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Down but not OUT



Batu Pahat



Kota Tinggi



Pontian



JOHOR BAHRU

The downturn in the Johor property market could be the right time to invest. See Pages 8 and 9.



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Trinity Aquata to be completed by mid-2019

Boutique developer Trinity Group Sdn Bhd's Trinity Aquata condominium project in KL South is slated to be completed by mid-2019, according to the company founder and managing director Datuk Neoh Soo Keat.

Located 1km away from the Terminal Bersepadu Selatan station, the freehold development with a gross development value of RM370 million offers 492 units with built-up sizes ranging from 839 sq ft to 1,420 sq ft. Prices start from RM580,000.

It is accessible via the Besraya Highway, KL-Seremban Highway, Middle Ring Road 2 as well as the KL-Putrajaya Highway (Maju Expressway).

In conjunction with the lunar new year season, the company has launched the Trinity Auspicious Package where Trinity Aquata buyers will have an opportunity to own the semi-furnished condos with only a 1% down payment.

LBS Bina Group to launch last block of BSP21 this weekend

LBS Bina Group will be launching the 10th and final block of BSP21, a

First phase of Titijaya's 3rdNvenue fully booked

The first phase of Titijaya Land Bhd's 3rdNvenue project located at the Embassy Row in Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur has been fully booked overnight.

The developer organised a private preview event on Jan 8 for existing customers to select their units from the 1,110 lifestyle office



suites in the first phase dubbed Neu Suites. Prices start from RM299,000 for a 430 sq ft unit.

The event received staggering reception as some customers

queued up as early as 4am on the preview day.

Titijaya Land executive director Charmaine Lim Puay Fung said the positive response for 3rdNvenue shows the market's confidence and the company's strong follower base.

3rdNvenue is a leasehold 6.06-acre mixed development with an estimated gross development value of RM2.1 billion, jointly developed by Titijaya Land and CREC Development (M) Sdn Bhd.

The project will comprise four blocks with a total of 2,400 units of lifestyle office suites, serviced apartments and retail lots.



served apartment development in Bandar Saujana Putra, this weekend.

The 21-acre leasehold project has a total gross development value (GDV) of RM1.4 billion.

LBS had over the past three years launched nine blocks, or a total of 2,292 units, at BSP21. They have been 85% sold. The project is slated for completion in 2018.

"The selling price of the last block is from RM312,387," LBS told TheEdgeProperty.com.

The final block offers 310 units with built-ups ranging from 610 sq ft to 1,711 sq ft. The block has a GDV of RM184 million.

BSP21 boasts a 4-acre podium

deck, jogging and cycling tracks totalling 2.7km in length, a 66,000 sq ft clubhouse spread over four levels, a 3-tier security system and a car park with panic buttons.

The project is easily accessible via five major highways including the North-South Expressway Central Link, South Klang Valley Expressway, Maju Expressway, Shah Alam Expressway and Damansara-Puchong Highway.

BSP21 also features 28 shop units which will be retained by the developer.

Paramount to launch RM600 mil worth of properties in 2017

Paramount Corp Bhd expects to achieve higher property sales this year than the past two years.

It achieved about RM400 million sales in 2015 and 2016, said Paramount group CEO Jeffrey Chew on the sidelines of a media briefing and signing ceremony between Paramount and REAL Education Group, which saw Paramount enter into an agreement to acquire a 66% stake in REAL Education Group.

"We are looking at launching properties worth more than RM600 million in gross development value this year and this is more than the previous two years," said Chew.

Among its upcoming launches include the second phase of Sekitar26 comprising 2- and 3-storey shoplots in Shah Alam; a project in Section 13, Petaling Jaya which offers retail, office and residential units; as well as residences in Batu Kawan (Paramount Utropolis), Penang.

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LAUNCHES + EVENTS



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S P Setia's Perfect Reunion CNY Celebration

Date: Jan 14 (Sat)
Time: 12pm to 4pm
Venue: Setia Tropika Welcome Centre, Jalan Setia Tropika 1/21, Setia Tropika, Johor Bahru, Johor
Contact: (07) 237 2255

Join S P Setia Bhd's Chinese New Year celebration in Johor and meet Astro's top celebrities. Join in the fun and stand a chance to win ang paws and a limited edition Rooster Plush Toy.



Chinese New Year event at Eco Sanctuary

Date: Jan 15 (Sun)
Time: 10am to 5pm
Venue: Eco Sanctuary Sales Gallery, Lot 41296, Persiaran Eco Sanctuary, Telok Panglima Garang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 3344 2525

Organised by Eco World Development Group Bhd, the event will feature a cooking demo by renowned chef Martin Yan. The event also features a lion dance performance and calligraphy demonstration. There will even be manicure sessions.

Feng Shui talk at Lakefront Cyberjaya

Date: Jan 15 (Sun)
Time: 11am to 4pm
Venue: Lakefront Cyberjaya, Persiaran Semarak Api, Cyberjaya, Selangor
Contact: (0111) 722 6060
Join MCT Bhd this Sunday for a feng shui talk by Nancy Yeoh from Joey Yap Consulting Group. Bazi reading, candy painting and Chinese zodiac papercup making workshops will also be held. Seats are limited. Call or RSVP via the Lakefront Cyberjaya website.

Redrow Homes unveils The Park Collection

Date: Jan 14 and 15 (Sat and Sun)
Time: 11am to 7pm
Venue: Bintang 1 & 2, Level 3, JW Marriott KL, 183, Jalan Bukit



Bintang, Bukit Bintang, KL
Contact: (012) 288 0101 / (019) 226 0568
UK-based property developer Redrow Homes will launch The Park Collection, which is the latest phase at the Colindale Gardens development in London. The exhibition of the development is organised by Hartamas Real Estate.

Feng shui outlook for 2017

Date: Jan 14 and 15 (Sat and Sun)
Time: 11am to 5pm
Venue: Tropicana Aman Property Gallery, No 2, Persiaran Aman Perdana 3, Bandar Tropicana Aman, Telok Panglima Garang, Selangor
Contact: 1700 81 8868
Get a preview of Cheria Residences' semi-dees and

Sinaria's 2-storey shopoffices at Tropicana Aman this weekend. Master Kenny Hoo will be giving talks about feng shui prospects at 3pm on Jan 15. Light refreshments will be served.

