

UP IN SMOKE!

Did you know fire incidents resulted in some RM2.4 billion of losses and claimed 107 lives last year? Five experts at a recent EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 offer their views on how you can keep your property safe from fires.



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EdgeProp.my SYMPOSIUM 2017 | IS YOUR HOME A FIRE HAZARD?

PHOTOS BY LOW YEN YEING | **EdgeProp.my** + HARIS HASSAN / THE EDGE MALAYSIA



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(From left) Chong, EdgeProp.my contributing editor Sharon Kam, Hamdan, Lee, Nur Faidarina, Gamuda Land branding and communications general manager Nicola Tiong, Nippon Paint (M) Sdn Bhd project division sales manager Sean Tan, Au, EdgeProp.my editor Lam Jian Wyn and Low.

Urgent need to spread fire-safety knowledge

BY **SHAWN NG**

In 1976, Malaysia had its first high-rise fire incident. An inferno raged for nearly 30 hours at the Campbell Shopping Complex along Jalan Campbell (now Jalan Dang Wangi). A short circuit had sparked the flames that razed the 4-storey retail podium and adjoining 15-storey office tower, claiming a life. Fast forward to nearly 40 years later, and fires continue to make headlines — such as the one at the unfortunately named 86-storey Torch Towers in Dubai, and the 24-storey Grenfell Tower blaze that resulted in an estimated death toll of about 80.

These incidents show that fires continue to destroy property and — more tragically — lives.

According to a recent report, 107 people were killed in fires while 477 were injured in fire incidents in Malaysia last year. The year

before that, 153 died while 467 were hurt. The figures highlight the need to improve public awareness and knowledge on fire safety and preventive measures.

“We all know that apathy, ignorance and arrogance can lead to tragic results. Yet, many times, we choose to dwell in a false sense of assurance and security until it gets too late, which can be fatal,” said EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 “Is your home a fire hazard?” on Oct 14.

“For instance, is it good enough to have a fire extinguisher at home? Do you know if you have bought something that is meant for all types of fire? Is it still in good working condition?”

“If you are living in a high-rise building, was it designed, built and managed with fire safety in mind?” asked Au, adding that communal living also demands for specific fire-safety practices.

To spread awareness on fire safety, EdgeProp.my had gathered five experts from various industries to share their advice.

The half-day symposium, which saw more than 350 participants turning up, was held at Hilton Kuala Lumpur. Gamuda Land was the presenting sponsor while the supporting sponsor was Nippon Paint Malaysia. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*. Attendees also took the opportunity to visit the booths set up by EdgeProp.my, Gamuda Land, Nippon Paint Malaysia and The Edge at the event.

One of the attendees of the symposium is Tan Hai Khoon, a property investor and a committee member of the joint management committee at his condo. He was delighted to learn more about fire hazards in communal living from the speakers.

“I want to know, when we come across any



Over 350 participants attended the half-day symposium.

EdgeProp.my SYMPOSIUM 2017 | IS YOUR HOME A FIRE HAZARD?



Camuda Land showcased its latest projects at its booth.



Au: Apathy, ignorance and arrogance can lead to tragic results.

EdgeProp.my SYMPOSIUM 2017

IS YOUR HOME A FIRE HAZARD?



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Attendees reading EdgeProp.my pullout while waiting for the session to begin.



An attendee asking a question.



Registration began at 8am.



Nippon Paint Malaysia representatives answering participants' queries on different types of paint products.

Participants visited EdgeProp.my's booth to find out more about the portal's analytic tools and the latest market trend.



issues and fire hazards in a building, how we should address it and which party we should look for to deal with it?" he told EdgeProp.my.

He added that he is concerned about the issues in communal living, which can lead to fire incidents, such as illegal renovations, fire equipment that are in poor condition, and misuse and crowding of common areas.

"For example, some of them [owners] will replace their fire-proof door with a non-fire-proof one, so if a fire occurs, it will spread to the corridor and burn other units," he explained.

The symposium featured five speakers — LeeSiong Architect Sdn Bhd principal architect Chong Lee Siong, Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd executive director Low Hon Keong, Fire and Rescue Department Fire Safety Division assistant commissioner Hamdan Ali, Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited architect and trainer Anthony

Lee Tee, and Energy Commission Malaysia's department of regulatory electrical safety's equipment unit regulatory officer Nur Faidarina Alias.

Chong, who was the first speaker at the event, highlighted in his session titled "So, your home was built with fire safety in mind?" the importance of owners complying with the relevant fire-safety requirements when renovating their properties.

He said the Uniform Building By-laws 1984 — which was amended in 2007 and 2012 — has clear guidelines and legal requirements on building safety that architects, developers and homeowners must comply with.

Meanwhile, Low noted that the level of awareness of fire safety among strata residents is still a cause of concern.

"The most common complaints lodged by homeowners are water leakage, cleanliness, security and problems with common facilities, but none of them are related to

fire safety," he said during his session titled "Fire safety in communal living".

The subsequent speaker, Hamdan, stressed that Malaysia's fire-safety laws are up to date, but there is a need to adopt a performance-based building regulatory system rather than just following the prescriptive laws in a building. He was presenting on the topic "Fire safety and building regulations — is Malaysia outdated?"

Lee, who was next, urged the audience to take action with just three simple steps to raise fire-safety levels in the country — identify the unsafe aspects and areas that are in dire need of improvement in buildings; start to address the most urgent and important issues; and then continue to maintain the building. He was sharing during his talk entitled "Burning facts you cannot ignore!"

The last speaker of the day was Nur Faidarina, who shared simple steps that the public can take to avoid electrical fires in her session titled "Ensuring electrical safety at home".

The steps include never plugging in or operating appliances with wet hands, selecting the appropriate cable size for an electrical appliance, and getting rid of and replacing electrical cords and cables that are already frayed, exposed and cracked.

Hamdan, Lee and Nur Faidarina then took part in a panel discussion entitled "Myths vs reality", which was moderated by Au.

One of the key takeaways from the panel discussion is that joint management bodies and management corporations of strata residential buildings should consider extending their annual audit process to include building safety.

EdgeProp.my SYMPOSIUM 2017 | IS YOUR HOME A FIRE HAZARD?

BY TAN AI LENG

Is your building a DEATH TRAP?

Be it your workplace or your home, a building can actually help save you during a fire. That is if it was built right.

There are safety requirements in place that the architects and builders need to adhere to make a building safe for people to reside or carry out their daily activities in.

LeeSiong Architect principal architect Chong Lee Siong said there are ample laws and regulations in Malaysia to ensure the planning or construction of buildings fulfil safety requirements; however, we still hear of buildings being burnt down because they do not comply with regulations or do not have fire safety certificates.

To close the gap between the implementation and enforcement of the law, homeowners and people in general should know some of these fire safety requirements in a building so they can rest assured that the building in which they reside or work in is safe or can allow them ease of escape in the event of a fire.

“First of all, a building has to be designed for people to get out of the building safely, if a fire breaks out,” Chong told the audience during his presentation titled “So, your home was built with fire safety in mind?” at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 “Is your home a fire hazard?” on Oct 14.

The event was organised by EdgeProp.my and presented by Gamuda Land. Nippon Paint Malaysia was the supporting sponsor. The event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

He cited four main principles for fire safety during a fire in a building:

1. Evacuation

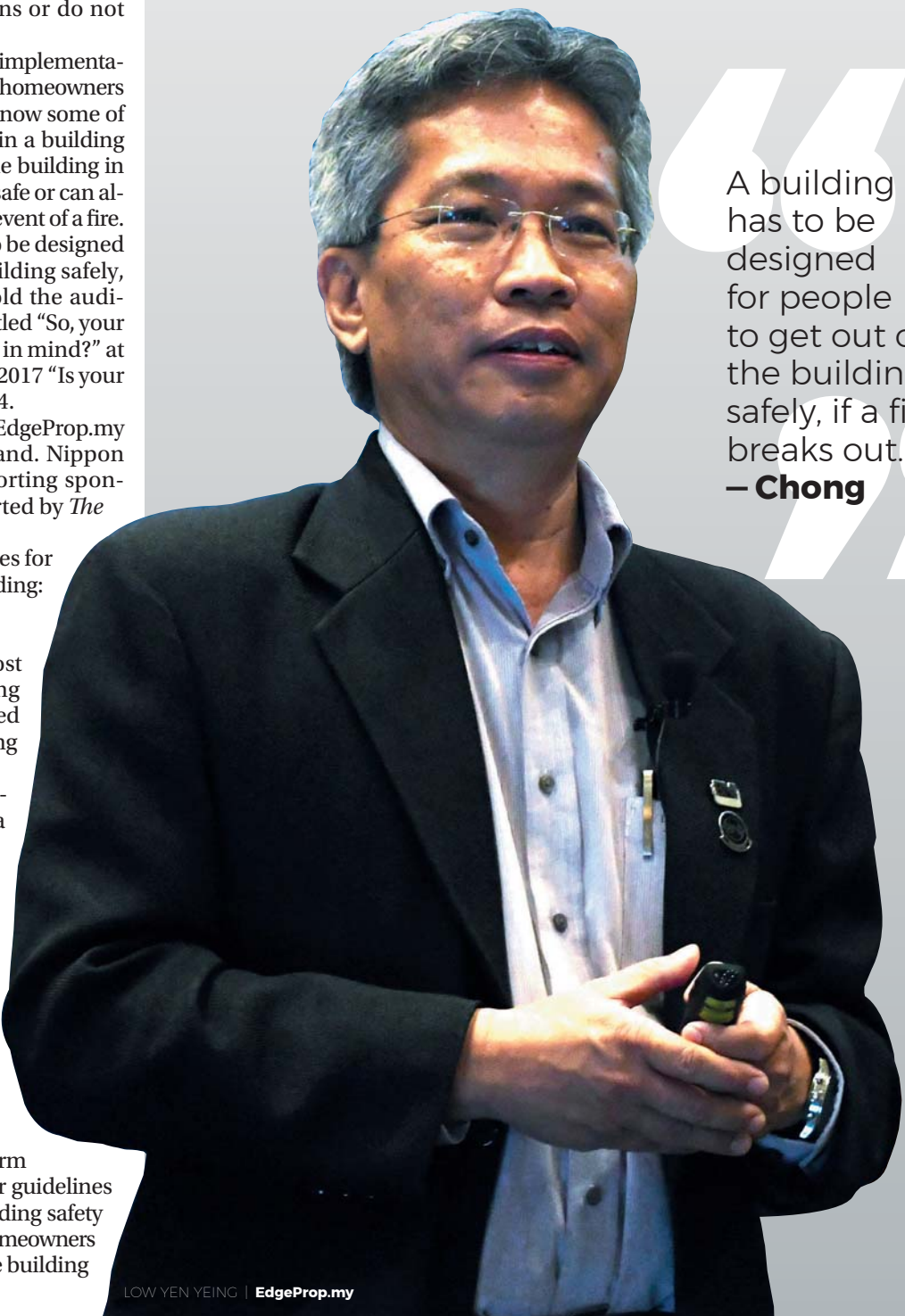
Evacuation is the first and most important principle in building design. The emergency exits need to be incorporated in the building design from the beginning.

