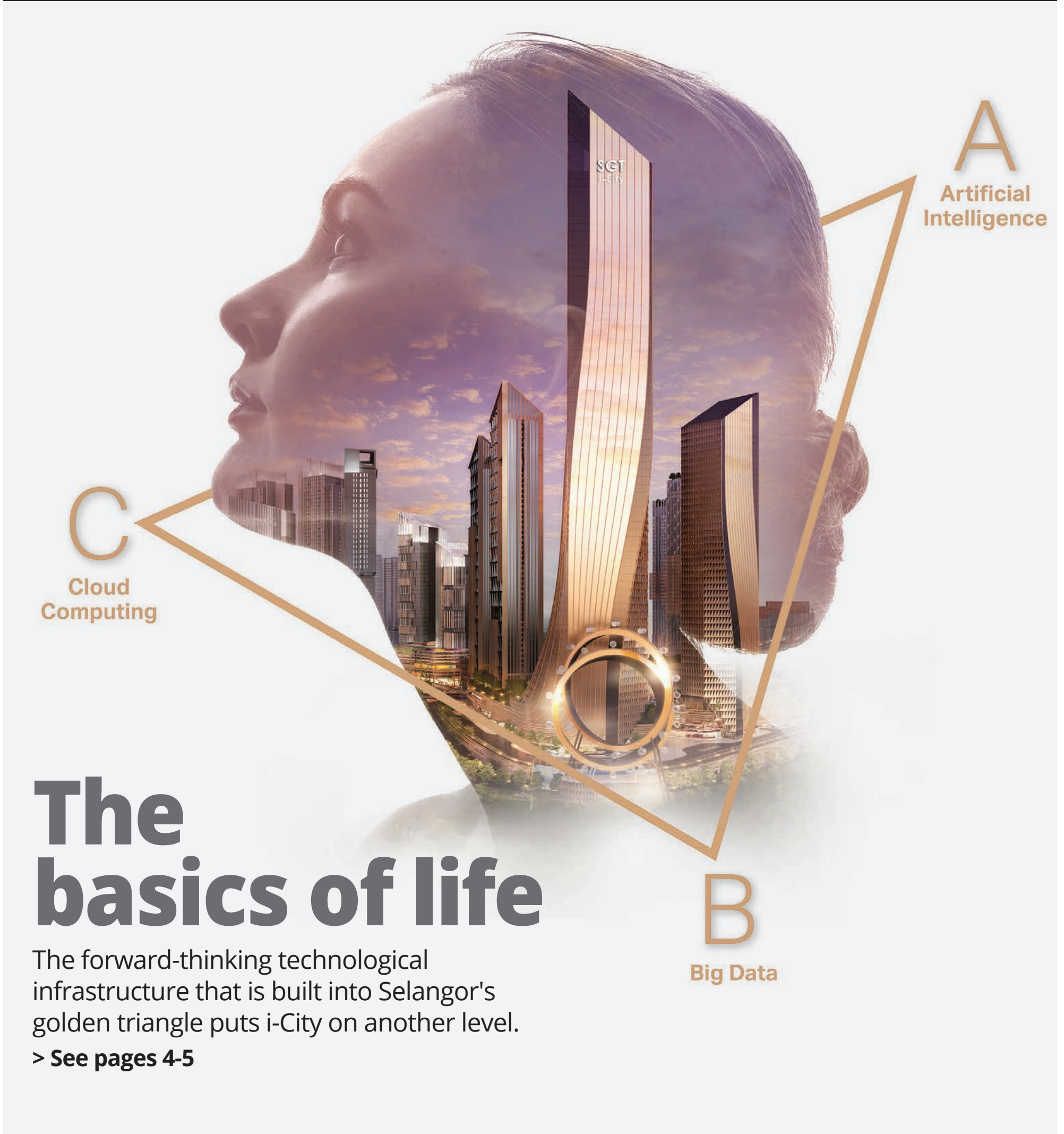
StarProperty
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The basics of life

The forward-thinking technological infrastructure that is built into Selangor's golden triangle puts i-City on another level.

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A timely effort can prevent heartaches

Buyers need to be mindful of the certificate in Section 73 of the SMA 2013

Contributed by CHANG KIM LOONG

ABDUL Rahim joined the job market after graduating from university three years ago. With his savings, he sought to buy an apartment in Subang Jaya.

However, Abdul Rahim is a newbie to stratified development. He knows practically nothing of the selling and buying process and sought the professional service of a lawyer.

The lawyer attended to the usual sub-sale transaction with Abdul Rahim eventually taking possession and keys of the property from the seller.

After shifting into his apartment with his family, he received a service charge statement from the joint management body (JMB) that there are outstanding arrears from the previous owner. This is to the tune of RM5,280 which the seller defaulted in paying his monthly dues for maintenance charges and sinking fund.

Abdul Rahim sought help from his lawyer but was informed that he has to litigate and sue the previous owner for the reimbursement. The lawyer will have to charge him separately for the court proceedings.

The legal process cost is estimated to be about RM5000. Abdul Rahim felt



Homebuyers may unwittingly be lumbered with outstanding arrears of maintenance charges, sinking fund, insurance and apportioned quit rent.

disgusted being a victim on the oversight.

In scenario two, a standard sale and purchase agreement (SPA) was prepared by the law firm in a sub-sale transaction for Sally. One of the clauses stated that "all the outstanding arrears are to be borne by the vendor prior to the completion of the sale transaction".

The owner collected his portion of the balance sales price (after redemption

from the bank) and migrated overseas. Sally was lumbered with an outstanding amount of RM7,830 being arrears of maintenance charges, sinking fund, insurance and apportioned quit rent.

The management corporation (MC) took Sally to the Strata Management Tribunal to recover the indebtedness in the account. Sally reluctantly chose to pay up the arrears by instalments to

avoid the legal quagmire.

The lesson from the above two cases is about the inexperience and flaws of certain unwary lawyers attending to the sale and purchase transaction in a strata property commercial or residential.