Tropicana's Satay Fiesta

Date: Jan 14 and 15 (Sat and Sun)
Time: 10am to 6pm
Venue: Tropicana Heights Property Gallery, Jalan P6/2, Bandar Teknologi Kajang, Semenyih, Selangor
Contact: (03) 7453 2328 / (016) 239 7566
Piping hot satay will be served this coming weekend at Tropicana Heights Property Gallery. Guests can also take the opportunity to view Tropicana Heights' park villa and semi-dee showhouses.



GAMUDA GARDENS



In a Garden where Happiness lives

Rediscover the rejuvenating beauty of nature. Gamuda Gardens, an 810-acre integrated township nestled in nature, is designed by masterplanners and architects to balance our need for a quality lifestyle and living in nature. Our well-designed homes go beyond your front door to embrace natural undulating terrain with master-crafted facilities and amenities.

Strategically located in the northern end of Kuala Lumpur, Gamuda Gardens sits at the confluence of the Guthrie, LATAR and North-South expressways.



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UTAR RESEARCH: Better buy your home soon

BY RACHEL CHEW

KAJANG: A Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) team that recently conducted an analysis of the Malaysian housing market has concluded that it is best to buy properties now as the current dampened market sentiment is expected to recover in the first quarter of 2018.

The research was conducted under the Higher Education Ministry's Fundamental Research Grant Scheme.

The first part of the research findings was released by UTAR a week ago, while the second part was released on Jan 11.

Part 1 suggested that the current property market downturn plaguing the country will not be as turbulent as the one that occurred some two decades ago as this downturn is taking a gentler gradient.

In part 2 of the research, it was concluded that the current market scenario seems to signal "buy".

"Looking at the graph, the housing market has already entered the downward slope of the current cycle and, thus far, it looks relatively stable, reflecting the supporting ef-

forts of the government and housing suppliers. Logically, this is now the period to consider buying," the research team suggested.

According to the chart, the current cycle started in 2009 and peaked in 2013. Prices have begun moving down since 2014.

The research team noted that the Malaysian property market is still on a "gradual down slide". The phenomenon is also a vital signal to enter the housing market, it said.

"You may ask, why not wait for the cycle to bottom out before we

start buying. That would be ideal but there is no specific method to forecast and pin-point the bottom," the team explained.

Furthermore, it said now is a "good time to buy homes" because developers are offering rebates and incentives.

"It is basic indication that the housing market has excessive inventories. However, constrained by rising costs, there is a limit to lowering prices. During an economic downturn, weak and smaller developers would likely be

forced out of the market and thus ease market competition," it said.

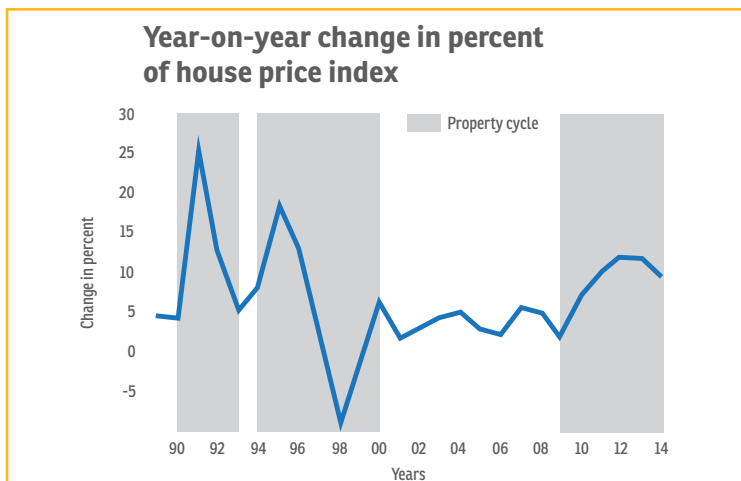
Moreover, the team believes that when the backlog is cleared, prices of new homes may be more expensive as a supply squeeze may cause prices to go up.

On the other hand, the team suggested that the good times for the real estate sector will return when the economy climbs back in full steam, because by then, the housing market would have entered the next cycle.

"The bottom line is still market sentiment and purchasing power of consumers. Both are closely linked with disposable income, and that in turn depends largely on the economy," it explained.

Some positive news have emerged recently such as oil prices picking up and China's significant increase of investments in Malaysia.

"As the impact of these development projects on the economy starts to kick in, and barring changes in the local political scene, we expect market confidence and sentiment to start improving by the first quarter of 2018."



First phase launch of Gamuda Gardens after CNY

BY RACHEL CHEW

KUANG: Gamuda Land plans to launch the first phase of its 810-acre Gamuda Gardens township development soon after the Lunar New Year.

Gamuda Gardens is a 15-year development project located in Kuang, Selangor with a gross development value of over RM10 billion.

"We target [to launch the first phase] right after Chinese New Year. It will comprise double-storey terraced houses with built-up sizes of 20ft by 70ft," said chief operating officer Ngan Chee Meng.

"They will be located close to the main entrance of the township," Ngan told TheEdgeProperty.com on Jan 9 after the official opening of a new 3.1km access road at the Kuang Elevated Interchange System at the North-South Expressway (NSE) which will cut travel from Kuala Lumpur to Kundang by 10km. It will also provide a direct

link to Gamuda Gardens.

The selling price for the homes will start from RM700,000.

"I think this is very affordable if you see what we have been doing [on the master planning]. Around this area, other projects are selling around RM680,000 but they do not have such master planning and facilities. I don't think there is any other project with a similar master plan in this area," he said.

He added that the first phase of Gamuda Gardens consists of about 200 units. The developer is planning to launch three to four phases of the development this year, depending on market responses.

Built on a natural undulating terrain, Gamuda Gardens offers lifestyle and nature living in a satellite township. It features five cascading lakes and a waterfall in a 50-acre park, a mixed terrain cycling trail and a Waterfront Village.

The township is located right at the intersection of the KL-Kua-



Fadillah (fourth from left) and Gamuda Bhd group managing director Datuk Lin Yun Ling (fifth from left) at the access road opening ceremony.

la Selangor Expressway, NSE and Guthrie Corridor Expressway.

"With direct access from the NSE, the travel distance and time from the capital will be reduced by about 10km or 15 minutes. We are happy to declare that the road will

be open for public use from today, (Jan 9)," said Gamuda Land executive director Datuk Abdul Sahak Safi at the official opening.