For instance, in a condominium design, there must be a minimum of two staircase exits for every floor with fire-rated walls to ensure the residents can evacuate in a short time.

2. Containment

The second element is containment of the fire. The units or spaces within the building should be designed to prevent the fire from spreading to other places or another unit.

Chong noted that the Uniform Building By-laws 1984 has clear guidelines and legal requirements on building safety that architects, developers and homeowners must comply with to ensure the building fulfils fire safety requirements.



“A building has to be designed for people to get out of the building safely, if a fire breaks out.”
— Chong

These measures include fire-rated party walls that separate two units. In case of a blaze in one house or unit, the wall can keep it from spreading to the unit next door.

Besides this, for landed houses, there are also legal requirements regarding physical distances between units or even the maximum length of a row of houses (for instance, terraced houses).

For detached houses, the physical distance between the house to the front gate and back door is at least 10ft — this space is to prevent the fire from spreading next door.

For semidees, the two units are separated by a fire-rated party wall and the physical distance from the house to the front and back is 10ft.

As for terraced houses, the maximum length of one row is 300ft and each unit must have a fire-rated party wall that can prevent the fire from spreading to the next unit.

3. Suppression

Thirdly, a well-designed fire-safe building will have active intervention fire suppression elements, which means there will be equipment that enables the residents to suppress the fire to prevent it from spreading.

The suppression equipment could be in the form of fire extinguishers for different types of fire and fire blankets.

Chong said every home should have fire extinguishers at hand. The ABC dry powder type of fire extinguishers is for fires on burnt solids while the CO2 type is for fires caused by electrical leakages.

Fire extinguishers also need to be examined every year to check whether they are functioning well.

4. Rescue

Lastly, the element of rescue in the external and internal design of a building or development enables fire fighters to carry out their rescue operations efficiently and effectively.

Externally, the design of the building or landed housing area needs to include the access to proper external sources of water such as hydrants, lakes, ponds, pools, rivers and fire tenders. The external water source is important and needs to be maintained from time to time, especially fire hydrants.

“The fire engine has limited water source. It is essentially a giant water pump but it may not be enough. If the hydrants are damaged, it will delay the fire fighting process as fire fighters would then need to look for other water sources,” he added.

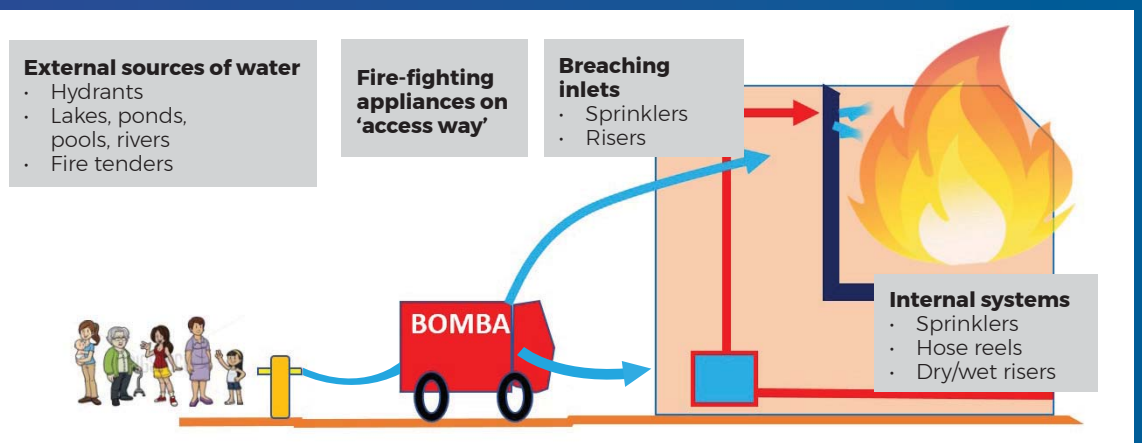
Internally, the building needs to have a well-designed fire-fighting access lobby and a Bomba (Fire and Rescue Department) lift to enable fire fighters to get into the building.

“If your home is built from quality materials, and the building is certified by Bomba or the respective authorities, it would have fulfilled these four main principles. Then, I would say the building you are in is built with fire safety in mind,” Chong concluded.

LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

Four safety principles during a fire

Evacuation	Exit doorways for occupants to evacuate if a fire breaks out
Containment	Ensure that the party wall is made from fire-resistant material and adequate physical distance of your house with next door (for landed houses)
Suppression	Well-functioning equipment to put out the fire immediately if there's a blaze, such as fire extinguishers and fire blanket
Rescue	External water source, fire rescue road and internal fire-fighting access lobby as well as Bomba lift



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Are we living DANGEROUSLY?

BY LUM KA KAY

One common practice among homeowners once they've received the keys to their new homes is to start checking out the unit for cracks and leaks. They also think about the budget they can spend on renovations to make the space look better.

However, they often forget or neglect to check on the wiring system, which is a rather common cause of fires, said Henry Butcher Malaysia (Mont Kiara) Sdn Bhd executive director Low Hon Keong.

"Faulty wiring can cause fires. Owners will do renovations when they get the keys to their new homes — they want to build wardrobes and all kinds of fittings, but very often they do not think of the wiring simply because it can't be seen and they are not electrical experts.

"So there could be a time bomb in your house and you do not know it because wiring is something we cannot see. But I believe that owners should pay attention to it. Even if it costs money, a good wiring system is essential," he said.

Low was speaking during his session entitled "Fire safety in communal living" at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 "Is your home a fire hazard?" held in Hilton Kuala Lumpur on Oct 14.

The symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my. Gamuda Land was the presenting sponsor while the supporting sponsor was Nippon Paint Malaysia. The half-day event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Other causes of fires in high-rise residential buildings include overheated kitchen areas, faulty electrical appliances, water seepage into the wiring system which will then cause short circuits, and carelessness in discarding cigarette butts, according to Low.

He also noted that an overcrowded home could raise the risk of a fire incident as more people share a limited number of power points and appliances. He added that property owners who operate home-sharing businesses at their units such as Airbnb could pose safety problems if they are allowed to rent out the unit to more people than the unit is meant for.

"One of the most common questions asked by homeowners to our property managers nowadays is whether home-sharing activities such as Airbnb are allowed in the building.

"The business is subject to the local authority's approval but the other consideration is how safe it is to have such businesses in a residential building.

"Some of these home-sharing units try to squeeze in as many occupants as possible; hence, a small unit meant for four people may end up having double that number. They will treat it like a hotel and leave air-conditioning on for 24 hours; thus, there is a high chance the occupants will cause an electricity overload.

"Furthermore, do the occupants of these units know where the fire escapes [of the building] are? Do we supply them with fire safety information like in a hotel? When we stay at hotels, it's different because there is a fire escape plan on the back of our room doors," he said.

Low also cautioned smokers to be mindful

of where they dispose of their cigarette butts.

"Smoking on balconies is common but when the cigarette butts are thrown from the balcony, it might land on your neighbour's home below, right onto their curtains. Be responsible to yourself and your neighbours," he advised.

Low fire-safety awareness

There are about 1.2 million strata property owners in Kuala Lumpur alone, but many of them lack fire-safety awareness, Low shared. He cited a real-life example of a fire that had started due to the ignorance or carelessness on the part of the homeowner who had turned the space below the air-conditioning compressor into a storage area.

"There was no proper ventilation for the compressor, which led to overheating and caused a small fire. We were in time to put out the fire. But what would have happened if there were nobody at home?"

"The [level of] awareness of fire safety [among strata property owners] is still very low. When we take over properties from developers for property management, among the frequently asked questions by these property owners are whether there are any defects in the unit, [what the] appliances supplied by the developer are and even whether they have unblocked balcony views or the pool size. None of these questions are related to fire safety.

"Some [property owners] even asked whether they could lock the fire safety access. So, from there we can tell their awareness level," said Low.

According to Low who oversees the management of over 80 properties, the common complaints lodged by homeowners are about water leakage, cleanliness, security and common facilities.

"They [homeowners] will not ask us what the fire escape plan is, the functionality of the sprinklers... It is not ingrained in their minds to ask us these questions.

"And when we conduct fire drills, only the security guards, property management and cleaners participate. Many of the homeowners are not bothered at all," he said.

Preventive measures

Low noted that fire safety involves everyone — from the property managers to homeowners.

