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FRIDAY, MARCH 8, 2019 . ISSUE 2843/2019 . PP19055/06/2016(034530)

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EdgeProp.my pullout is published by The Edge Property Sdn Bhd. It is available with *The Edge Financial Daily* every Friday. The pullout is also distributed at more than 200 offices, shopping complexes, condos, medical centres and F&B outlets in the Klang Valley. You can also download it for free at www.EdgeProp.my

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MIEA: Please extend HOC incentives to sub-sale properties

The government's incentives for the six-month National Home Ownership Campaign 2019 (HOC 2019) should be extended to first-time homebuyers of secondary market residential properties, said the Malaysian Institute of Estate Agents (MIEA).

The organisation urged the government and stakeholders to weigh the importance of the secondary residential property market which makes up about 80% of all residential property transactions in the country.

It noted that the incentives for buyers of properties registered under the HOC 2019 should not just be limited to properties offered by developers as there are significantly more choices of affordably-priced homes for first-time homebuyers with in the secondary property market.

Residents upset over rise in Airbnb units

Residents at Gurney Park here have expressed concerns over the growth of Airbnb operations in their housing area.

They are upset over the invasion of their privacy with the presence of tenants who keep changing frequently as many of them are short-term visitors and tourists, said their spokesperson, Yan Lee, who is also the Penang Chant Residents' Association (Chant) adviser.

"Residents are worried about their safety because they do not know the occupants as they only stay for brief periods. There are also

HOC 2019 launched to increase home ownership among Malaysians



Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad officially launched the National Home Ownership Campaign 2019 (HOC 2019) last Friday at the HOC 2019 Expo in Kuala Lumpur. The campaign began on Jan 1 and will run until June 30, 2019.

The HOC was initiated to increase home ownership among Malaysians and to address Malaysia's property overhang which has hit 43,211 units, amounting to a value of RM29 million as of the third quarter of 2018.

During the tabling of Budget 2019 last November, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng announced that the HOC will be initiated in collaboration with the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (Rehda).

In conjunction with the HOC, Rehda in partnership with the Housing and Local Government Ministry (KPKT) organised the national-level



el HOC 2019 Expo from March 1 – 3 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

Over 20,000 units of homes were showcased in 180 booths by 51 developers. A government pavilion showcased affordable housing projects and schemes under KPKT, Perbadanan PRIMA Malaysia, Syarikat Perumahan Nevada Bhd, Permodalan Nasional Bhd and UDA Holdings Bhd. More expos will be held in various states and cities after this.

During the HOC period, for Malaysian homebuyers purchasing properties registered under this campaign, the stamp duties on instruments of transfer for properties priced up to RM1 million and for loan agreements of up to RM2.5 million will be waived. Homebuyers will also get a minimum 10% price discount from developers.

Go to mapex.com.my/hoc2019 for more details.

complaints of trespassing, thefts and noise," he said.

He added the authorities, especially the state government, with the cooperation of the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, should take action to regulate housing rental operations more seriously.

Approval for 8,000 to 10,000 affordable units in FT every year

The Federal Territories Ministry

wants to approve between 8,000 and 10,000 affordable homes every year, said its minister Khalid Abdul Samad recently.

He explained that such a target is in line with Putrajaya's plan to build one million units of affordable homes within the next 10 years.

He added the ministry received more than 30 applications to build 29,000 affordable units in Kuala



Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan this year.

"We fell short last year, only approving about 6,000 units, but that is okay because the new government had just taken over.

"Despite the many projects that have been approved, there is still a long waiting list for affordable homes," he said after handing over keys to Residensi Jalilmas homeowners in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur recently.



LAUNCHES + EVENTS



Ladies' Day DIY Rose workshop

Date: March 8 (Fri)

Time: 3pm to 7pm

Venue: Country Garden Danga Bay Phoenix Clubhouse, Danga Bay, Jalan Bertingkat Skudai, Johor Baru

Contact: 1300-88-9888

Organised by Country Garden Danga Bay, participants get to learn and make their own roses at the workshop. Admission is free. Seats are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Launch of Rumbia @ Ari Permaisuri

Date: March 9 (Sat)

Time: 11am to 3pm

Venue: Ari Permaisuri Sales Gallery, Jalan Sri Permaisuri, Bandar Sri Permaisuri, KL
Contact: (010) 211 9605 / (010) 212 1388
Ari Permaisuri



is a joint venture project by DwiTasik and Kuala Lumpur City Hall with EH Property as the turnkey developer. The second project at Ari Permaisuri, Rumbia will be launched this weekend. It is a low density condominium 500m away from the Cheras LRT station.