"We are currently planning for a city centre within Gamuda Gardens, offering various retail, business and

commercial hubs, which is expected to boost the growth of the entire north Selangor area," he added.

The event was officiated by Minister of Works Datuk Sri Fadillah Yusof. The event also saw Gamuda introducing its new Industrialised Building System (IBS) facility.

Located in Sepang, the plant is the first fully automated robotic IBS plant in Malaysia. It has the capacity to produce up to 2,000 apartment units per year. "Initially, this facility will be utilised for the Group's in-house projects," said Sahak.

Ngan also told TheEdgeProperty.com that IBS will be used for Gamuda Gardens' affordable and high-rise homes.

"IBS is not so much about reducing construction cost, but about the long-term benefits and sustainability," he said.

Gamuda is also constructing its second IBS factory in Banting, which is planned to be ready in the third quarter of 2018.

'Buy for own stay but not for flipping'

This article first appeared on www.TheEdgeProperty.com on Jan 11. It was interesting to note that although the research findings drew mixed responses from our readers, many took it with pinches of salt and the overall sentiment was a rather sceptical one. There seems to be a lack of confidence that the market will pick up in the near future.

Here are some of the comments made on TheEdgeProperty.com's facebook page:

'Research need not pay tax...Every word is free. Or seems they got paid to say so.'

'Hoping this is an independent and unbiased research done by UTAR and not another scene to create fake sentiment considering the research is funded by the government'

'Hopefully this researcher is not being paid by the developer'

'It is just a research... maybe they used old parameters to do the analysis... they should reveal the parameters used in the analysis, then only can we make further comments'

'Some of the market sharing by banks stated that the economy will plummet further during the 2nd half of the year. We need to look further down the road to observe when it is really a signal to buy properties.'

'Buy for own stay is ok but not for flipping and short-term investment'



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Melawati Mall is jointly developed by the established property conglomerate, Sime Darby Property Berhad and CapitaLand Mall Asia, a wholly-owned subsidiary of CapitaLand Limited, one of Asia's largest shopping mall developers with real estate and operations in 52 cities across Singapore, China, Malaysia, Japan and India. With the partnership of these two real estate leaders, confidence levels are high in anticipation of the success of Melawati Mall.

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Johor: GOOD

Is it time for some BUYS?



BY SHAWN NG

2016 was a rough year for the Johor property market. The continuity of economic and political uncertainties, no easing on banks' lending policies and concern of oversupply in high-rise properties has remained a burden to the market.

The negative factors have dragged down the value and volume of transactions for properties in Johor in 2016, and the market in 2017 is expected to continue being haunted by these factors.

According to data from the National Property Information Centre (Napic), the total value of transactions in the third quarter of 2016 (3Q2016) for the major types of properties in Johor, including residential, commercial, industrial and agricultural was RM3.908 billion, 29.33% down from a year earlier and 15.56% down from the preceding quarter.

Meanwhile, there was a total of 8,840 transactions in 3Q2016, declining 26.4% from a year earlier and 21.28% from the preceding quarter.

Looking ahead, KGV International Property Consultants (Johor) Sdn Bhd executive director Samuel Tan expects the Johor property market in 2017 to be as subdued as it was in 2016.

"In general, property prices in Johor will begin to see some drop in 2017 and if the economy continues to be depressed, there will be more downward pressure on prices," he tells TheEdgeProperty.com.

Under normal property cycles, assuming the Johor property market began its downturn in the second half of 2014 (2H2014), it will likely take four to five years from that point for the market to recover, offers Tan.

However, there is still some excitement in store for Johor.

Tan notes that developers from China will continue to feature prominently in Johor Bahru and they will make greater efforts to capture the local market by developing properties in areas favoured by the locals and with prices within the locals' reach.

"This is a natural progression of business. As the China developers become more familiar with the local property market, there will be offers for joint ventures from local landowners," he says, adding that the local property market offers a stable and ready catchment for the developers and any prudent developer would be willing to take on such offers.

Since China's "One Belt One Road" (OBOR) initiative was announced in 2013, Johor has seen more Chinese developers expanding their presence in the state due to its strategic location in the OBOR trade network.

The first Chinese developer in Johor was Country Garden Holdings Co. The Guangdong-based company ventured into the state with its mixed development called Country Garden @ Danga Bay in JB.

The developer then expanded its footprint in JB with mega developments such as Forest City and a joint-venture project known as Central Park along Jalan Tampoi.

Meanwhile, China state-owned Greenland Group and Guangzhou R&F Properties Co entered the scene with Greenland Tebrau and Greenland Danga Bay; and Princess Cove in JB by R&F.

What to look for?

Despite the weak outlook for 2017, the Johor property market offers investment opportunities

that often arise when the market is not so rosy. The key for investors in 2017 is to stay invested as there will be good buys.

"If you are looking to invest in Johor this year, commercial properties will be a worthy consideration as prices are moderating, so be on the lookout for properties with ready good-grade tenants," Tan suggests.

Of the 10 districts in Johor, JB remains Tan's choice for investors because of the state capital's large population, strategic location close to Singapore and the bright long-term outlook for Iskandar Malaysia.

"JB will be in the best position to offer investment opportunities. This is further reinforced by the fact that there is an economic blueprint for Iskandar Malaysia to propel it," he explains.

"In addition, the large population of 1.7 million people in Iskandar Malaysia will give JB a huge advantage in providing it with a large catchment market. Its proximity to Singapore is another important factor," he adds.

He also anticipates Iskandar Puteri (formerly known as Nusajaya) and the Eastern Corridor areas to usher in some unplanned catalytic projects from the private sector, including development or expansion in the industrial, tourism and educational subsectors.

"Hopefully, there will be some off-budget infrastructural projects to stimulate the market here. These could be in the form of new or expansion of highways, bridges and others," he says, citing for example, Pontian, which may receive a boost if the bridge from the Port of Tanjung Pelepas to Tanjung Bin commences construction this year.

Meanwhile, property investment and investment education firm CORE Investors Sdn Bhd founder and director Rachel Lim chooses JB city centre, Pasir Gudang and Desaru as her top three property hotspots in the state in 2017.