Property managers, he said, need to make sure that fire-safety features in common areas are maintained and checked regularly to ensure they are fully functional in case of an emergency.

"In our daily inspection of our buildings, we have to make sure all the firefighting pumps are in order because firemen need water," he said. "If the pumps are not functioning, how can they put out fires?"

The [level of] awareness of fire safety [among strata property owners] is still very low.

— Low



LOW HON KEONG | EdgeProp.my

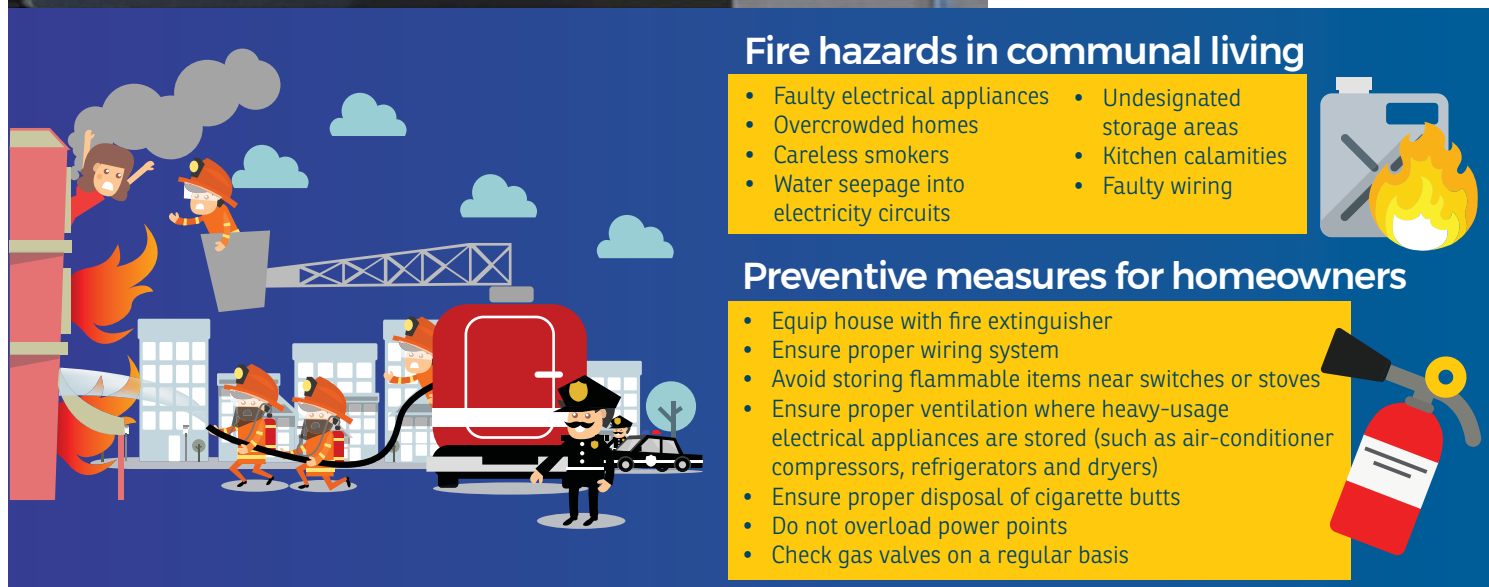
Fire hazards in communal living

- Faulty electrical appliances
- Overcrowded homes
- Careless smokers
- Water seepage into electricity circuits
- Undesignated storage areas
- Kitchen calamities
- Faulty wiring



Preventive measures for homeowners

- Equip house with fire extinguisher
- Ensure proper wiring system
- Avoid storing flammable items near switches or stoves
- Ensure proper ventilation where heavy-usage electrical appliances are stored (such as air-conditioner compressors, refrigerators and dryers)
- Ensure proper disposal of cigarette butts
- Do not overload power points
- Check gas valves on a regular basis





The sales gallery at Forest City will be turned into an international centre in the future to cater to residents' needs.

PROVING WHAT WAS ONCE ONLY IMAGINED

The balance between nature conservation and progressive development has often been a tricky problem faced by the modern world. More of one usually means less of the other. No doubt some visionary ideas have been kicked around to resolve this dilemma, but they are often too costly or complicated to accomplish.

Beating such restrictions though, Country Garden Pacificview Sdn Bhd has forged ahead to build Forest City, a smart eco-city located at Iskandar Malaysia, Johor.

When the plans for Forest City were unveiled in 2015, many were skeptical about the grandiose development. Today, the freehold mega development in Gelang Patah, which consists of four man-made islands with a combined area of 20 sq km, is fast taking shape in less than two years since it was officially launched globally in March 2016. At the same time, the developer has also been busy developing a 10 sq km site on the mainland, which comprises Forest City Golf Resort and Forest City IBS Park.

“For those who are not familiar with Forest City, they may not know what we are planning and doing. But we are very clear about our direction, which is to bring the best lifestyle, work, industries and other elements into Forest City, a city that aims to become the prime model of future cities with practical ideas, such as multi-layered transportation system and vertical greening system,” says Country Garden Pacificview regional sales and marketing vice general manager Zhou Jun.

Being the master developer of the mega development, Country Garden Pacificview is a joint venture between Country Garden Holdings Ltd and Esplanade Danga 88 Sdn Bhd, an associate company of Kumpulan Prasarana Rakyat Johor.

A world-class city taking shape

It has thus far completed a high-end luxury hotel with over 200 rooms, a commercial street, several water and waterfront recreational facilities, an apartment project and a sales gallery on the first island, which is still undergoing reclamation. The completed components of the project have been attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors per month.

“Some of our clients may think that the hotel and the commercial street, which currently houses about 40 retail shops, are merely a lifestyle component, but in fact it is the formation of our own business and operating model. They have also generated a lot of interest from corporations all around the world to collaborate with us,” Zhou adds.

Based on a multi-layered urban planning concept, the city is being built on an elevated platform and vehicles will be guided into two “underground” levels to create a quiet, safe and relaxing environment for



The Entire Forest City will be surrounded by buildings with green facades, sky gardens and rooftop gardens.

residents as no vehicles will be traversing its surface and fumes will be insulated.

On top of that, the entire Forest City will be surrounded by buildings with green facades, sky gardens and rooftop gardens – all forming a multi-dimensional greening system to purify the air, conserve rainwater and reduce noise pollution.

“The future neighbourhoods in Forest City will have no cars on the ground except pedestrians, bicycles and a railway transit line. This concept will allow us to create a liveable and comfortable yet high-density city,” Zhou explains.

Ambitious plans

Expected to be completed in 25 to 30 years' time, Forest City aspires to become a world-class centre for eight key sectors— tourism and MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), healthcare, education and training, regional headquarters, nearshore finance, e-commerce, emerging technology and green and smart industry with a population of up to 700,000.

To date, Country Garden Pacificview has inked several deals with 57 leading companies from both domestic and overseas to jointly develop the eight key industries including with Celcom Axiata Bhd, Sasaki Associates, Arup Group Ltd, G-Energy Global Pte Ltd, Cisco Systems Inc, Accenture PLC, Huawei Technologies Co Ltd, MJ Group, Midea Group Co Ltd, China Construction Steel Structure Corp Ltd, Deutsche Bank (Asia Pacific) Ltd and Bank of China (Malaysia) Bhd.

Located next to the Sultan Abu Bakar Customs, Immigration and Quarantine Complex at the Malaysia-Singapore Second Link, the city also aims to cater to the Lion City's businesses which are looking to expand from their respective saturated markets, such as emerging service providers, research and development companies and innovative small and medium-sized enterprises, she shares.

LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



Zhou: We are very clear about our direction, which is to bring the best lifestyle, work, industries and other elements into Forest City.

More excitement on the way

Looking ahead, Forest City has a few exciting projects to be unveiled, including the opening of Shattuck-St Mary's School in August next year, and the launch of Forest City Golf Resort and Carnelian Tower 1.

Sitting on the plot in Gelang Patah, Forest City Golf Resort is a freehold low-density development comprising a 5-star hotel, three golf courses and well-designed golf villas, which promote premium wellness living. The landed homes will be open for booking in November.

Located approximately 7km from Forest City, the golf resort development consists of three international standard 18-hole golf courses nestled along a beautiful river. The first course is jointly designed by golf legend Jack Nicklaus and Jack Nicklaus II with a planning area of 183 acres.

When completed in 2018, future residents of the golf resort will get to enjoy a pleasant and comfortable life in a green landscaped environment by the serene river.

Meanwhile, the Carnelian Tower 1 is set to become a landmark building like the Petronas Twin Towers in the southern region. Located at the first man-made island of Forest City, the Carnelian Tower 1 is a mixed development which houses a shopping mall, luxury condominiums, office spaces and leisure areas in a 45-storey tower. It will be launched globally soon!

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EdgeProp.my SYMPOSIUM 2017 | IS YOUR HOME A FIRE HAZARD?

BY NATALIE KHOO

The cost of FIRES

Billions of ringgit go up in flames yearly. As of September this year, fire incidents in the country have caused an estimated RM3.7 billion in total value of losses, according to the Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia (Bomba). This figure has way surpassed the total value of losses recorded for the whole of 2016 by 54.1%.

Fatalities from fires recorded up to September numbered 106, just one shy of the 107 lives lost in fires for the entire year of 2016.

These figures should raise alarm bells considering the rising density of people and building settlements especially in urban areas. The question is, how do we prevent more properties and lives from being razed?

“Prevention is and always will remain the priority. The worst enemy of fire safety is complacency.

“When there is a [fire] drill, nobody turns up — this is complacency. Only when we hear about tragic events caused by fire in the news do we feel empathetic towards them [the victims], but we never think it will happen to us,” said Bomba Fire Safety Division assistant commissioner Hamdan Ali.