The lawyers have to ensure all outstanding charges, debts incurred in the parcel unit by the owners to the JMB, MC or subsidiary MC, collectively known

EVENT HIGHLIGHT

Countdown to the StarProperty year-ender fairs



A recent photo of a StarProperty Fair held at Sunway Velocity Shopping Mall.

STARPROPERTY's property fairs, which will fall in November, gives homebuyers great venues to secure the home of their dreams as many developers will be showing their properties along with great year-ender deals.

The three remaining fairs for the year will be held in Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall, IOI Mall Puchong and Central i-City Shopping Mall.

Why limit oneself to just one sales gallery when StarProperty hosts several developers in the three venues, increasing the opportunity to select that dream home buyers are after.

A vast selection of properties awaits homebuyers, from landed houses to high-rise units and commercial lots, all prepared by a curated list of distinguished property developers.

Not only that, but friendly and knowledgeable salespeople will be present to answer every question and information to quell doubts.

More free prizes

Conveniences aside, the StarProperty fair is possibly the only fair organiser that rewards both visitors and homebuyers. This year's Win Kaw Kaw Campaign promotion ensures that everyone who attends any StarProperty fair becomes a winner.

It's not just houses and prizes to be won at the virtual fair.

Developer-centric

StarProperty is well-known as one of the premium and popular organisers for property fairs and awards events. These events not only provide a platform for developers to sell but allow them to interact with potential buyers to find out what they are looking for in a home.

"Buying a property, be it as an investment or for personal use is an important decision. Hence it is never a bad idea to always hear from the horse' mouth when it comes to selecting your dream property and finding out about all the features that come with it.

"We are very meticulous about the selection of highly reputable developments that are showcased at StarProperty fairs. Come get the best possible insights on where you should put your money in from the industry experts," said StarProperty group general manager Jason Yap.

He added that the fairs made it convenient for potential homebuyers and they have total peace of mind as the buyers will be dealing directly with developers who can give them good deals.

On the other hand, this fair also provides the opportunity for developers to share the unique features of their projects and exclusive promotions with homebuyers.

Developers interested in participating in the remaining StarProperty fairs can call 03-79671341, or reach out by email at events@starproperty.my.

as management bodies are paid in full before the transaction is completed. This is to ensure that buyers are not burdened with the oversight of past debts.

In *Brightvite Sdn Bhd vs Pantai Towers Management Corporation* and another, (2019) 2 CLJ 439, the Court of Appeal made an important ruling on the recoverability against a new proprietor of management charges and other dues accrued before transfer or conveyance.

In that case, the judge, commenting on Section 45 of the Strata Titles Act 1985 - similar provisions can be found at Sections 60, 61 and 68 of the Strata Management Act, 2013 (SMA 2013) - ruled that the debt is recoverable from two parties, namely the existing proprietor or the proprietor's successor in title, that is, the new owner.

But the section refers to one-and-the-same debt, that debt being the sum outstanding as management fees. In other words, that single debt is recoverable from either the proprietor or the proprietor's successor-in-title when he or she becomes the new owner, but the debt of the first owner cannot be transferred to the new owner.

The debt incurred by the previous owner is not divisible, or transferable to the new owner. It is pertinent to consider Section 73 of the SMA 2013. This provision, implemented on June 1, 2015 allows conveyancing lawyers to apply for a certificate on behalf of the owner or potential buyer of the unit for a fee not exceeding RM50.

The management body is to issue to that person a certificate certifying the amount that is due to the unit owner. It also stipulates the time and manner of payment of the amount determined and other matters.

This certificate provides conclusive evidence of the total debts due to a particular unit. The issuance of this certificate by management bodies is to ensure the dues are to be paid in full.

It also enables a prospective buyer to find out what is the total debt, if any, that is outstanding to the management bodies and to decide if he is getting a fair deal from the purchase.

And if any debts are outstanding, he can then negotiate a further quantum to be considered during the negotiation process and before finalising the purchase price.

This can be referred to in Form 19 of the Strata Management (Maintenance & Management) Regulations, 2015 - Regulations 19.

Outstanding arrears recoverable

The aim of Section 73 is to enable prospective buyers to ascertain the outstanding dues attributable to a parcel prior to transfer or conveyance to avoid unpleasant situations where the prospective buyer has to pay the dues accrued by the previous owner.

The purpose of the section namely is to ensure that the management bodies recover their dues so as not

to make all the other unit owners subsidising the debt incurred.

This would amount to a considerable prejudice to the other unit owners. So the conveyancing lawyers should ensure that settlement of debts due to the management bodies prior to transfer be made a condition in the sale and purchase contract and such 'figures' to be calculated on a strata unit's share basis.

The successor-in-title or proprietor may not evade the obligation to pay contributions prior to *Brightvite* case. The High Court in *Sri Wangsaria Management Corporation vs Yeap Swee Oo @ Yeap Guan Cheng* (2009) MLJU 1461 made a similar ruling.

The subsequent buyers refused to pay arrears of maintenance charges for the period prior to vacant possession, denying all liability for such arrears.

The judge held that Section 45(5) of the Strata Titles Act, 1985 (STA) allows the amount to be recoverable from the proprietor, or who may no longer be a proprietor as defined.

Although this Section 45 of the STA has been superseded and now migrated to the SMA 2013, the principle of law established in *Brightvite* and *Sri Wangsaria Management Corporation* cases continue to be applicable.

To our mind, the provision shows the intention of the legislature that neither a proprietor nor a successor-in-title nor that category of proprietor may evade the obligation to pay contributions, that is, the debts.

It is incumbent for the buyers' lawyers to make a written requisition

Lawyers have to more vigilant to ensure that there is no outstanding debt that will affect the new owner.

under Sec 73 of the SMA 2013 to inquire about the amount of charges and contribution to the sinking fund payable; time and manner of payment and any levied contributions owing by the sellers or any amounts outstanding pursuant to the SMA 2013.

If they have failed or neglected to do so, the buyers and their lawyers cannot later allege that they are not aware of the indebtedness because of their own omission.

Litigation process could be avoided if the parties entrusted had done what is required of them under the SMA 2013. The liability of buyers to be duly registered as proprietors or successors-in-title is clearly provided for in the law.