Short for "Community of Real Estate Investors", CORE Investors was established in 2012 and it is currently based in Iskandar Malaysia. According to its website, the company has invested in more than 1,803 properties worth more than RM547 million. Most of the properties are located in Iskandar Malaysia and Kuala Lumpur.

Lim expects JB to benefit from the upcoming JB-Singapore Rapid Transit System, which will connect Johor's Bukit Chagar terminus station to the Singapore terminus in Woodlands North, where it will join the upcoming Thomson-East Coast MRT Line.

"The project will bring more people into the city and create demand for properties," she adds.

As for Pasir Gudang, Lim is optimistic about the outlook for the industrial town as there is still steady demand for industrial property there.

"For those investors who have more capital to invest, industrial property is a good choice because I believe the industrial sector in Johor will do very well in the long run," she says.

Lim also chose Desaru as a property hotspot in Johor due to the positive spillover from Pengerang, where Petronas is developing the RM60 billion Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (Rapid) project within the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex.

"The blue-collared will stay in Pengerang but the white-collared will want to stay in areas with a better environment, so Desaru will become

Tan: Developers from China will continue to feature prominently in Johor Bahru.



Lim expects Johor Bahru to benefit from the upcoming Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System.



Lee suggests that investors keep an eye on the offices in Medini and Johor Bahru city centre.





SOURCE: TheEdgeProperty.com | GRAPHIC: HENRY LEE

JOHOR PROPERTY HOTSPOTS



Johor Bahru city centre

Large population, strategic location neighbouring Singapore and improved infrastructure and connectivity

Iskandar Puteri + the Eastern Corridor areas

Catalytic projects from the private sector

Medini + Puteri Harbour

Improved accessibility and connectivity with the on-going extension of the Coastal Highway

Pontian + Kulai

Improved connectivity to Johor Bahru; Pontian to benefit from the bridge of the Port of Tanjung Pelepas to Tanjung Bin

Pasir Gudang

Bright outlook for industrial sector in Johor

Desaru

Positive impact from Petronas's RAPID and Desaru integrated resort development

Kluang, Batu Pahat + Muar

To benefit from the HSR

Pengerang

To benefit from RAPID project

one of their picks," she says.

"We invested in double-storey terraced houses in Desaru back in 2013 for about RM380,000 per unit which we rent out for RM3,500 per month. The more than 10% rental yield is very decent and the capital appreciation is about 40% to date."

A word of caution

Overall, she believes 2017 is a good time for investors with foresight to start accumulating good properties despite the slowdown in the property market.

"However, investors are warned to be cautious when investing in Johor. I advise people to look at properties that have a rental yield of about 7% to 8% or properties that offer potential capital appreciation of 30% in the next three years with help from their unique features."

Lim also notes that with more high-end properties to be completed this year, there will be a lot of desperate sellers looking to let go of their properties.

For Knight Frank Malaysia Sdn Bhd (Johor Branch) executive director Ricky Lee Kong Wah, his top picks for investors to look at in Johor in 2017 are JB, Pontian, Kulai, Batu Pahat and Kluang as the five districts of Johor are set for some interesting developments over the next few years.

He says JB will continue to grow as its infrastructure is continuously upgraded with links to

the smaller towns, notably Kulai and Pontian.

Meanwhile, Kluang, Batu Pahat and Muar are slated to benefit from the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore High Speed Rail (HSR), which is expected to prompt new interest from developers in these areas.

"Investors should look at properties located near the future KL-Singapore HSR stations as the property values in these locations are expected to appreciate as the project materialises," he adds.

Lee notes that the ongoing extension of the Coastal Highway will include a link road connecting to the Second Link to Tuas, Singapore. Once it is completed, it will create smoother and quicker traffic flow from the city centre to Medini, Puteri Harbour and the wider Iskandar Puteri.

As such, Lee suggests that investors keep an eye on the offices in Medini and JB city centre, commercial units in Iskandar Puteri, Bandar Penawar, Pengerang and Kempas, and landed residential properties in Iskandar Puteri, and the Permas-Pasir Gudang stretch, as well as Bandar Penawar and Pengerang.

However, he urges investors not to rush into purchases as there could be more bargains in the Johor market by 2H2017.

"Investors should look at both residential and commercial properties but they must be prepared to wait a long period to see return on their investment," he concludes.

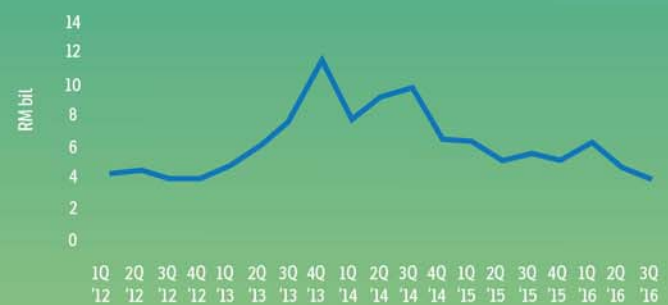
JOHOR MARKET OUTLOOK

- 1 The subdued and lacklustre activities to continue in 2017
- 2 Property prices expected to drop
- 3 The "China factor" will continue to lead developments in Johor
- 4 Ongoing and upcoming catalytic projects such as Coronation Square Johor Bahru, Petronas' Rapid and the HSR will aid the market
- 5 Possible catalytic projects from the private sector
- 6 A good year to invest in Johor properties but will need patience and strategy

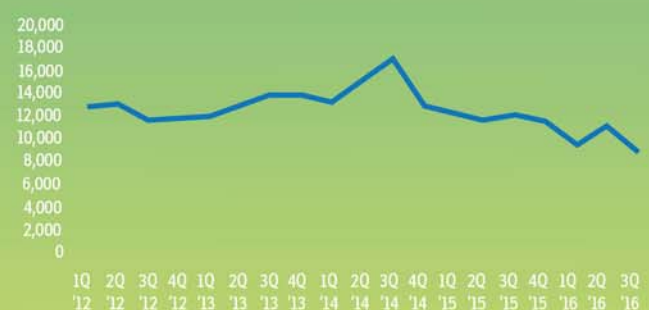


SOURCE: NAPIC

Johor property transaction value

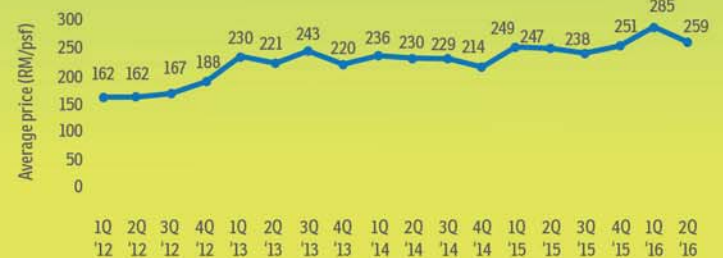


Johor property transaction volume



SOURCE: TheEdgeProperty.com

Terraced house prices in Johor Bahru



Non-landed housing prices in Johor Bahru





Run a home-sharing business at your own risk



BY LUM KA KAY

Ever since the emergence of home-sharing start-ups, many property owners have been getting in on the home-sharing economy by converting their homes, be they houses or apartments, into short-term rental stays.