“The cost of fires is made up of a combination of the losses caused by fires and money spent on fire prevention, protection and mitigation by detecting, containing and suppressing them effectively,” he added.

Instead of asking the cost of a fire incident, Hamdan said the better question could be: “What is the cost of not having fire safety?”

Hamdan was speaking on the topic “Fire safety and building regulations — is Malaysia outdated?” at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 “Is your home a fire hazard?” held in Hilton Kuala Lumpur on Oct 14.

The symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my. Gamuda Land was the presenting sponsor while Nippon Paint Malaysia was the supporting sponsor. The half-day event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Hamdan noted that experts have concluded that it is best to prevent fires before they happen. Prevention could be carried out in three core areas, or what is known as the Three Es — engineering, enforcement, and education.

Engineering covers the design and building of structures that are safe from fires.

“Use the best building practices to create structures that resist fire or that could prevent major losses in case of fire,” offered Hamdan.



Prevention is and always will remain the priority. The worst enemy of fire safety is complacency.
— Hamdan

LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

Meanwhile, enforcement has to be done while buildings are being designed and built to ensure that the work is done within the required fire codes. Once construction is completed, more checks and approvals are carried out to ensure that these fire safety codes have been followed.

Education is also important to inform people on how to prevent fires and what to do in the event of a fire.

Hamdan also noted that Malaysia’s fire safety laws are constantly updated. Provisions under the Uniform Building By-laws 1984 have been updated in 2012 to eliminate unnecessary requirements and include new ones — for instance, with regards to building materials, construction methods and technologies.

“Life safety is the prime objective when it comes to fire safety and building regulations. Under the Fire Services Act 1988 (Act 341), building owners or managements are responsible for occupant safety through self-declaration of the fire certificate under the fire regulation. This is the minimum requirement by law.

He also noted that as building design evolves and becomes taller, more iconic and complicated, it is important to adopt a performance-based building regulatory system rather than to just follow the prescriptive laws.

“Today, building codes in many countries are shifting from prescriptive to being more performance-based. It uses fire science, fire engineering principles and human science to protect people, property and the environment from fire,” he added.

Tall buildings, for instance, possess attributes that can adversely affect the fire safety of a building including extended evacuation time, water supply limitations, height beyond the availability of resources of Bomba and a pronounced stack effect.

“Some of the fire strategies for high-rise buildings include using fire suppression system provisions such as sprinkler design densities, special suppression systems and fire pump arrangement; smoke management system provisions such as the design approach and egress system provision, including the use of horizontal exits, phased evacuation zones and unique exiting configurations,” Hamdan explained.

In conclusion, he said all stakeholders should play their part in the prevention of fire incidents.

“If everyone played their part diligently, it will be a win-win situation for building owners, fire fighters, professional engineers, professional architects, insurance underwriters and all occupants of the building, which could be you and me with our families,” he added.



	2016	Jan-Sept 2017
Total fire calls	50,008	23,237
Fatalities	107 lives	106 lives
Loss value	RM2.4 billion	RM3.7 billion
Saved value	RM37.8 billion	RM45.1 billion

DATA BY THE FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT MALAYSIA

Principles of fire safety

- Means of escape for the occupants
- Curbing spread of fire within the building and from one building to another
- Means of detection and extinguishment of fires
- Fire fighter safety

Fire safety is the set of practices intended to reduce the destruction caused by fire. That includes:



- Safety of occupants
- Safety of properties
- Safety of fire fighters
- Safety of adjacent premises
- Business continuity

In order to achieve fire safety, a building must have five safety elements:

- 1 An adequate means of escape for occupants
- 2 A structure that can withstand the fire for a period of time to allow occupants to get out of the building and for firefighters to extinguish the fire
- 3 Appropriate compartmentation to contain the fire
- 4 The ability to detect and extinguish the fire at the earliest stage
- 5 Adequate access for intervention by the fire brigade

BY SHAWN NG

Lack of awareness and lack of action even when there is awareness are public enemies number one when it comes to fire safety and prevention.

The root cause of most fire mishaps in the country is ourselves, because we do not take fire safety seriously.

But just three simple steps can make a difference in saving lives and property and to prevent the fatal fire tragedies we have been hearing more of lately, including the Grenfell Tower in London that claimed 80 lives and the tahfiz school fire here in Kuala Lumpur that killed 21 pupils and two wardens.

“Fire burns and affects everybody. It doesn’t matter if you are rich or poor; Malay, Chinese or Indian; young or old — that is a burning fact.

“But people continue to have low awareness and take no action with regards to fire safety,” said Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited architect and trainer Anthony Lee Tee during his talk entitled “Burning facts you cannot ignore!” at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 “Is your home a Fire hazard?”

“Even if people are aware of the importance of fire safety, they remain ‘blur blur’ and take no action. How long are we going to be like this?” Lee asked the audience who attended the half-day symposium on Oct 14.

The event was organised by EdgeProp.my. Gamuda Land was the presenting sponsor while Nippon Paint Malaysia was the supporting sponsor. It was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

“I’m happy to see quite a large crowd here today, but I think whenever we speak about fire safety, we don’t quite get the same kind of attraction as those ‘make money’ property investment talks, which discuss where we can invest next.

“Buying a property is probably the most expensive thing you will ever spend on in your life, and yet you don’t protect it? It is like driving your car with bald tyres or without seat belts. Yeah, it still runs, but what happens when you get into an accident?” Lee continued.

Hence, he urged everyone to take action with these three simple steps:

1. Establish condition
2. Prioritise
3. MRR (maintain, repair and replace) programme

Lee said one must first identify the unsafe aspects and areas in the building that are in dire need of improvement. “First of all, we need to establish the condition of your property — is it safe or unsafe, and what is unsafe? Some buildings are born sick. As mentioned by the speakers today, there are so many things that could have already gone wrong in the first place, including the design and construction of the building as well as the fire-fighting system,” he said.

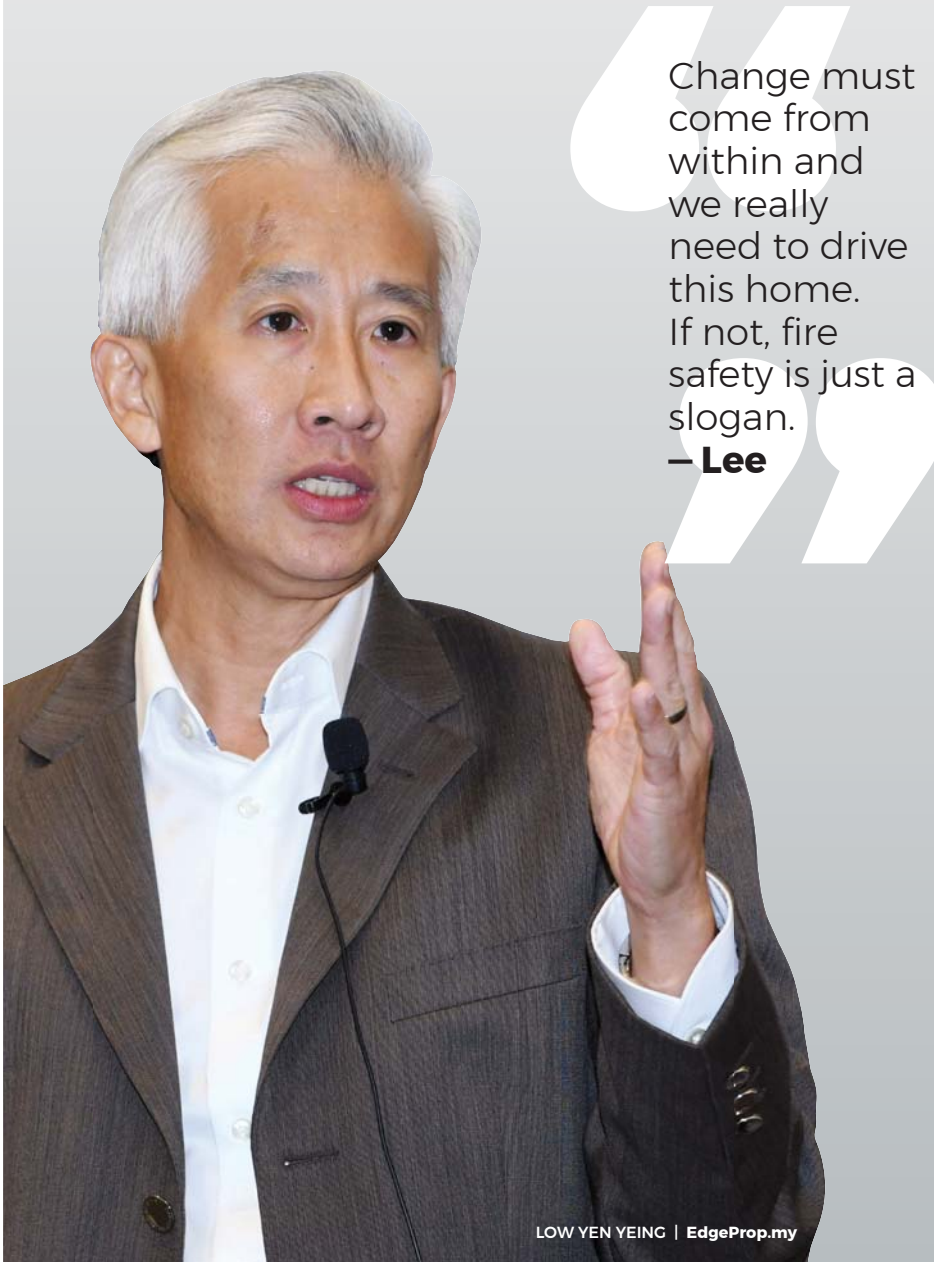
“Like humans, buildings get sick and they need TLC — tender loving care. They need proper maintenance and this would require awareness and action. So start your action,” Lee urged.