It is also the obligation of the buyers to be vigilant of the need to conform to the SMA 2013 and its regulations if they choose to stay in a stratified property.

There is a corresponding Section 31 in the SMA 2013 that relates to the same issue titled: 'Right of parcel owners or prospective purchaser' for those developments still under developer management period or JMB status, where individual strata titles have not been issued.

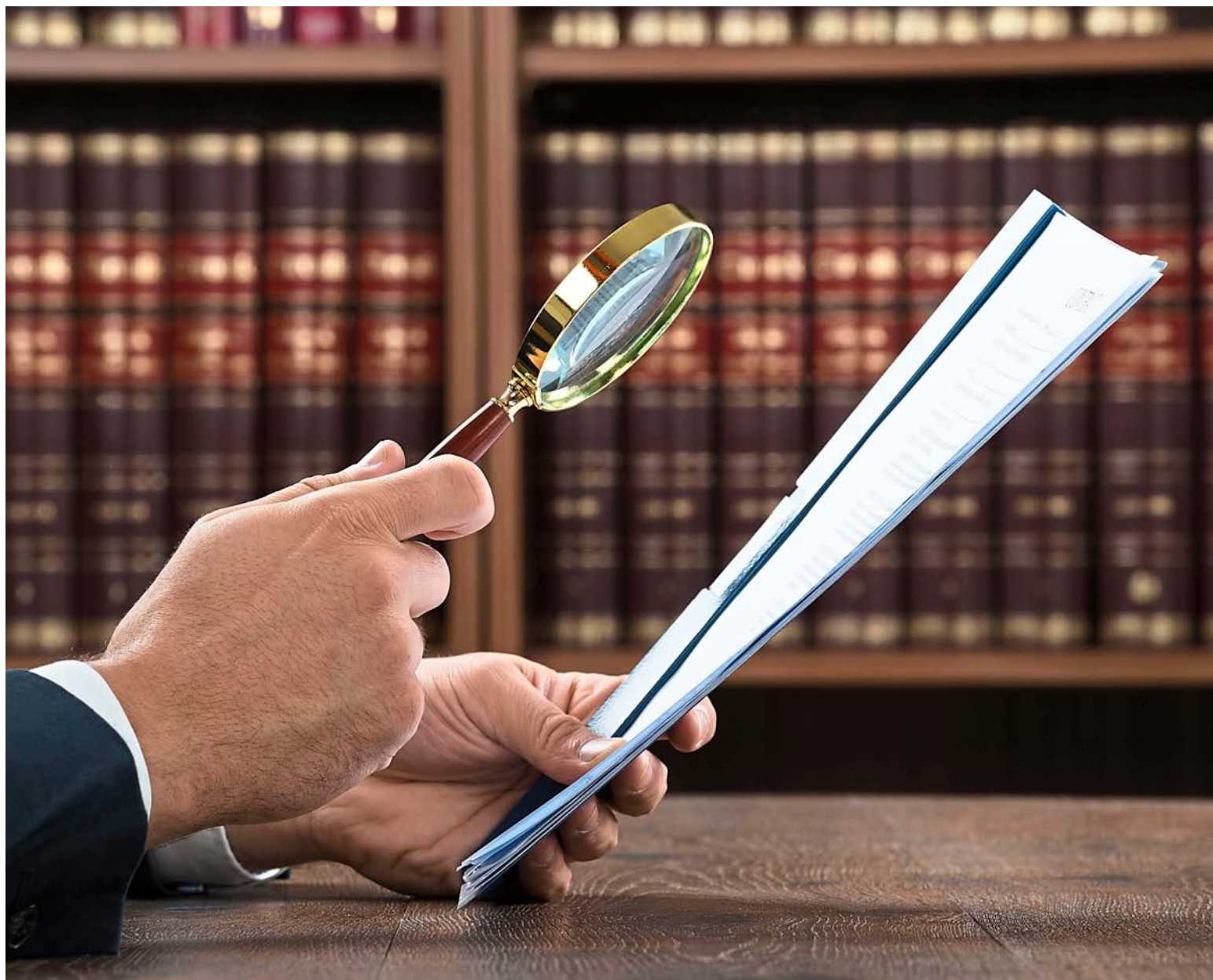
The pre-requisite form is under Form 10 of the SMR - Regulations 19.

Three-fold legal relationship

A person who purchases a unit in a strata development enters into a three-fold relationship; firstly, he is the individual owner of his unit. Secondly, he is a co-owner with all other owners of the common property and the land of the strata development, and thirdly, he is automatically a member of the owner's body (management body) to whom the management and maintenance of the scheme are entrusted.

Harmony can only be achieved if the strata development is managed properly, the common property and facilities maintained adequately and regularly.

The proper maintenance, efficient management and ultimately, the success of the strata development will depend on a steady flow of payments to the coffers of the common funds. This includes the debts. 🏠



Datuk Chang Kim Loong is the honorary secretary-general of the National House Buyers Association: www.hba.org.my, a non-profit, non-governmental organisation manned by volunteers.

The alphabets ABC has a stronger connotation when tech is incorporated

By JOSEPH WONG
josephwong@thestar.com.my

GROWING up, every child is taught the basics of language with the building blocks of the ABCs. While these alphabets have formed firm foundations in our education, their application to modern civilisation in which technology has become intertwined with property development is an inevitability.

And when technology is incorporated into the ABCs, a bigger picture will form, A represents artificial intelligence (AI), B is big data and C, cloud computing, said Jones Lang Wootton Malaysia deputy managing director Prem Kumar.

Artificial intelligence, big data and cloud computing - three foreign-sounding concepts just over a decade ago are three life-changing precepts that have formed the basis of i-City Selangor Golden Triangle's (SGT) evolution over the years.

Widening the sphere

In i-City SGT, technology has consciously been adopted in pushing the boundaries of its developments and product offerings, a critical ingredient in widening the sphere of Selangor Golden Triangle's influence.

"It is currently blossoming into a showpiece of masterful proportions. The goal had also been to stimulate Selangor's economic growth through the active proliferation of technology, in line with the Selangor's government Smart State 2025 vision," said I-Berhad executive chairman, Tan Sri Lim Kim Hong.