While property owners may earn extra income by letting out the extra space in their properties, there are legal concerns that they should take note of.

On home-sharing start-up Airbnb's website, it clearly states that as a platform and marketplace, it does not provide legal advice. "If you have questions, contact your local government, or consult a local lawyer or tax professional," the website states.

Airbnb also lists down the possible rules and guidelines that homeowners have to adhere to before offering their properties on the home-sharing platform such as a business licence, building and housing standards, zoning rules, special permits, taxes and other rules established by tenant organisations and landlords.

When TheEdgeProperty.com contacted Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), a spokesperson from the corporate communications unit said: "As long as you're using your residential property for residential purposes (which includes rental purposes), there is no need for you to apply for a business licence or permit".

An Airbnb host in Kuala Lumpur city centre who requested anonymity concurs.

"So far, there's no licence required for homestays [or home-sharing]. I think in KL there is no need [for any licence].

"Instead, it depends on the property manager of a residential building [whether to take action on the hosts]. The property manager may prohibit home-sharing activities if they cause trouble to long-term residents in the same property," he says.

Meanwhile, Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ) councillor for Kampung Sungai Kayu Ara, Bandar Utama (PJU 6) and Mutiara Damansara (PJU 7) Tang Fui Koh says: "There is no guideline at this moment for short-term rentals. However, that does not imply you can do it".

When asked if property owners have to convert the land title from residential to commercial if they were to rent out their properties be it for long-term or short-term, MBPJ's Tang says there is no need for a land title conversion if the property is to be rented out for residential purposes, "unless [you're] renting out for commercial purposes [such as] kindergartens, old folks homes and caring homes".

A few months ago in July, the Penang Island City Council (MBPP) issued summonses on residential property owners who rented

out their premises for short-term stays.

An MBPP spokesperson from the Environmental Health and Licensing Department tells TheEdgeProperty.com that MBPP acted based on public complaints.

"From a legal point of view, short-term rental means operating an illegal lodging house without a lodging house licence issued by the local authority. Landlords or property owners who ignore notices from us for them to cease their unlicensed short-term rental activity will be issued summonses.

"We will also initiate prosecution against those landlords or property owners if we obtain concrete evidence, and after the deputy public prosecutor has granted us the sanction to do so," the spokesperson says.

He also explains that these short-term rental operators or landlords had violated two law provisions, one being the Municipal Council of Penang Island (Trades, Businesses and Industries) By-Laws 1991 and the other being the Town and Country Planning Act 1976.

"In short, they are doing the right things but in the wrong place [as it is clearly stated that their properties are for residential purposes only] which is against the law and cannot be legalised.

"There are two types of buildings which are suitable for this purpose — lodging house or hotel and serviced apartment as their Certification of Completion and Compliance clearly states their usage," adds the spokesperson.

He advises landlords and property owners to check their property usage from the local government's Planning Department before they start their business for short-term rental.

At the federal level, a spokesperson from the Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Ministry's corporate communications unit says the ministry has no plans to draft regulations for the home-sharing industry.

"The Tourism and Culture Ministry also has no jurisdiction over the matter," says an officer from the ministry's corporate communications unit.

It is noted that local authorities of major cities such as New York, London, Amsterdam and Berlin have taken measures to regulate home-sharing services.

In New York, the city's governor Andrew Cuomo has signed a bill that will fine tenants or landlords who let out unoccupied flats for less than 30 days. In London, a 90-day rule has been introduced where no property can be rented out on any home-sharing service for more than three months a year without planning permission. In Amsterdam, the city's councillor has limited the sharing of private homes to 60 days a year. And in Berlin, people are not allowed to rent out whole apartments and homes for short-term, or they risk a fine of €100,000 (RM475,330).

The legal perspective

According to lawyer and partner of Pretam Singh Nor & Co Datuk Pretam Singh, it is unlawful to convert a residential property into a homestay for tourists without complying with regulations.

"Under the Strata Management Act 2013, its standard bylaw states that a residential property cannot be used for commercial purposes unless stated otherwise.

"From the planning and safety perspectives, the planning approval given by authorities is meant for residential use. When you convert the unit for commercial purposes, you're then infringing the safety requirement from the Fire and Rescue Department of Malaysia (Bomba) such as the installation of a 'KELUAR' (Exit) sign at the property, among others.

"So riding on that point, the property is not safe for different purposes other than residential," he argues.

There is a difference between turning a residential property into a homestay and renting it out to tenants, notes Pretam. "If you're talking about rental, there must be a tenancy agreement but in this case, many of them are coming in as [short-term] lodgers.

"If you're a tenant, you'll have to sign a tenancy agreement with the stamp duty and everything. So if these property owners are running their properties as hotels, who is going to sign a tenancy agreement just because they're staying in the property for a few days?" he asks. Hence, it is unlawful to convert a residential property into a homestay, Pretam concludes.

"Property owners will have to upgrade their properties to comply with Bomba requirements under the Uniform Building By-Laws 1984 as it involves the safety of visitors," he says.

"You cannot bring people into your house unless the safety issue is addressed, or you're running that risk [of endangering people's lives]," adds Pretam.

He warns that the property will not be covered by insurance should any mishaps happen.

"The insurance you've taken is meant for residential purposes. So the insurance will not cover the property if you're running it as a business entity. Not to mention now that the property is being used for commercial purposes, the owner could be subjected to Goods and Services Tax," he says.

Furthermore, neighbours are allowed to lodge complaints to the Strata Tribunal if they discover that a homeowner is using his or her apartment or condo for commercial purposes, notes Pretam.