Once the problem areas have been identified, start to address the most urgent and important issues — those that will harm or kill must take priority, while continuing with the maintenance of the building. Indeed, the MRR — maintain, repair and replace — programme is a crucial part of ensuring the safety of a building.

“There are different people here today — property managers, developers, investors, contractors and people who are interested in fire safety — all of us will have an action plan depending on our expertise and the

STEPS

to keep our homes safe from fire



LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

direction that we want to go forward. We need to take action,” he said.

Lee reminded the audience that one shouldn’t focus solely on their homes but also the places where they or their family spend a lot of time in such as kindergartens, workers’ quarters, boarding schools, retirement homes and even home away from home such as Airbnb and other home-sharing or serviced apartment units.

Many also do not realise the fire hazards some property developments pose. Among the high-risk groups, for instance, are high-rise buildings and mixed developments, which are rising in number.

The fire hazards and barriers to fire safety in a building include security grilles, locked fire escapes, faulty fire-fighting equipment, faulty sprinklers and smoke detectors, broken water hydrants, water seepage into the electrical wiring or circuit and shoddy electrical works.

In fact, according to Lee, shoddy electrical work is one of the leading causes of fire incidents in the country. There were over 800 cases of electrocution reported in the country in the period of 2002 to 2015 with more than half of the victims killed. The states with the highest incidents are Sabah, Selangor and Penang.

Many would also think that a building with a fire certificate is safe, but Lee said this is a misconception.

“This is because it only deals with the fire services and does not include electrical and other dangers that will cause fire in your property,” he explained.

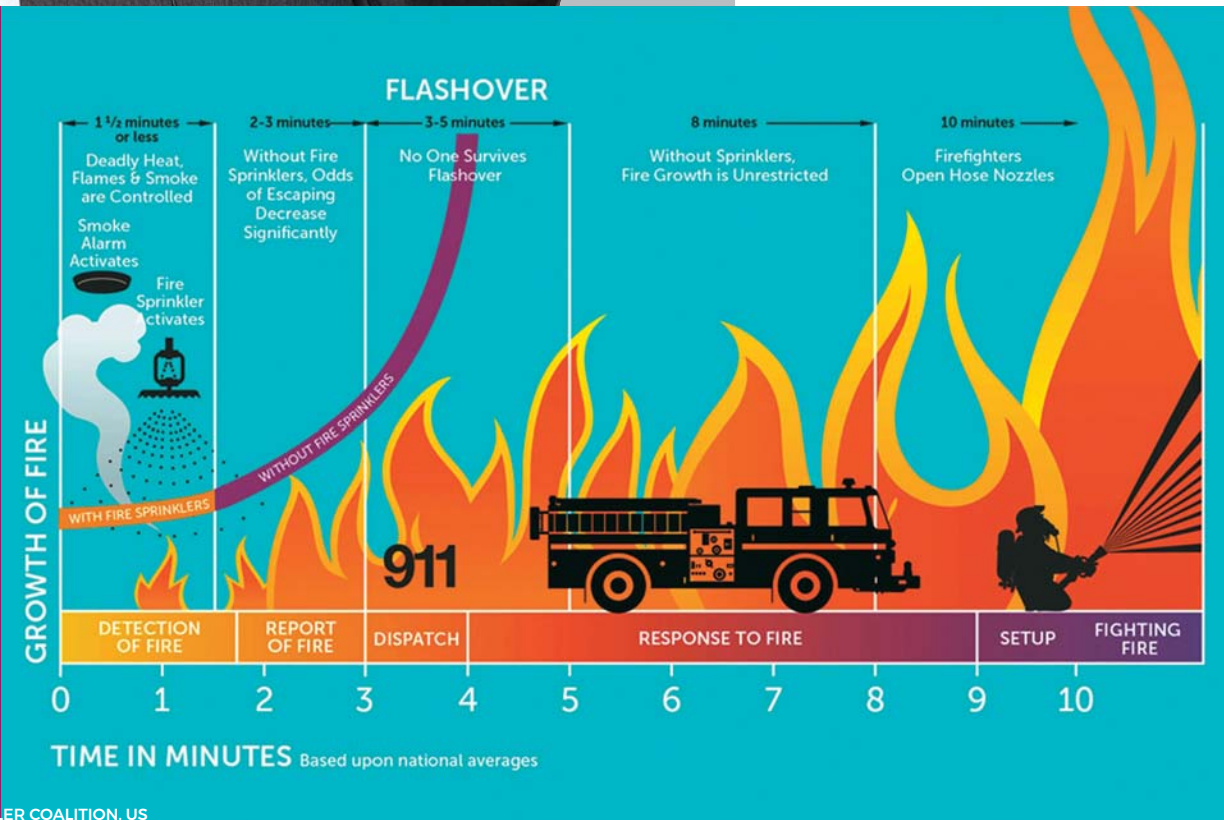
In addition, many buildings are believed to be operating without a fire certificate, which is issued yearly by the Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia to building owners who have complied with their fire safety requirements.

Besides addressing safety issues in a property, an individual’s dangerous habits can also put his or her life in danger. Lee cited the habit of people charging their mobile phones beside their beds overnight, which could pose a fire hazard as the phone may be overcharged and explode.

“Change must come from within and we really need to drive this home. If not, fire safety is just a slogan.

“I also believe we must start with our young ones. If you see the state of our kindergartens and schools today, our children are being taught in and exposed to environments that are unsafe. So when they grow up, they would think that it is the norm — so we have to change that norm,” he concluded.

HOME FIRE TIMELINE



BY NATALIE KHOO

Often when we read the papers or hear on the news about a tragic case of electrocution, we feel sorry for the victims and their families. At the same time, some questions may also pop up in our heads — how did it happen? Could it have been prevented?

“When electrical items do not meet the minimum safety requirement, it can lead to fire, electric shock, explosion, radiation and other risks that can cause injury or death to a human being and/or damage to a property,” said Energy Commission Malaysia Department of Regulatory Electrical Safety’s Equipment Unit regulatory officer Nur Faidarina Alias.

The Energy Commission of Malaysia (EC) or Suruhanjaya Tenaga is a statutory body established under the Energy Commission Act 2001. It is responsible for regulating the energy sector, specifically the electricity and gas supply in Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah.

At the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 entitled “Is your home a fire hazard?” organised by EdgeProp.my at Hilton Kuala Lumpur on Oct 14, Nur Faidarina spoke about electrical safety at home. Gamuda Land was the presenting sponsor of the symposium while the supporting sponsor was Nippon Paint Malaysia. The half-day event was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.

Citing faulty water heaters, for example, Nur Faidarina recalled a case in 2013 where a couple was found electrocuted in the bathroom of a condominium in Mont’Kiara due to the leakage of electric current from the water heater.

She also urged the public to ensure that their electrical appliances have a SIRIM (Scientific and Industrial Research Institute of Malaysia) sticker and other approval labels by authorities as this means they have gone through the required testing procedures to prove that they are safe to use.

“All electrical appliances must obtain a Certificate of Approval required for the importation or manufacturing of electrical appliances or equipment as required by the Malaysian Electricity Regulation 1994. The types of appliances refer to any domestic equipment, any low voltage equipment that is sold directly to the general public and any low voltage equipment that does not require special skills in its operation,” she said.

Approved electrical equipment or appliances are required to be affixed with safety labels before being sold to the public, to prevent malfunctioning. She also advised

ELECTRICITY

— friend or foe?

When electrical items do not meet the minimum safety requirement, it can lead to fire, electric shock, explosion, radiation and other risks.

— Nur Faidarina



the public to be cautious with the products that do not promote electrical safety.

“The pillow warmer, for instance, was banned in Malaysia in 2015 while energy-saving devices in the market which claim to save electricity usage as advertised are not effective at all. In fact, they function more like power banks,” she explained.

There are also many simple steps people can take at home to avoid electrical mishaps, which include never plugging in or operating appliances with wet hands, selecting the appropriate cable size for an electrical appliance, and getting rid of and replacing electrical cords and cables that are already frayed, exposed and cracked, offered Nur Faidarina.

When it comes to electrical safety, besides ensuring the equipment itself is safe, one must also ensure that the installation design is safe and managed by a competent person.

“The installation design and installation of electrical works must be done and managed by a competent person as no one is allowed to perform or carry out any electrical work unless he holds a valid Certificate of Registration issued under the Electricity Regulation 1994,” she noted.

Thereafter, how often should the installation be checked and by whom?

Nur Faidarina said an installation other than a domestic installation shall be checked and tested by a competent person at least once every five years, or at any time as directed by the EC.

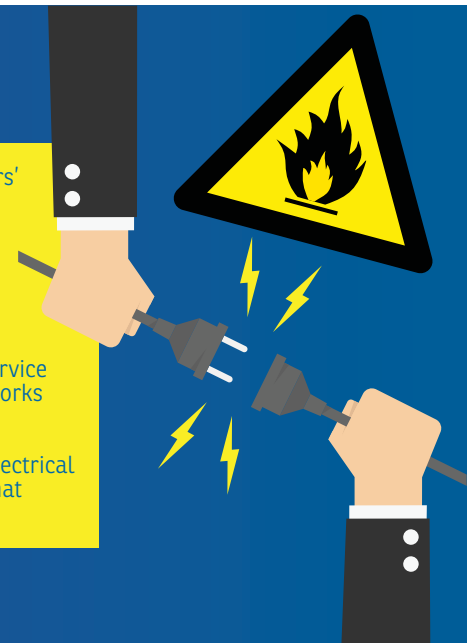
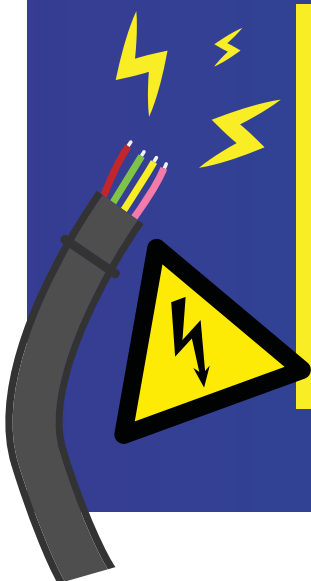
“The responsibility to maintain the installation in the manner required shall be with the owner, management, licensee or occupier of the installation, his servant or agent. Meanwhile, any protective relay and device of an installation shall be checked, tested and calibrated by a competent person at least once in every two years, or at any time as directed by the EC,” she elaborated.