The federal government's recent comment about categorising the provision of the Internet as a utility alongside water and electricity exemplifies i-City SGT's foresight in already embodying the ABCs, he said.

Currently wired by a 400G-capable high-availability network, connectivity in i-City SGT is now future-proof, he assured.

The inevitability of the fifth-generation (5G) network roll-out will spark a revolutionary change in how people live and work, with new advances like self-driving cars and advanced augmented reality experiences, amongst many others. Come what may, however, i-City SGT stands ready, Lim said.

This infusion of technology into a property development is growing in demand given the Covid-19 pandemic, which has changed the way people look at technology within the property setting, Prem said, adding that the push to use technology was amplified.

"In today's era, people have come to expect a certain level of technology, but it also has to be achievable. Demand for bandwidth will undoubtedly be greater over time, given the increased adoption of the ABCs into everyday living," he said.

"Disruptions in communication when internet connection fails during a business meeting via Zoom or Google Huddle could cost companies millions of ringgit. This is

ABC-the building blocks



i-City SGT is an important catalyst component within the Selangor High Technology Zone.



The elevated interconnecting bridges and linked walkways in i-City SGT provide easy and safe access to the residences, offices, hotel and shopping venues.



Technology brings about family entertainment venues like Snowwalk, an arctic environment with snow falls and rides.

why many companies are now looking at properties that provide secure infrastructures that can facilitate the modern concept of work, live and play," he added.

"Once people can see and understand these benefits, the value of a property like i-City SGT will escalate," he concluded.

Capturing the vision

For over 30 years, I-Berhad has nurtured a truly captivating vision

of i-City, said SA Architects Director Tony Mak. SA Architects is the master architect for the transformation of i-City SGT.

"The developer has successfully planted the seeds of growth that have turned into an important economic transformation hub, containing living, working and leisure as its lifeline," said Mak.

i-City SGT is an important catalytic component within the Selangor High Technology Zone. The developer

intends to turn i-City SGT into a dynamic component in the economic corridor and to stretch its network of business and communication towards the outer regions of Semenanjung Malaysia.

In a more specific role, it is designed to lead corporations in doing their part to put the nation's broad economy on track.

"Its ultimate goal is to instil an active city, self-sustainable in nature practising smart technology to outstretch its key role as a major leader

in future community opportunity," he said.

Defining t

Explaining the ABC Prem said: "Artificial Intelligence trained using large data can identify patterns and recommend a human would, just

"Big Data, the E these days by com

of life



i-City SGT bears the hallmarks of what San Francisco is to the United States, said Lim.

the i-City SuperApp. This single platform connects the Selangor Golden Triangle community to the realities of their daily lives.

Online ordering, car parking, tenant or job searching, utility bills checking or paying, amongst many others, are underpinned by the unpacking of big data stored over cloud computing, enabled by artificial intelligence applications or algorithms.

Facial recognition technology is also already in use at the recently-completed Grade-A GB-rated Sumurwang Tower corporate office in i-City SGT, and also in the coming residential project to be launched soon.

Infusion of technology in i-City SGT is not static and continues to evolve as technological capabilities change over time, addressing elements of the ABC eco-system into property development and everyday living.

Given the proliferation of smart devices, everyone will want to be able to connect easily to the Cloud from anywhere and everywhere, i-City SGT is working with world technology leaders to ensure the most cost-effective solution, incorporating technologically-advanced offerings.



We believe i-City will be the future landmark of Shah Alam, said Hasan.



The developer has successfully planted the seeds of growth, said Mak.

Inspirations from vibrant cities

The influence of technology on i-City SGT is none the more evident than San Francisco, deemed a poster child for the economic effects of technology-based companies taking control of urban areas.

In a 15-mile radius within San Jose, less than an hour south of San Francisco sits six of the top 10 technology companies in the world with the largest body of highly successful talent pools from Apple and HP to Intel, Cisco and eBay. With the Silicon Valley of old running out of space and many millennials, the new generation of knowledge workers wanting to be closer to, if not in, a city with



In today's era, people have come to expect a certain level of technology, said Prem.

nightlife and culture, the likes of Google, Yahoo, Cisco and others have been led to open big offices in San Francisco.

"i-City SGT bears the hallmarks of what San Francisco is to the United States," said Lim.

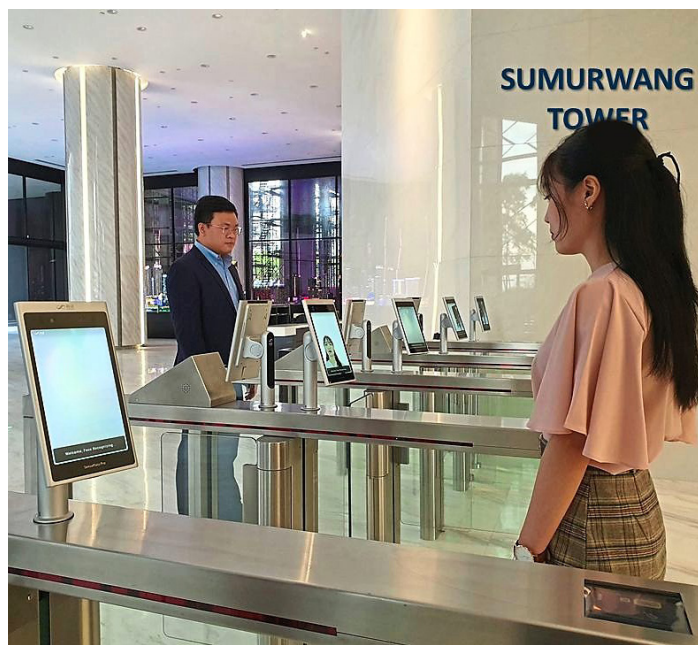
While San Francisco's status and prosperity has benefited from the presence of technology-based industry giants, there are still ample opportunities in i-City SGT to continue contributing to the economic development and prosperity of the state capital, befitting Selangor's Golden Triangle, he said.