"But rather than making this report individually, I recommend that joint management bodies and management corporations also make the effort to take the matter to the Tribunal," he says.

KENNY YAP | TheEdgeProperty.com



Pretam: The property will not be covered by insurance should any mishaps happen.

What can one accomplish in the year of the Fire Rooster?

BY TAN AI LENG

Considering the negative outlook for the property sector in the year of the Fire Rooster, founder of Mastery Academy of Chinese Metaphysics Datuk Joey Yap says two of the best things to do this year is to acquire assets and new skills.

The property sector in the year of the Fire Rooster which begins on Feb 3 will remain gloomy as the Earth element in feng shui is in a weak position this year. However, Yap advises property investors or homebuyers to make the effort to look for opportunities as there would be some good deals out there.

“Moving into the Fire Rooster year, industries associated with Metal, Water and Wood elements are expected to do well, while industries related to Fire and Earth elements may experience a slowdown due to restrictions and changes,” he told the audience at the “Joey Yap’s Feng Shui & Astrology 2017” seminar in Kuala Lumpur on Jan 7 (last Saturday).

The same applies to individuals as well. Those who have Metal, Water and Wood elements in their personal Bazi will fare better this year than those who do not have these elements.

Chinese astrology is divided into Wuxing or the five elements — Metal, Wood, Water, Fire and Earth, with each element having its own strengths.

Industries associated with the Earth element, such as real estate,



Over 3,000 participants attended the KL seminar on Jan 7.

natural resources and construction materials, will be sluggish this year offering weak earnings as there are obstacles and restrictions to growth.

However, Yap stresses that one cannot merely depend on the yearly feng shui movements to determine his or her own success.

“Individuals who want to have a better life will have to make the right choices by [choosing] the right strategy to find solutions and enhance their skills in order to improve their life,” he says.

According to him, there are two ways to do so — by acquiring assets (to accumulate wealth) or acquiring new skills (self-improvement).

“Instead of focusing on the negative aspects [of each element], we should look for the hidden opportunities. With Earth being the weakest element, it means that [properties] are getting affordable, and people should take the advantage



Participants queued up as early as 7am for registration to grab a good seat.

and accumulate assets during the slowdown,” he explains.

Sectors which are related to the Metal element include the gold and jewellery industry, the automotive sector, finance, mining as well as fields which are mechanical in nature. These areas will be positive overall amid heightened competition but business owners or individuals need to watch out for cash flow issues and regulatory pressure.

Water element industries, including the aquatic and fisheries sector, shipping, tourism, trading, media and planning strategists and other water-related businesses such as laundry and sewage, are expected to see significant growth and opportunities with increased innovation in ideas and talents.

Fire element industries, which include oil and gas, food and beverage, airlines, information technology, metaphysics, electronics, fire arms and artillery, as well as service-related sectors, will enjoy strong gains and recognition this year with new breakthroughs and collaborations.

Wood-related industries, such as fashion and clothing, furniture,

agriculture, education, religious preaching and cultural sectors, will experience abrupt changes which will bring in new leadership or new responsibilities (for the individuals involved).

Starting his metaphysic consultation career as a 20-year old, Yap has since gained international recognition for his modern methods of feng shui teaching and practices in a scientific and relatively simple way. Yap is a popular speaker on the subject around the world and the author of more than 160 books that have sold more than four million copies worldwide.

Rising pessimism in 2017

From the feng shui perspective, Yap has a mixed view on the global outlook this year as the strongest element Metal will show its strength and this will have a negative effect overall.

“The Metal element signifies that there will be increased spending on infrastructure which will affect the environment. This element also symbolises weapons, signifying rising conflicts including war-related conflicts that will threaten global security causing tension and uncertainties as well as negatively impact

the environment,” he explains.

In terms of calamities, the Metal element also signifies transport-related problems and health issues as the Metal element also symbolises knives and swords.

“People also need to beware of possible tsunamis, haze, typhoons and floods,” he adds.

The second and third strongest elements — Fire and Water — complement the Metal element, which signifies knowledge, creativity and advancement.

According to Yap, there will be job opportunities in the industries related to Metal, Fire and Water while medical and technology-related fields will see new developments as well.

Choosing the right direction

According to the annual flying star chart for 2017, the good directions this year are in the southeast, east, northeast and north, depending on what aspects you want to focus on. The “bad” directions that one needs to avoid are the south, southwest, west and northwest.

The southeast direction is helpful for investors; east direction is good for wealth, northeast direction could help one excel academically; and the north direction will enhance one’s career luck or authority.

Yap says for individuals, they can activate one of these sectors or activate all sectors to enhance their luck for the entire year.

To activate the energy in these sectors, one could carry out renovation works, change the furniture or simply put a nail on the wall and hang a picture in that particular sector.

“Do spend more time in the good sectors to continue enhancing your luck, for instance, if your living room is situated in the north direction, you can just take your laptop and work in that part of the living room to enhance your career luck,” he adds.

Meanwhile, Yap stresses that the worst sector will be the south direction as it signifies calamity, followed by northwest as it signifies illness, and west as well as southwest as these two directions signify discord and arguments.

“Avoid doing anything to ‘activate’ these sectors and spend less time in these bad sectors. If it happens that your bedroom lies in those sectors, you can neutralise the negative impact by activating the other four good sectors,” he advises.

More than 3,000 people turned up for the KL seminar which was presented in English while the Cantonese seminar was held the following day on Jan 8. Another seminar in English was held earlier in Penang on Dec 18. TheEdgeProperty.com is the official media partner for the seminars in Malaysia.

Yap: We should look for hidden opportunities instead of focusing on negative things.





Architectural intervention could benefit local community

BY TAN AI LENG

A well-designed building could bring tangible benefits to the local community by improving their economy, environment and social well-being.

One example is the Post-war Collective architecture, designed by Sri Lanka-based Robust Architecture Workshop co-founder Milinda Pathiraja, which has achieved its objective of reintegrating former soldiers back to post-war Sri Lankan society.

The project, an eco-friendly community library in Ambepussa, Sri Lanka, which was built by rammed-earth walls and recycled materials, has been completed and opened at the end of last year.

"After 30 years of civil war, we have a large military workforce that doesn't have any skills. The objective of engaging them into this project is to transfer the knowledge and building skills to them through constructing a real building for the community," Milinda tells TheEdgeProperty.com.