In fact, non-compliance to any provision of the Electricity Regulations 1994 will incur a fine of not exceeding RM5,000 or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year or even both.

She also pointed out that under the Electricity Supply Act 1990, it is stated that any person who tampers with or adjusts any installation or part of it or manufactures or imports or sells any equipment so as to cause or to be likely to cause danger to human life or limb or damage to any equipment or other property, shall be guilty of an offence and for each such offence shall, on conviction, be liable to a fine not exceeding RM100,000 or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years or both.

Tips to prevent electrical fires

- Never plug in or operate appliances with wet hands.
- Do not place the connection cable under the carpet or on the floor.
- Never plug too many appliances into a single outlet or extension cord. Overloading electrical outlets can lead to damage of your home electrical system or, worse, a fire.
- Get rid of and replace electrical cords and cables that are already frayed, exposed, or cracked.
- If an electrical equipment gives you a shock, turn it off and send it for repair.
- Remove the electrical appliance from the socket every time you need to clean it.
- When removing the plug from an appliance, pull the plug instead of the wire or cable.
- Select the appropriate cable size for an electrical appliance.
- Carefully follow the manufacturers’ instructions regarding your home appliances.
- Never attempt electrical repairs or upgrades. Always seek professional help.
- Obtain an electrical contractor service registered with EC for electrical works or repairs.
- Make sure to purchase and use electrical equipment approved by EC and that have the SIRIM-ST label.





Concerns over enforcement on fire safety regulations

Au (left) moderated the discussion between Lee (second from left), Hamdan (second from right) and Nur Faidarina (right).

BY TAN AI LENG

While Malaysia may have numerous laws and regulations with regards to fire safety in buildings, proper enforcement of these laws remains a question mark.

Members of the audience at the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 “Is your home a fire hazard?” on Oct 14 questioned how safe their homes really are and whether there was enough enforcement to ensure that the buildings they reside in are safe. Their concerns were raised during the symposium’s panel discussion session titled “Myths vs reality”.

On the panel were Energy Commission Malaysia’s Department of Regulatory Electrical Safety Equipment Unit regulatory officer Nur Faidarina Alias, Architect Centre Sdn Bhd accredited building inspector and trainer Anthony Lee Tee, and Fire and Rescue Department Malaysia (Bomba) Fire Safety Division assistant commissioner Hamdan Ali. The discussion was moderated by EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee.

Au noted that the tragic case of the Grenfell Tower fire in London has alerted the public about fire safety in their buildings, as people’s lives could be saved if a building is designed with fire safety features and residents are well-educated with fire prevention and safety knowledge.

Lee said that in the Grenfell Tower incident, one of the possible reasons the fire spread so quickly was the plastic-filled panel cladding on the building.

However, way before that incident, Bomba had already tested the material back in 1997 and had banned the usage of this material in Malaysia for buildings above the height of 18m.

“For the buildings that are using this kind of material and built before 1997, we have set up a consultative committee to look into the problems related to the use of this material and find ways to enhance fire safety in these buildings, and let the owners understand the risk,” Lee revealed.

Hamdan then noted that the said material is allowed for use in buildings below the height of 18m (or around six storeys) simply because the fire engine’s ladder could reach only up to that height.

He said laws and regulations pertaining to fire safety in Malaysia have been amended from time to time, to enable local authorities to ensure that new building projects fulfil the fire safety criteria.

However, the panellists agreed that there is a need to inspect the safety features of a building every now and then to make sure every element is functioning and managed well. New systems and additional safety features could also be installed.

The panellists also concurred that residents themselves as well as joint management bodies (JMBs) and management corporations (MCs) play vital roles in this respect

as they have the decision-making rights.

For instance, the installation of more fire alarms in a building or in every residential unit involves extra costs and therefore will need the JMB or MC’s efforts in explaining the rationale and getting the owners’ approval for the installation.

Building audit

A member of the audience had also suggested that a building audit be done and be included in the annual audit by JMBs and MCs.

In response, Lee said although there is currently no requirement for JMBs or MCs to include the building audit as part of their annual audit, it’s something worth considering.

“One can get an independent expert to check the overall safety of the building,” he suggested.

Hamdan added that Bomba is available to provide the necessary expertise and service if a building needs fire safety inspection.

He also reminded homeowners to annually check their fire extinguishers they have at home to make sure they function well.

In terms of the choice of fire extinguishers that one should have in hand at home, the ABC dry powder type is adequate for fires on burnt solids while the CO₂ type is for fires caused by electrical leaks.

Certified electrical appliances

Meanwhile, Nur Faidarina from the Energy

Commission noted that besides the building itself, homeowners need to beware of uncertified electrical appliances and unsafe wiring systems as these are among the main causes of fire break-outs.

For safety reasons, all electrical appliances must obtain a Certificate of Approval for the importation or manufacturing of electrical appliances or equipment. This is required by the Malaysian Electricity Regulation 1994.

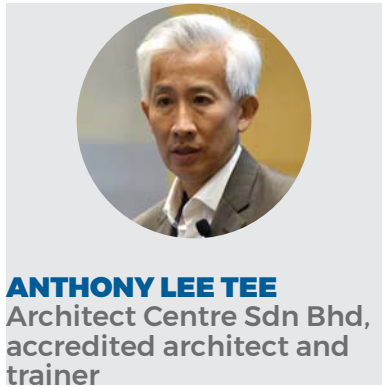
Approved electrical equipment or appliances will be affixed with safety labels before being sold to the public.

To avoid electrical fires, Nur Faidarina also reminded homeowners to check their home electric panel box by pressing the “T” button every month to make sure it is functioning well. In case of electrical leaks, it might save one’s life, she added.

In conclusion, fire safety is the responsibility of not just the homeowners but also the approving authorities, developers, architects, contractors and property managers. All have their roles to play so the impact could be reduced in the event of a fire.

To report a fire, many might be confused with the correct number to dial. Hamdan said if residents do not have the contact number of the nearest fire station, the safest way is to “keep calm and dial 999”.

The half-day symposium was organised by EdgeProp.my. The presenting sponsor was Gamuda Land while Nippon Paint Malaysia was the supporting sponsor. It was also supported by *The Edge Malaysia*.



ANTHONY LEE TEE
Architect Centre Sdn Bhd,
accredited architect and
trainer

What are the chances of a fire incident occurring at a high-rise residential building compared with a mixed development (residences atop a commercial podium)?

If poorly managed, all types of properties are at risk due to faulty fire protection and fire-fighting equipment, obstructions in staircases and defective fire doors, which render them unsafe.

The fire risk for high-rise residences built on top of commercial blocks is obviously higher due to the density, nature of activities and proximity. However, a well-managed mixed development with good standard operating procedures (SOPs) in place would be able to prevent — and if necessary, respond quickly and adequately to — a fire incident.

The provisions found in the Uniform Building By-Laws (UBBL) and Fire Services Act impose far more stringent conditions for these types of properties. We have well-defined by-laws that stipulate the design and construction of residential and mixed developments. The UBBL dedicates the largest portion of its by-laws towards fire requirements for fire-resistant materials, early detection and alarm, safe evacuation, containment of smoke or fire, and installation of fire fighting equipment, among others.

What should residents be aware of when living in these properties?

Residents and owners should be well aware that high-rise stratified properties mean “communal living” extending beyond their own unit and car park.

They should participate actively and harmoniously in their respective joint management bodies (JMBs) or management corporations (MCs) to become aware of and resolve issues related to “their own” common property.

They should understand the various systems constructed into their property, such as fire doors, pumps, pipes, fans, electrical boards, lift motor rooms, control panels and emergency backup systems, must be operated and maintained properly and regularly. These systems have prescribed service intervals and life spans, and are interconnected with one another to ensure that the property is kept operationally safe as intended. Residents should be aware that it is more costly to carry out repairs or replacements after a system has broken down than the spending on regular maintenance.

A simple analogy is: “Avoid engine damage, change your engine oil and filter every 10,000km. For optimal performance, inspect and service your car regularly.”

Before embarking on ad-hoc repairs, common property should be professionally inspected to establish condition, prioritise urgent issues related to safety, and then implement maintenance, repair and replacement methodically.

BURNING questions

Questions from the audience were forwarded to the speakers of the EdgeProp.my Symposium 2017 “Is your home a fire hazard?” after the event. Here are their replies.

I'm currently staying in a 2-storey link house and I would like to enhance the fire security of my home. What can I do?

Here is a (non-exhaustive) list of things property owners can do:

1. Remove obstruction at the ground floor (back and front doors). Metal grilles at the back door can be a fire trap.
2. All metal grilles in the house (upstairs and downstairs) to be built in accordance with the Bomba guidelines for safe evacuation.
3. Practical housekeeping — do not store flammable materials, fuel or items that can burn easily. Even a burning stack of old newspapers or old cardboard boxes can be difficult to extinguish.
5. Install a smoke or fire alarm above the staircase and test the unit regularly.
6. Buy at least two units of ABC fire extinguishers (6kg) and place one in the kitchen and another in the hall upstairs, on a wall where it is easily seen.
7. Engage a proper qualified electrician to check all the wiring and installation. Check that the residual current device is correctly rated in compliance with the Energy Commission's requirement. If the house has frequent outages, check the root cause.
8. Understand the sources of fires, such as handphone chargers, prayer altar lights or electrical appliances that are left on standby mode. Always switch them off at night. Use only SIRIM-approved appliances. Water leaks can cause electrical fires, so fix all water leakages.