"The SGT we see unfolding today is founded on the determination to offer a fully-integrated lifestyle township with the infusion of cutting edge technologies, characterised by a number of strategic alliances with some of the world's leader like the Central Pattana Group of Thailand, Hilton Worldwide, among others," said Lim.

The i-City SGT of tomorrow will be powered by world technology leaders - Huawei, HIK Vision, SenseTime, other technological giants in their own right. The entire SGT landscape will be an intelligent and international city comprising a shopping mall, corporate towers, residences, hotels, leisure attractions, data centre and the iconic 78-storey SGT Tower - the Ultrapolis as envisioned.

The enthusiasm is shared by Invest Selangor Chief Executive Officer Datuk Hasan Azhari Idris, one of the earliest tenant in i-City, who said "We believe i-City will be the future landmark of Shah Alam. The development is setting a new benchmark in property development in Selangor, especially those with a technology focus."

The Selangor Golden Triangle showcase is now scheduled for Oct 28 to Nov 1 at Central i-City Mall. It's a experiential journey of the world of digital possibilities showcased by world technology industry leaders.



Sumurwang Tower is equipped with face recognition system and smart elevators.

Benefitting from a TOD

RESIDENTS and business owners are already reaping the benefits of i-City Selangor Golden Triangle (SGT) as an integrated development.

As a development that incorporates live, work, play and study into the masterplan, it is already meeting the expectation of its citizens despite having more phases to go.

For Korean Jay Jang, he was more than pleased to be about to enjoy the convenience of living and working in the same development.

"Previously, it takes me one-and-a-half hours to reach home from work. By the time I reach home, I feel exhausted," he said.

"Now it takes me less than 10 minutes to walk to work. And after work, I can go to the gym next door," he said, adding that he has a healthier lifestyle now due to the proximity to his new office.

Jang is the finance assistant manager for Pantos Logistics, a multinational corporation, which relocate to Sumurwang Tower in i-City SGT to take advantage of the information and communication technology (ICT) connectivity.

Due to the elevated interconnecting bridges that connect his home, work and the shopping centre, Jang laughed that he

hasn't even walked once on street paths since it is safer and more convenient to use the elevated link bridges.

Dr Geetha Sanmuganathan, who runs a clinic with her husband, and also resides in i-City SGT also sees the advantage of the proximity of home and the clinic.

"We have a young daughter, so it is very important that we able to reach home within minutes of work, in case of urgent needs. One of the main reasons why we chose i-City SGT for our first clinic is for this reason.

"And most importantly, the location and its surrounding are very safe. For women, this is important," she added, pointing out that the security within i-City was good.

For business owner Foo Cher Ming, who runs the famous Chong Kok Kopi Tiam, he is very confident with the vibe of i-City SGT.

"When I first step into i-City, I can feel the good chi within and surrounding it. I have seen i-City SGT grow over the years and is proud that we have such a hotspot here," he said, pointing out the original shop is nearby the development.

With the opening of the branch within Central i-City Mall, Foo said it had a modern look but retained that old-charm feel to the outlet.

"I see a lot of young people coming to the outlet. And when they come, I just want them to enjoy and build up that ambience of Muhibbah that the next generation can build good memories of," he said.



Jang is enjoying the convenience of an integrated development.



Proximity to home and her clinic is Dr Geetha's consideration.



Foo is very confident of i-City SGT's vibe.

communication and business he said.

g the ABC

ABC further, Tan Sri Lim Intelligence (AI), the A, is large datasets so that they patterns, make predictions and actions, much like a just faster and better.

the B, is becoming common companies to outperform

their peers. In most industries, existing competitors and new entrants alike will use the strategies resulting from the analysed data to compete, innovate and capture value.

"Cloud Computing, the C, is a big shift from the traditional way businesses think about information technology resources, primarily in areas of cost, scale, performance, security, speed, productivity and reliability."

The symbiotic relationship between the three is none the more evident than in

A forced change

Covid-19 pandemic impacts near-term supply and long-term design of housing

By JOSEPH WONG
josephwong@thestar.com.my

ONE undeniable thing is that the Covid-19 pandemic has made an impact on the near-term supply and long-term design of housing, not just in Malaysia but around the world.

And things will never be the same again. According to a survey conducted by Knight Frank amongst 160 global developers across 22 nations, almost six in ten global developers have delayed projects in response to the spread of the virus, as it broke down supply chains and prompted a wholesale rethink of how and where people want to live.

Of those with delayed projects, four in ten are now making changes to designs that were once considered complete.

Knight Frank associate Flora Harley said: "While it is still too early to confirm the lasting impact of the pandemic on the development landscape, it is clear that it has accelerated pre-existing trends and prompted new ideas for current and future developments.

"Yet, what cuts through the findings of the research is the importance of not overreacting to the immediate fallout from the crisis. There is little evidence pointing to the need to design for future lockdowns or specified meterage for social distancing."

Critically, the level of market activity seen through the crisis globally and in London specifically demonstrates the resilience of demand for housing designed and built prior to the pandemic.

According to Knight Frank data, the number of offers accepted across the UK

capital in August was the highest ever monthly total on record.

On the homefront, the scenario is very similar as Knight Frank Malaysia International Residential Project Marketing associate director Dominic Heaton-Watson points out.

"The abovementioned record month of August was supported by high transaction levels from our Malaysia International Residential department. (Some) 44% of August transactions from the Malaysia office were in the two-bedroom category, with buyers

seeking the additional space of a flexible second bedroom that could be used as a separate study room," he said.

While developers will likely temper their urge to radically reshape development designs initially, Knight Frank's survey confirms a desire to



City living vs suburban living

THE great debate between city living versus suburban living has again peaked with the Covid-19 pandemic playing a massive role in contributing points to the latter.

Knight Frank Malaysia International Residential Project Marketing associate director Dominic Heaton-Watson said city developments are moving towards creating a sense of community and developers are creating holistic living experiences.

"The demand for lifestyles next to parks, green spaces and canal waterways is clear," he said.

The three main selling points for suburban living have always been cheaper, more open spaces and lower crime rates. But with Covid-19 in the picture, suburban living now has an added advantage of being less risky as the population density is lower.