He notes that although robust development activities have taken place in Sri Lanka, the country has a shortage of skilled workers in the construction industry.

By training the soldiers and equipping them with a new skill set, it could open up more job opportunities for them as well as benefit the local community with a new library for the children, he says.

This project won the LafargeHolcim Awards Global Silver winner for Sustainable Construction in 2015. Milinda and a few fellow past winners of the LaFargeHolcim Awards were in Malaysia recently to share more about their winning projects.

Architecture intervention could also help the public appreciate nature and raise awareness about conserving the environment. For instance, the 2014 LafargeHolcim Awards Asia Pacific Gold winning project named "Protective wing, a bird sanctuary" in Chiang Mai, Thailand by Jariyawadee Lekawatana aims to transform a plot



Yeang's award-winning design was a 14-level ecologically-designed retail and commercial building in Putrajaya, Precinct 2.

TR HAMZAH AND YEANG

of unused agriculture land into a bird habitat, which could in future serve as an education centre for children and the general public.

The project, which started in 2011, will create an eco-system to attract birds which includes the planting of more trees and cleaning of the lake.

"In this project, we are not just architects who work on our own and stick to our own judgement on the construction process. We have to engage with the owners and bird experts to understand the eco-system and improve our design," says Jariyawadee, who is the principal architect of Architektidd Thailand.

Although the project is still in progress, it has already drawn the local community's attention as a series of activities has been organised, such as bird-watching, as well as activities for children.

"Through observing and understanding how the eco-system works, people learn to love nature and its flora and fauna including birds," Jariyawadee explains.

Meanwhile, TR Hamzah and Yeang principal architect Datuk Ken Yeang concurs that architects are now more aware of their role in educating the public through their buildings and hence are designing



Jariyawadee's award-winning project — 'Protective wing, a bird sanctuary' in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

LARFARGEHOLCIM



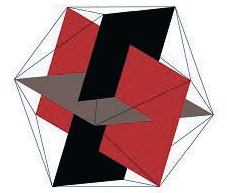
The construction of Milinda's Post-war Collective project — an eco-friendly community library in Ambepussa, Sri Lanka — has been completed.

more sustainable architecture.

"Sustainable architecture must fulfil three criteria — it must work well (function), be cost-manage-

able and aesthetically-fulfilling.

These attract people to love and want to use the building," says the Asia Pacific Bronze winner of the



LafargeHolcimAwards

2012 LafargeHolcim Awards.

Yeang's winning design then was for a 14-level ecologically-designed retail and commercial building named Sasana PJH in Putrajaya, Precinct 2, Malaysia, which will be built using eco-friendly state-of-the-art technology.

In this building, vegetation is actively integrated into the building to reduce energy consumption, provide solar shading, and create comfortable spaces. There is a double-skin façade which acts as a ventilated air cavity to improve thermal performance.

The 5th International LafargeHolcim Awards

The LafargeHolcim Awards is organised by the LafargeHolcim Foundation for Sustainable Construction based in Switzerland to acknowledge the hard work of architects and to encourage the flow of creativity and reward outstanding ideas.

Established since 2005, global online submissions for the latest and 5th instalment of the competition will close on March 21, 2017. Covering five geographic regions, each will have its own jury of renowned specialists from the science and business society. The five regions are Europe, North America, Latin America, Middle East and Africa, and Asia Pacific.

The awards is open for submissions from architects, urban design planners and engineers on projects and design concepts that focus on smart solutions for cities and the built environment. It offers US\$2 million (RM8.94 million) in cash prizes.

Lafarge Malaysia president and CEO Thierry Legrand urges Malaysian architects to participate in this global competition which recognises innovative projects and future-oriented concepts on the regional and global levels. He says participants are encouraged to submit their visionary concepts and bold ideas, irrespective of the probability of actual implementation.

Projects are evaluated according to the region in which they are to be built, and are measured against five target issues for sustainable construction, namely progression (innovation and transferability), people (ethical standards and social inclusion), planet (resource and environmental performance), prosperity (economic viability and compatibility) as well as place (contextual and aesthetic impact).

The regional winners will be announced in a series of five consecutive award ceremonies in the second half of 2017.

The 15 projects that receive Gold, Silver or Bronze in the regional levels will automatically qualify for the Global Awards, which will be presented in mid-2018.

PICTURES BY HARISS HASSAN | TheEdgeProperty.com



Jariyawadee: Engaging and working together with bird experts made the project a real success.



Legrand: Participants are encouraged to submit their visionary concepts and bold ideas, irrespective of the probability of actual implementation.



Yeang: Architects are now aware of their role in educating the public on the importance of sustainability.



Milinda: The objective of engaging soldiers into this project is to transfer the knowledge and building skills to them.



No substitute for hard work

BY LUM KA KAY

Having been in the real estate sector for over 20 years, Homefield Real Estate Sdn Bhd director Munirah Mohammad believes there is no replacement for hard work when it comes to serving customers.

With her passion and dedication to her profession, the real estate agent has certainly made a name for herself in the industry. Last year, she was one of the recipients of the Million Dollar Roof Top Award at the National Real Estate Awards 2016 organised by the Malaysian Institute of Estate Agents (MIEA).

"I believe in going the extra mile to serve clients and to constantly learn about the industry," says Munirah.

"Not only that, I think experience and knowledge about the industry are crucial if you want to be a good real estate agent," she tells TheEdgeProperty.com at her modest office in Seksyen 13, Shah Alam which belies the achievements of the agency.

She stumbled into the real estate industry when she was diagnosed with dyslexia while pursuing accountancy at Universiti Teknologi MARA, which led her to switch to estate management.

"Actually [real estate] has been calling out to me because most of my family members are already in property-related industries. One of my brothers is working in the electrical industry, the other is a civil engineer while my sister works for a quantity surveying firm.

Munirah graduated in 1989 during the recession and despite her qualification, she took on the job of a receptionist at a real estate firm in Subang Jaya. In her second month there, she volunteered to move to sales instead.

"I managed to sell a landed property in SS15, Subang Jaya for the price of RM120,000. From thereon, I had multiple appointments a day to meet clients.

"At one point, I had 20 appointments a day and I worked

around the clock," she says.

Interestingly, as if taking the cue from her familial involvement in property-related fields, Munirah's husband is also a registered estate agent.