LOW HON KEONG
Henry Butcher (Mont
Kiara) Sdn Bhd, executive
director

Once the JMB or MC takes over a project from the developer, what kind of tests on the fire safety system does the JMB have to perform?

Carry out a joint inspection at the main control room with the developer and property manager. That's the heart of the building where almost all of the fire-fighting equipment is placed. Besides that, testing must also be conducted at all fire-fighting pump rooms.

If the owner/developer of the commercial car park that adjoins our residential condominium agrees to shut down the car park and block car entries into the car park, can

the JMB lock the fire door at the car park?

Every fire door needs to be UNLOCKED at all times. Should the JMB wish to lock the door, electromagnetic locks must be installed and Bomba's approval is required.

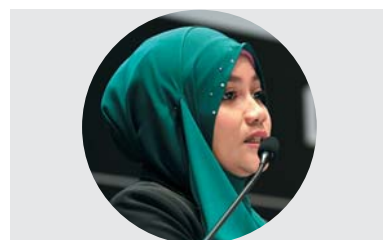
Another alternative is install one-way access doors where they can only be accessed from the lobby or ground floor to the staircase (access from the staircase to the lobby will not be possible). Any residents exiting their floor via the staircase will not be able to access any other floor except the ground floor.

What is the recommended frequency to service fire systems in a residential condominium?

Monthly basis — no compromise!

How would you suggest building managers draw residents to participate in fire drills?

Organise a tour-based fire drill; visit authorised areas such as the fire control room or pump rooms within the building where owners don't really have the chance to see before. Collaborate with Bomba and suggest a demonstration involving the fire engine.



NUR FAIDARINA ALIAS
Energy Commission of
Malaysia Department of
Regulatory Electrical Safety,
Equipment Unit regulatory
officer

I am currently renting a unit that has faulty installation. I contacted my landlord but they told me not to worry about it. What should I do?

Write an official letter to your landlord to inform them of the matter. Subsequently, if there is no action from the landlord, you may file a complaint to the Energy Commission at www.st.gov.my under the “e-Aduan” section.

How often should I get my home electrical wiring checked and where should I look for certified electricians?

Currently, there are no requirements for the checking of domestic electrical wiring. However, residents are advised to check their own house wiring. Residual current devices should be tested at least every six months to ensure its proper operation. The test shall be carried out in accordance to the Electricity Supply Act 1990 and Electricity Regulations 1994, and based on the recommendation of the manufacturers and/or good maintenance practice.

To look for certified electricians and contractors, please refer to the Energy Commission's website.

Is there a schedule of fees that certified electricians need to adhere to?

Please refer to the Energy Commission's website for the full list of contractors with their respective fees.



CHONG LEE SIONG
LeeSiong Architect, principal
architect

There must be a party wall between two premises, but does it apply to commercial properties? In case the business intends to expand to the space next door, is it okay to break down the party wall? Is there a need to install a fire door?

This is subject to planning and building plans approval from the local authority including the planning department, building department, premise licensing, the Fire and Rescue Department and associated departments related to the type of business. Approval, if granted, will usually include an undertaking to re-instate the wall upon the termination of the tenancy or ceasing of the business.

As for the fire door installation, it depends on the type of occupancy and the relevant compartment limits (floor area and/or volume) as prescribed in the UBBL.

How often should we service the fire systems of a condominium?

Fire safety systems should be inspected and serviced at least once a year. Every six months is preferable, and a monthly test run of the water pumps and alarm is highly recommended. You could seek qualified fire services contractors to provide these inspection services.

Fire hose reels should be readily accessible during fires. However, the vandalism rate at our premise is high and that results in unauthorised use and even missing hoses. Can we tie or lock the hoses to its casings?

For fire safety reason, please avoid doing any modifications to fire safety equipment. If needed, the JMB or MC should consider installing Bomba-approved lockable cabinets with break glass keys for the fire safety equipment.

My terraced house was built 30 years ago. Is there any way to check whether it was made from fire-rated material? If the party wall is not made by fire-resistant material,

should I change it and will it be very costly?

A conventional claybrick wall which is 200mm thick with plaster on both sides is deemed to satisfy the fire rating requirements of a party wall. If possible, you may get up into the ceiling space and check if the wall is fully constructed to project beyond the roof.

Should I keep a fire blanket at home?

Yes, most certainly — do keep at least one close at hand near the kitchen. But a portable fire extinguisher (ABC dry powder type) is more essential for every home.

I am staying in an old 5-storey walk-up apartment and there's only one staircase for 20 units. Is this sufficient for evacuation purpose in case of emergency? What should we do to improve the fire safety of the building?

The current UBBL prescribes a minimum of two exit stairs for every floor, with the exception of shophouses/shopoffices where the top-most floor does not exceed 12m in height from the ground. You may seek the services of professionals to do an inspection or audit on your premises and make recommendations on the building's fire safety.



HAMDAN ALI
Fire and Rescue Department
Malaysia Fire Safety
Division, assistant commissioner

There must be a party wall between two premises, but does it apply to commercial properties? In case the business intends to expand to the space next door, is it okay to break down the party wall? Is there a need to install a fire door?

For your information, if the owner plans to expand his or her business with same usage of the building, the party wall can be demolished. However, all the other passive and active fire-safety requirements need to be considered since the area has been expanded. The need for a fire door depends on the usage of the units by owners.

Fire hose reels should be readily accessible during fires. However, the vandalism rate at our premise is high and that results in unauthorised use and even missing hoses. Can we tie or lock the hoses to its casings?

We admit that the number of vandalism cases is increasing. However, the fire hose is generally used by the public during an emergency. There are many ways to prevent vandalism such as installing a closed-circuit TV or to have a break glass key box.

Can I use fire-extinguishing ball products to replace the traditional fire extinguishers?

A fire-extinguishing ball product cannot be used to replace the fire extinguisher, but can be used as an additional fire-fighting equipment.

EdgeProp.my SYMPOSIUM 2017

IS YOUR HOME A
**FIRE
HAZARD?**



THANK YOU

Distinguished speakers:

Chong Lee Siong
Principal Architect, LeeSiong Architect

Low Hon Keong
Executive Director, Henry Butcher
Malaysia (Mont Kiara)

Hamdan Ali
Fire Safety Division Assistant
Commissioner, Fire and Rescue Department
Malaysia

Anthony Lee Tee
Accredited Building Inspector and Trainer,
Architect Centre

Nur Faidarina Alias
Regulatory Officer, Equipment
Unit, Department of
Regulatory Electrical Safety,
Energy Commission Malaysia

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APSDA aims to grow into a strong regional body for interior designers

BY SHAWN NG

PETALING JAYA: The recently formed Asia Pacific Space Designers Alliance (APSDA) aims to expand its member base from the current 20,540 members across eight member countries — Malaysia, China, Australia, Indonesia, India, Japan, the Philippines and Thailand — said its president Chris Yap Seng Chye.

“We want to rope in more national interior design bodies across the Asia-Pacific region to enlarge our membership. We are looking at Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and even the Middle East,” said Yap, who is also the current president of the Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers (MIID).

He added that three or four bodies have applied to join APSDA and the association will process their applications after its first general assembly meeting, which will be held on Oct 21 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

EdgeProp.my is the media partner for the event.

“Besides exchanging ideas and recognising the good works by our member countries, we also want to talk about interior design practices and related issues at the meeting.

“Each country has its own strengths and we can learn from each other. For us, we are able to share some of our experiences in the legislation of the interior design industry, which is regulated under Act 117 of The



Yap: Each country has its own strengths and we can learn from each other.

Board members of the first APSDA

President: Chris Yap Seng Chye (Malaysian Institute of Interior Designers)

Deputy president: James Galias Jao (Philippine Institute of Interior Designers)

Vice-president: Lea A Aziz (Himpunan Desainer Interior Indonesia)

Board members:

- Hiromu Hasegawa (Japan Commercial Environmental Design Association)
- Julie Louise Hobbs (Design Institute of Australia)
- Kung Shu Chang (Chinese Society of Interior Designers)
- Montip Lynn Assoratgoon (Thailand Interior Designers Association)
- Pratap Vasant Jadhav (Institute of Indian Interior Designers)

Architects Act 1967, with countries that don't have these by-laws yet,” he told EdgeProp.my.

However, Yap noted that the Malaysian interior design industry has several issues that need to be addressed, one being unregistered interior designers in the market who are running rampant.

“We are still a young industry, so the awareness among the public has to be im-

proved and we need to stamp out unregistered designers to protect the public. Although some of them deliver acceptable jobs, we do receive complaints against these black sheep who deliver shoddy work and run away with payment,” he said.

APSDA had remained as a loose alliance for the past 19 years and was only officially formalised with the Registrar of Societies in Malaysia on Jan 23 this year.

“Before APSDA was officially formed, the members only have meetings once every two years, so I suggested to formalise the association and meet more often to implement our plans, such as a cross-border student-exchange programme and awards to recognise excellent interior designers in the region.

“Hence, the association decided to go with the suggestion in 2015. Now we will have a board meeting every quarter. Looking ahead, I hope APSDA can grow into a strong regional body that can represent the region on interior design,” he said.

Currently, the eight national Asia-Pacific interior design bodies that are officially registered as the founding full members of APSDA are the Chinese Society of Interior Designers, Design Institute of Australia, Himpunan Desainer Interior Indonesia, Institute of Indian Interior Designers, Japan Commercial Environmental Design Association, Philippine Institute of Interior Designers, Thailand Interior Designers' Association and MIID.