In contrast, city living offers cultural diversity, better public and private transportation networks and better selection of amenities.

With the spike in the recent numbers of new Covid-19 cases as it makes a second wave through Malaysia, potential homebuyers are re-evaluating their circumstances as safety from deadly contagious viruses now takes precedence.

Once upon a time, Malaysians fear the dreaded commute to work if they choose to live further away from the city. Since the pandemic pushed the business communities to quickly adapt to work from home (WFH) via online connectivity, this worry of being stuck in jams and long travelling hours have somewhat been defused.

That more inquiries are being made for suburban properties is a possible tell-tale sign that the market could again shift to living away from the city. This is a trend that is not just present in Malaysia but a global one, especially in more developed nations.

The advantage of living in cities when there is a pandemic is that the medical facilities will usually be better and more support industries like food supply are in place.

But ultimately, whether to live in a city or suburb depends on the individual. They both have advantages and disadvantages so, at the end of the day, it is the homebuyer who decides. ↗



The number of physical viewings will decline as two-thirds of respondents see sales are now geared towards virtual offerings.

consider potential Covid-19 inspired changes, including:

- **Space for home offices:** Three-quarters of developers are more likely to consider advanced telecommunications and space for home offices to allow for continued flexible home working.

- **Healthier and greener living:** 38% of developers are more likely to consider facilities for bicycles, compared to only 17% that are more likely to consider parking space availability.

- **Urban appeal:** Whilst 41% of respondents said they would be looking to develop in a mix of locations, cities, second-home and rural areas, 45% said they were more likely to solely focus on cities.

- **Mixed-use schemes:** A third of developers are considering adjusting the mix of residential and commercial elements in schemes. From rentable desk space and individual pods to business suites, it will be interesting to see what this will look like in practice in the future.

- **Closer to home:** Following a period of unprecedented restrictions on movement, two in five developers said they would more likely be sensitive to the requirements of the domestic market.

- **Virtual viewings:** Almost two-thirds of respondents see sales geared towards virtual offerings from now on. This enables a more inclusive sales process with buyers able to have the architect or designers speak directly to them, via webinars, for example, enabling more interaction with the developer and a better experience.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has certainly brought some basic, yet crucial issues to light. For example, we all now know how it feels to be isolated and restricted to the confines of our home.

"This is often the fate suffered by seniors and the differently-abled in our community, due to limitations in the access to facilities as well as a lack of communal spaces. Sadly, the ecosystem generally doesn't support them and the inaccessibility stifles their ability to be productive and active members of society," said Suntrack Development Sdn Bhd CEO James KK Tan.

With housing delivery a high priority in many markets, the research also examined some of the biggest constraints that developers are facing.

"According to our survey respondents, funding is the biggest barrier to global development, with just under a third citing it as their biggest concern. Some markets have seen a reduced number of lending facilities offered to developers.

"At the moment, there is decreased bank appetite for developer lending and in some markets, the pre-sales requirements make it hard to begin construction. One way for governments to spur construction would be to facilitate lending, perhaps through a combination of guarantees or loans. This would crucially remove one of the biggest hurdles in development and enable the ground to be broken," said Harley.

Other barriers to overcome

Second to funding was the threat of further property market taxation and



regulation, with planning and travel restrictions also seen, but to a lesser extent as barriers to overcome in the near-term.

Branded residences have seen a surge in popularity over the last 20 years and the pandemic has highlighted some of the advantages of such developments. From the 'lock up and leave' element to the stringent maintenance procedures offered by foremost hospitality providers.

The sector may face some challenges in the wake of Covid-19 but is likely to evolve in new and exciting ways.

Heaton-Watson commented, "Crown Resort's branded residence at One Barangaroo, Sydney pays close attention to acoustics as buyers place greater emphasis on video conferencing and the ability to conduct business at home."

"For the future, two messages are clear. For developers, Covid-19 has accelerated trends already underway in new build projects, whilst for purchasers, it has ultimately confirmed that flexibility is key.

"Purchasers are seeking truly versatile living space that supports agile working, whilst allowing for a separation for home life to promote health and wellbeing," he said.

Wellness and wellbeing are high up on the list for many homebuyers, and so are private health-related facilities like running and cycling tracks, well-equipped gymnasium, pool, reflexology paths and land area that is dedicated to open, green landscaped gardens or parks.

Some Malaysian developers are already on the ball where this is concerned. Gamuda Land Sdn Bhd, Tropicana Corporation, Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd, Sunway Group Bhd, SP Setia Bhd and EcoWorld Development Group Bhd are among those who are

familiar with this formula.

"The lifestyle revolution that is occurring will bring with it opportunities for branded residences, especially where relative value, best in class product or safe haven status can be demonstrated," predicted Alexander Lewis, partner, residential development at Knight Frank.

More virtual offerings

Heaton-Watson added that the research report found that 63% of the developer respondents will further increase their sales process to be more geared toward virtual offerings.

"As proven with our success during the movement control order (MCO), we are adopting developer 3D walk-throughs and virtual viewing technology for our upcoming public launch exhibitions in Kuala Lumpur for two distinctive central London waterside communities: Holland House in Fulham W6 and The Imperial in Chelsea SW6," he said.

Little wonder that the recently concluded StarProperty Stay-At-New Home Virtual Fair 2020 was able to garner nearly 45,000 views with over 900 registered visitors as the Covid-19 pandemic had inadvertently driven up the number of online users.

Other developers have jumped on the bandwagon. Among them is OSK Property Holdings Bhd, who is testing out its first virtual fair. Most developers are already very active online, so the battle to draw homebuyers to their portals is ferocious.

However, where the Covid-19 pandemic road will eventually take property remains to be seen as nothing is as yet set in stone. Certainly, there will be winners and losers, but until the virus runs its course, the dynamic will take charge. ↗

ABOVE

Photo shows the manicured landscapes of Gamuda Land's twentyfive.7 Central Park in Kota Kemuning. Parks are among the features potential homebuyers are seeking.

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– Harley



Heaton-Watson said 44% of August transactions from the Malaysia office were in the two-bedroom category.