"We took the [registered estate agent] licensing exam together. I then started Homefield Real Estate in 1996. He joined the agency in 2011.

"My daughter has also taken an interest in real estate. She had worked under a well-known developer for about a year before joining us as a business development manager. She will also be getting her estate agent licence soon," says Munirah.

Homefield's present focus is on bulk purchases. It has been appointed by several major property developers for project marketing purposes. According to Munirah, Homefield wants to create a niche in the bulk purchase business segment.

"Out of the 15 latest developments in Shah Alam, 13 are marketed by us. Shah Alam is a unique market where the majority of residents are Bumiputeras.

"Before embarking on any marketing campaign for a project, we always do our best to understand the developer's concept by helping them to position their brands and products.

"We have to know what we are selling very well — from the architectural concept down to each facility available in a project. It's our credibility that has gotten us this far," she shares.

Moving forward, Munirah hopes to see more quality Bumiputera estate agents in the market.

"Compared with when I first

Munirah (middle) receiving the Million Dollar Roof Top Award from Minister of Finance II Datuk Johari Abdul Ghani (left) and MIEA current president Erick Kho (right) at the MIEA National Real Estate Awards 2016.



started, the number of Bumiputera real estate agents and negotiators has grown.

"However, there are real estate firms who don't pay much attention to the quality of their agents. Being a real estate agent or negotiator is more than just closing a deal. I hope this can change, especially in the Bumiputera sector," she says.

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Munirah hopes to see more quality Bumiputera estate agents in the market.



Simple but interesting DIY Lunar New Year décor ideas

BY TAN AI LENG

You may have kept some old but still delightful mooncake boxes and containers or hamper baskets in the cupboard thinking that one day you could put them to some good use. Well, you certainly could and this Lunar New Year festive season is a good time to start.

Event decorator Winnie Poh, founder of The Décor Fairy, a company that specialises in thematic event decorations and design says a lot of things one already has at home could be used to create festive décor items.

“Instead of buying new décor items, I would suggest that we use the existing unused items in our house,” she adds.

“With just simple tools, like glue, coloured ribbons, faux pearls, golden ingots and other things, you can easily create striking and classy decorative items for the house. And it doesn’t cost you much as you are

recycling these items,” she tells TheEdgeProperty.com.

For the Lunar New Year, Poh says the auspicious red colour which symbolises energy and happiness should be the main colour used in the New Year décor.

“You will never go wrong with red, but one needs to be careful not to overdo it, for instance by randomly placing all sorts of red accessories and decoration all over the place,” she adds.

Poh suggests that one could place a flower ball at the main entrance, and some red decorations on the coffee table or in a corner to create a warm and welcoming festive atmosphere.

Other than red, yellow and gold are also the season’s most popular colours. For those who are adventurous, the colour orange and purple are other auspicious colours they could play with.

Poh has observed that there is a rising interest in DIY furniture, furnishing and décor with many trying their hands at creating and making their own pieces.

Poh: With creativity and a little time, one can turn unwanted items into nice festive decorations at home.



1. CHINESE FLOWER BALL

The Chinese flower ball, which is a symbol of celebration for the Chinese, is often seen at Chinese weddings or in a new home. It is also popular during the Lunar New Year and can be hung on the main door frame and/or strategically placed on a flower pot.

Things required: A piece of red cloth or old table cloth or curtain, and ribbons or wires.



STEPS

- 1 Place the piece of cloth flat on the table or floor. Hold one end of the cloth and pleat into several folds of one and a half the length of your palm.
- 2 Hold the middle of the pleated side so it looks like a ribbon. Repeat the pleating again.
- 3 Repeat the same steps for about four to six times, depending on the size of the ball that you want — more pleats will create a bigger flower ball.
- 4 Tie up the middle of the pleated cloth (the spot where you are holding the pleated cloth) using a red ribbon or wire.
- 5 Loosen the pleats, make it fluffy.
- 6 Wrap the rest of the cloth around the plant pot with a simple knot, you can use a separate piece of cloth if the cloth is not big enough to wrap the pot.
- 7 Tie the flower ball on top of the knot, adjust the shape.
- 8 Done

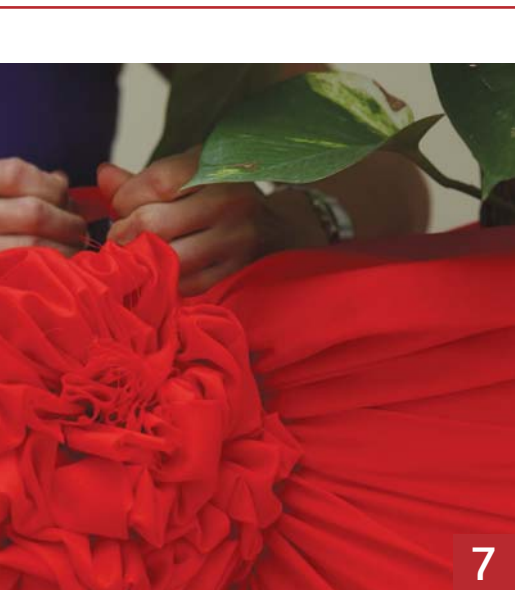




2. USING MOONCAKE BOXES TO DISPLAY FRUITS AND SNACKS

These can be placed on the coffee table or in a suitable corner of your home.

Things required: Mooncake boxes, ribbons, artificial flowers or decorative gold ingots, unwanted faux pearl necklaces, golden chocolate coins, fruit and new year cookies.



STEPS

- 1** Dress up the biscuit containers by using coloured ribbons.
- 2** You can use a glue gun, glue or double-sided tape to fix the ribbon onto the biscuit container cover.
- 3** Glue the gold ingots on the cover (optional).
- 4** Choose your preferred artificial flowers that match the mooncake box, and glue or fix them on the box cover.
- 5** Assemble the biscuit containers and fresh fruit and place them in the box.
- 6** The view from the back.
- 7** You can use additional artificial flowers to cover up the spaces between the fruit and biscuits.
- 8** If you have a multi-deck mooncake box, you can turn it into a God of Wealth treasure box by decorating it with fruit, a pearl necklace, ang pow packets and a God of Wealth figurine.
- 9** Put some golden chocolate coins in between the gaps.
- 10** Done.



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