MIEA-Penang renames Maspex 2017 to include primary properties

BY LUM KA KAY

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Institute of Estate Agents (MIEA) Penang is hosting its fifth property exhibition from Oct 26 to 29 at Queensbay Mall, Penang and for the first time, the event will officially include primary properties in the market.

Formerly known as the Malaysian Secondary Property Exhibition (Maspex), the upcoming fair has been renamed the Malaysian Secondary and Primary Property Exhibition.

MIEA-Penang chairman Mark Saw told EdgeProp.my that the event has been renamed specifically to include properties being sold by property developers besides showcasing secondary properties marketed by registered estate agents.

Among the participating developers are Malaysian Resources Corp Bhd (MRCB), Ideal Property Group, BSG Property, MTT-Priority Group of Companies and Penang Development Corp — the development agency of the Penang state government.

“As the property market moves into a more challenging phase, we

have enlarged the property fair to encompass property developers with solid track records and which our estate agency firms have worked well with over the years,” Saw said.

There will be 16 real estate firms showcasing up to 5,000 secondary properties at Maspex 2017 Penang. “Our exhibitors are mindful of their selection of good [secondary] properties at marketable prices with owners' full authorisation and permission to sell or lease their properties at Maspex,” he said.

Saw added that MIEA-Penang chose to hold the event at Queensbay Mall as the venue has high traffic flow.

Saw said it is currently a buyer's market in the northern state of Malaysia where secondary property transactions constitute about 70% of the Penang property market.

“Transactions have been slow but there is [still] movement as you [agents] are dealing with individuals as opposed to project sales. This is a buyer's market with plenty of choices for those looking to get their dream home,” he said.

Sponsors for the event are Malaysian Banking Bhd, MRCB, Ideal Property Group, BSG Property,



MIEA-Penang's Saw (fourth from left) with State Town, Housing and Country Planning Committee chairman Jagdeep Singh Deo (middle) and the organising committee of Maspex 2017 Penang.

MTT-Priority Group of Companies and Allianz Malaysia. The official media partners are EdgeProp.my and Good Harvest. It is also endorsed by the Penang state government and the Board of Valuers, Appraisers and Estate Agents (Bovaea).

“MIEA will continue to raise the

practising standards of registered estate agents by working closely with statutory bodies such as Bovaea to help educate the public and safeguard the public's interest on investing in real estate.

“Illegal signboards, posters and stickers put up by illegal agents have also created a nuisance. Our

local authorities Majlis Bandaraya Pulau Pinang and Majlis Perbandaran Seberang Perai, together with the police and the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission, are in the middle of solving this problem. Stern action will be taken against offenders,” added Saw.



PICTURE BY MIEA-PENANG



Plotting a future surrounded by IoT

BY RACHEL CHEW

The digital era's Internet of Things (IoT) is on everyone's lips. However, how many of us really understand what IoT is and its influence in everyday life now and in the future?

According to Panasonic Malaysia strategic B2B development general manager Tan Chee Hon, IoT is a simple yet flexible concept that aims to enhance the quality of work, live and play.

"IoT is about connecting people with people or things through the internet. It improves connectivity between people and people, people and machine, and machine and machine," explained Tan in his talk titled "Internet of Things (IoT) Perspective of a People's Company" in the Future Forward Forum 2017 held on Sept 7.

Themed "Trends: Insite", the forum was organised by Rehda Youth, the youth division of the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia, in partnership with Nippon Paint Malaysia. EdgeProp.my was the official media partner of the forum.

"With the connecting activity, we can collect data and these data are the fundamentals and root of the mushrooming social media, e-commerce, applications, analytics and automation, which are the tools to enhance our social experience and speed of doing business and communication," Tan said.

The widespread use of broadband technology today has spurred the growth of IoT.

"In many parts of the world, broadband and Long-term Evolution (LTE) services are widely available. We also have high diffusion rate of the internet today and, most importantly, people are already very adapted to high internet usage in their daily lives. I would think that now is the perfect storm for IoT," he shared.

Furthermore, the incredible penetration of smart devices, the much-improved IT literacy in society with lives intertwined via social network, the mushrooming of digital entrepreneurs and as more connected devices become smaller, more affordable and advanced, all these are contributing to the growth of IoT.

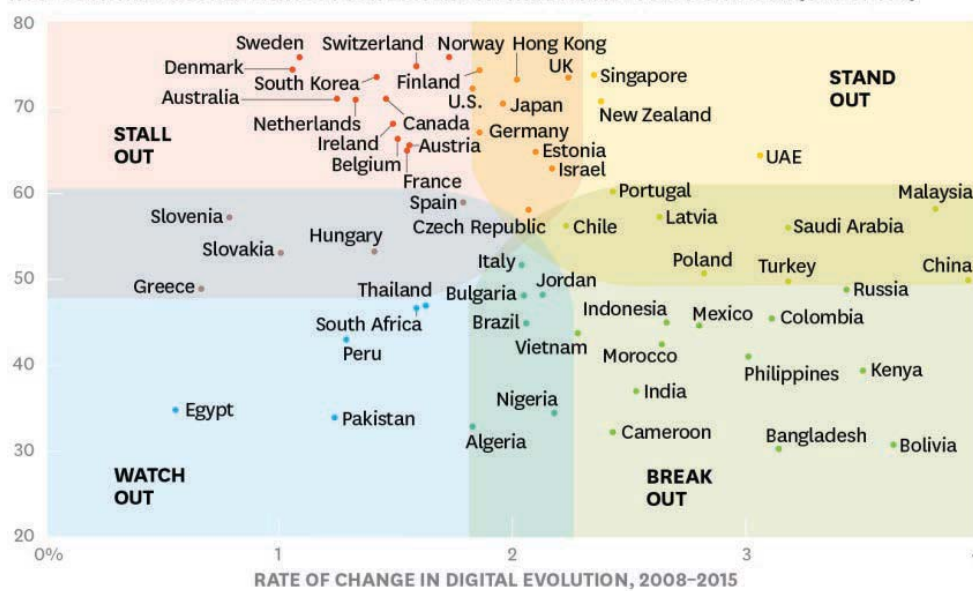
However, Tan believes the potential of IoT has not yet been fully unlocked.

The current common IoT in use are: smart devices, security cameras, video intercom, HD video conference, connected AV and home network systems. But IoT can do more, he added.

Plotting the Digital Evolution Index, 2017

Where the digital economy is moving the fastest, and where it's in trouble.

HOW COUNTRIES SCORED ACROSS FOUR DRIVERS ON THE DIGITAL EVOLUTION INDEX (OUT OF 100)





NREA 2017 honours industry stars

BY LUM KA KAY

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Institute of Estate Agents (MIEA) recognised the luminaries among real estate agents, negotiators and practitioners at its annual MIEA National Real Estate Awards (NREA) on Oct 14.

Deputy Minister of Finance II Datuk Lee Chee Leong officiated the gala dinner held at The Majestic Hotel here.

The Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Raymond Tang King Seng from Uptown Realtors.

Meanwhile, EdgeProp.my managing director and editor-in-chief Au Foong Yee and Impetus Alliance Advisors Sdn Bhd managing director and chief executive director Datuk Seri Michael Yam were accorded the MIEA Honorary Member Award.

A new award was given out this year — the MIEA Chief Executive Officer Award, which went to Reapfield Group founder and president David Ong.

EdgeProp.my sponsored two awards: The Most Innovative Marketing Idea Awards and the MIEA-EdgeProp.my Top Online Real Estate Negotiator Award.

Cornerstone Realty and Knight Frank Malaysia Sdn Bhd took home The Most Innovative Marketing Idea Awards while Mohd Faizal Md Ismail of Rescom Realty is the winner of the MIEA-EdgeProp.my Top Online Real Estate Negotiator Award.

Meanwhile, the Top Real Estate Firm Award was won by Hartamas Real Estate Sdn Bhd while the Real Estate Agent of the Year went to YY Lau of JLL Property Services Sdn Bhd. Another two notable award winners this year were Teo Zi Lin from Zilin Properties and

Munirah Mohammad from Homefield Real Estate Sdn Bhd who each won the Million Dollar Producer Award, which is presented to estate agents who have collected RM1 million in professional fees in 2016.

NREA 2017 organising chairman Lim Boon Ping said digital disruption has changed the way real estate practitioners do business.

“We should stop calling IT a disruption and start calling it a tool for us to use to help our business,” he said in his welcome address.

Attendees of the gala dinner also witnessed the changing of the guard at MIEA, where Eric Lim took over as president from Erick Kho.

MIEA president Eric told EdgeProp.my: “It is a great honour to helm and lead the national real estate agents’ association where its members are the prime movers of the national property industry that forms the backbone of the economy.”

Eric said he will continue to elevate the standards and professionalism of the real estate industry through education and training.

“We are also collaborating with many regional associations of similar trades to share their best practices and training modules.

“With the enhanced knowledge, we believe our members can serve their clients better and give greater confidence in the marketplace,” he said, adding that more collaborative arrangements are also in the pipeline to expand MIEA members’ market reach beyond Malaysia.

Go to www.EdgeProp.my to read further coverage of NREA 2017.



PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

Eric (middle) presenting an appreciation token to Lee (left) while Boon Ping looks on.



Eric (right) officially taking over as MIEA president from Kho.



Au and Yam were accorded the MIEA Honorary Member Award.



Cornerstone Realty sales and marketing director Wong Yau Long (right) receiving The Most Innovative Marketing Idea Award from Eric and Lee (middle).



(From left) Eric and Lee giving out the MIEA-EdgeProp.my Top Online Real Estate Negotiator Award to Mohd Faizal while Au looks on.



(From left) Eric and Lee presenting The Most Innovative Marketing Idea Award to Knight Frank Malaysia capital markets executive director Allan Sim.

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