Harley said it is clear that the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated pre-existing trends.



The pandemic has certainly brought some basic, yet crucial issues to light, said Tan.

Setting a new standard

Community building takes priority to ensure residents foster closer ties

NICHE property developer Tago (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd (Tago) believes that the next generation of properties will hinge on the strength of their residents' unity in the age beyond the Covid-19 pandemic.

While multi-ability, multi-generational and inclusive homes have become a new norm, Tago is taking it a step further.

Its latest project Alaia Titiwangsa is designed with a strong emphasis on community bonding, a place for children to grow up safely, for working adults to have a sanctuary to go home to, and the elderly to sit back and enjoy the finer things in life.

Tago chief operating officer Daryl Chew said: "We want to build a close-knit community. To achieve this, we are engaging the services of a community manager for Alaia Titiwangsa."

"From our experiences in Anjali North Kiara, we understand the importance of engaging with the residents when organising gatherings like barbecue, Christmas, Chinese New Year, Yoga and kids-oriented activities," he said.

Chew pointed out that the role of the community manager, unlike a concierge, is focused on creating and hosting events that are lively to encourage the residents of Alaia Titiwangsa to bond and foster ties that will last a lifetime.

"In Anjali North Kiara, we received a good response from its residents. It got to the point where the residents themselves started to organise their own events," he enthused.

Accessibility and independent living for all ages and abilities is taken into account for Alaia Titiwangsa, said Chew, pointing out that the essence to create community bonding is bottled into this project to ensure its success.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought many changes, from self-isolation to limited access to facilities and communal spaces, impacting the property industry.

Many development ecosystems generally do not support the conditions set by the new norm and discouraged community interactions thus stifling community bonding, he said.

The 436-unit Alaia Titiwangsa, with a gross development value of RM293mil, was designed with attention to details,



An artist impression of Alaia Titiwangsa

focusing on community and safety to create an inclusive environment.

As a result, many aspects like the co-working space within the development takes into account the physical-distancing and keeping the environment virus-free, said Chew.

"That's why we have included 18 retail units on the ground floor which will host businesses that are required by the residents. We will be managing these units to ensure that the right tenants come in," he said.

Four residential lifts and a service lift will service the leasehold serviced apartment's 40-storey tower. There are three variants with one-bedroom plus one-study, two-bedroom plus one-study and three-bedroom plus one-study configurations.

Unit built-ups will range from 635 sq ft to 1,012 sq ft and there will be 14 units per floor. Ample parking space will be provided as Alaia Titiwangsa has three levels of basement car parks and six levels of elevated car parks.

Alaia Titiwangsa offers unobstructed 180-degree panoramic views towards Titiwangsa Lake and the Kuala Lumpur Cityscape. To ensure

that owners are able to maximise this advantage, clear glass balcony railings will promote unobstructed views from the living room.

Moreover, the resident clubhouse that offers over 25 facilities spread over different floors catering to entrepreneurs and professionals who work from home, families, fitness enthusiast and retirees, said Chew.

Other amenities include the sky pool, sky dining, sky jacuzzi, sky lounge and sky cinema on the rooftop. With all these attractive facilities, it is a wonder that the price of units starts at RM436,000.

Built on 1.6 acres, the property will be constructed by Black Lotus Development Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of TAGO, and work is scheduled to start in Q4. The entire project is expected to complete towards the end of 2024.

Alaia Titiwangsa is accessible via Jalan Pahang, Jalan Genting Kelang and Jalan Tasik Titiwangsa as well as direct access into DUKE Highway. It is also close to the Titiwangsa interchange for both LRT and monorail services, and the future Titiwangsa MRT Station, which will be completed in 2023.



"We want to build a close-knit community," said Chew.

BELOW
 Owners will enjoy a 180-degree view of the KL cityscape.

Located within a matured but quiet area, the development is also in proximity to several hospitals like GH, IJN, Tawakkal, HSC Medical and Columbia Asia. Homeowners with children can rest assured of the many schools nearby.

These include Setapak High School, SMK Air Panas, and Chinese and Indian vernacular schools. International schools like Wesley Methodist, ISKL, Sayfol and Chong Hwa Independent School which are within easy reach.

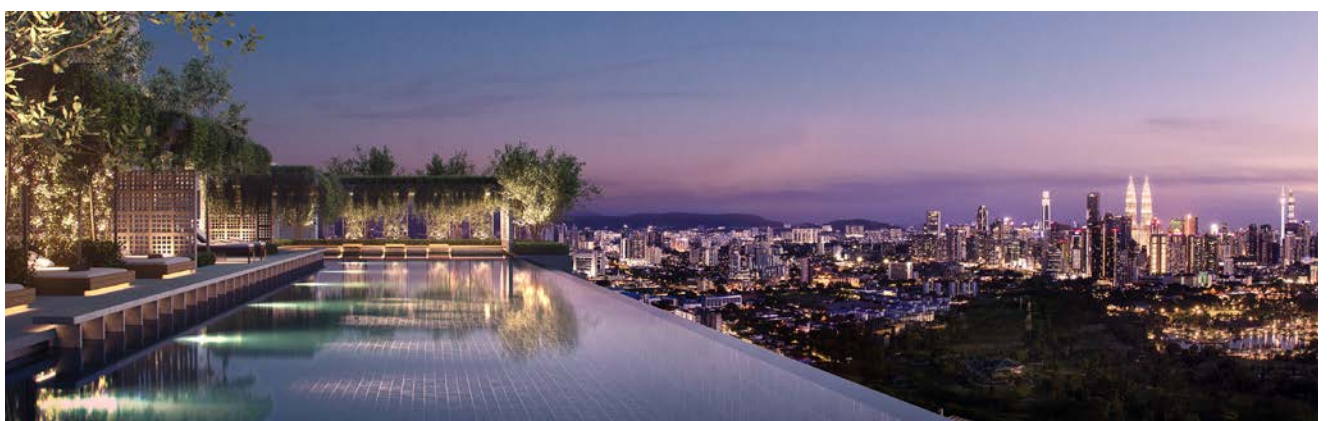
Apart from the 18 retail units at Alaia Titiwangsa, shopping amenities like the Setapak Central Mall, AEON Big and Giant Hypermarket are a short drive from the serviced apartment.

An activity van that doubles up as a shuttle bus to the Titiwangsa LRT-MRT-Monorail interchange station or use as a weekend exploration of the city by the residents will be provided to ease the residents' connectivity.

And to ensure that communication flows smoothly, Tago is incorporating technology into the project to manage visitors, oversee defect complaints and administer other aspects to ensure a well-managed property. 🏡



The dining and living areas are spacious.



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Protecting potential heritage

Why buildings like Bangunan Getah Asli should be protected

Contributed by MIGUEL A ROBLES-CARDONA

THE National Heritage Act 2005 states that any application to designate a building as a heritage site will be considered based on nine criteria.

These include the historical importance, association with or relationship of the building to Malaysian history and its good design or aesthetic characteristic.

Interestingly, most of these saved heritage buildings tend to be much older. But what of those that straddle between heritage and the potential of being one? Where do they stand?

The current practice appears to be hinged on the centennial birthdate which deems whether a building should be worth preserving. But what of buildings that have yet to reach the ripe old age of 100 years? How does a building qualify to be preserved?

Case in point: Bangunan Getah Asli is an unapologetic piece of the recent history of Malaysia. Testament of a moment and the relevance of the rubber industry, it is also an incontestable piece of heritage from the brief modernist architecture period in the country.

These clever architectural pieces boldly respond to the tropical weather in a time when technology was not widely available or affordable and appear prolifically in many countries along the equator during the 50s and 60s. This was also the period when modernist architecture achieved the climax of its maturity.

However, while in other latitudes these architectures are regarded as objects of study and admiration, being upkeep and fully functional, here they are, often, neglected as obsolete buildings with limited or non-commercial value, or worse, abandoned.

While Malaysians profess high esteem for the old European cities, many may not realise that buildings that once represented our societies have the most value.

Allowed to mature over time, such buildings will one day become a patrimony of our nation and testimony of who we were once.

Testimony of an era

For many years, tin and rubber were Malaysia's primary exports and, by the 1930s, the country produced half of the world's rubber. In the early 60s, a few years after Malaysia's independence, the Federation of Malaya Society of Architects organised an international design competition for the building that would house the Headquarters of the Malaysian Rubber Board. This was Bangunan Getah Asli.

Swan and MacClaren, one of the oldest architectural firms in Singapore, won the competition. The nation's aimed projection of modernity and progress determined the commitment to the so-called international style, earning the building strong criticism for, supposedly, its lack of acknowledgement of the local characteristics of the place and its people.

On the contrary, Bangunan Getah Asli is a bold example of how the international style could be adapted to the local context and, even today, an incontestable statement of modern architecture's capacity to address the tropical weather.

The very-much accepted colonial architecture had achieved mastery in dealing with the climatic conditions associated with Malaysia, aligned near the equator and characterised by high temperatures and humidity, and pouring rains.

High ceilings, ample eaves and deep shaded verandahs and colonnades had perfected over the time while the still-locally-untested modern architecture had yet to be proven itself valid.

Bangunan Getah Asli is developed as a low-rise building around a four-storey central atrium protected from the sun and the rain by a raised deck. The three upper levels are dedicated to office spaces organised along internal verandas revolving around the sheltered courtyard.

The ground floor, originally designed as an open plan, is structured by a grid of tree-shaped pilotis that raise the building and free up the floor for



circulation while allowing an evaporative shallow water body at the bottom of the atrium.

Only the staircases and a few ancillary rooms get to touch the ground. This way, the breeze flows into the building through the open ground floor and, after evaporating water from the shallow pool, ascends by the atrium cooling down the circulations and office spaces before being relieved through the perimeter of its elevated roof, like a chimney.

Even today, almost 60 years after its construction, with a ground floor practically entirely colonised by enclosed commercial spaces and the pool almost totally decked over, the breeze is still indisputably felt when entering the lobby after being dropped off under the long expressive modernist canopy.

Money talks

However, being the protagonist of the brief presence of the modern architecture in the country has not granted this building, that once exemplified modernisation and progress, any special consideration.

Bangunan Getah Asli is an unapologetic piece of the recent history of Malaysia. A testament of a moment and the relevance of the rubber industry.

ABOVE
A photo of Bangunan Getah Asli taken in 1963.



Dr Miguel A Robles-Cardona is an associate of the Veritas Design Group.

To the contrary, its almost perfectly symmetrical axial alignment with Petronas Twin Towers has earned it greater attention as a very much coveted, and potentially profitable, piece of land with an unparalleled view of Malaysia's iconic and beloved building by both the locals and the visitors.

The regrettable tension between monetising and preserving has continually placed this senior building under the pressure of disappearing and at constant risk of being replaced by some, today trendy, likely soon forgettable, luxury tower.

Distant relatives

In the parallel latitudes of Latin America, in countries like Chile and Brazil, similar buildings are regarded as modern heritage. These buildings are the object of constant study, by both researchers and students alike, as testimonies of an epoch and living examples of how modern architecture responded and adapted to the tropical weather.

The Vila Maria School by Paulo Mendes Da Rocha in 1962, or the IPE Kindergarten by Decio Tozzi in 1965, both in Brazil, are examples of it, presenting obvious parallelisms with Bangunan Getah Asli.

In spite of this, this piece of Malaysia's modern heritage is not given any degree of protection, and the value of the land where the building is situated threatens its survival.

The sad truth is that Malaysia will lose a chunk of its heritage if buildings like Bangunan Getah Asli, which represents the golden age of modernist architecture, are not given the opportunity to become a heritage building.

City halls must allow buildings with a history to age and mature. Otherwise, Malaysia will continue to look attentively at the beauty of the old European cities, admiring their heritage while replacing its very own meaningful buildings with some perishable structures.

Ironically, in the case of Bangunan Getah Asli, it would likely end up bombarded with advertisement boards that will deny its last urban presence, disappearing first from sight, and ultimately from the memory of the city. ↗

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