Launch of Parkland Residence

Date: March 9 (Sat)

Time: 7pm to 10pm

Venue: Cheras Selatan 118, Cheras 9th Mile, Selangor

Contact: (012) 900 7115

Parkland Group will launch its latest high-rise residential project Parkland Residence @ Cheras South. The event will be filled with various activities such as lucky draws, performances by local celebrities, magic show, an appearance by the God of Fortune and lion dance.

Exclusive preview of Baris Place

Date: March 10 (Sun)

Time: 11am to 5pm

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If you have any real estate-related events, email us at editor@edgeprop.my.
Events listed here will also appear on www.EdgeProp.my.

Venue: Sapphire Hall @ Club 360, Setia Ecohill Welcome Centre, Persiaran Ecohill Barat, Setia Ecohill, Semenyih, Selangor
Contact: (03) 8724 2255
S P Setia is unveiling Baris Place @ Setia Mayuri, comprising only 32 units of road-fronting 2- and 3-storey shophots. The event will feature Balinese dance and music, Balinese massage and an introduction to the Setia Mayuri township.



Science Day + Launch of Nada 5A

Date: March 10 (Sun)

Time: 10am to 6pm

Venue: Nada Alam Gallery, Kampung Baru Sungai Mahang, Mantin, Negeri Sembilan

Contact: (06) 799 7228

Seri Pajam Development Sdn Bhd

is launching Nada 5A double-storey terraced houses at its 160-acre Nada Alam development in Pajam, Negeri Sembilan. Visitors also get to participate in fun science activities including science games, an edible 3D cell model workshop, a mini solar car building workshop and a live science show.

Jazz it up with Jasmine Chen

Date: March 16 (Sat)

Time: 11am to 6pm (Jasmine Chen's performance @2pm)

Venue: The Roof Garden, Sime Darby Convention Centre, 1A, Jalan Bukit Kiara 1, Bukit Kiara, KL
Contact: (016) 299 1787

Immerse yourself in the soulful jazzy tunes by Jasmine Chen, singer from Crazy Rich Asians, while enjoying the stunning panoramic view of TPC KL's Green Fairways. Guests also get to discover Senada KL's latest development progress and its homeownership package. RSVP required.

Rumbia Residence coming up on last residential plot in Bandar Sri Permaisuri

BY RACHEL CHEW

KUALA LUMPUR: The last residential plot in the mature Bandar Sri Permaisuri township in Kuala Lumpur is being developed into the Ari Permaisuri high-rise residential development with a gross development value of RM450 million.

Comprising two phases, the first phase comprises a RumahWIP affordable housing project, Residensi Akasia, which was launched last year and Rumbia Residence @ Ari Permaisuri, a condominium which will be launched this weekend (March 9), said developer Dwtasik Sdn Bhd.

Ari Permaisuri is located on an 8.05-acre leasehold site at the 216-acre Bandar Sri Permaisuri which is a joint venture development between Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) and Dwtasik.

"Bandar Sri Permaisuri comprises a total of 17 plots of land. It has been developed since 1994 and we only have three undeveloped lands left in the entire township, of which two are commercial plots and only one is residential - the one where we are currently developing Ari Permaisuri," Dwtasik executive director Datuk Wan Mohamed Yaacob Wan Salaidin told EdgeProp.my.

Explaining the name for Ari Permaisuri, turnkey partner for the project EH Property managing director Christopher Soh said Ari was formed by the first letters in the names of each project in the two phases: Akasia, Rumbia and Ixora, which are also names of plants.

"We want to create a green, natural and a serene environment at Ari Permaisuri. This is why the development is quite low-density," Soh said.

A unique thing about Ari Permaisuri is



From left: Wan Mohamed Yaacob, Soh, Dwtasik Construction Sdn Bhd director Zulkifli Ibrahim and Dwtasik Sdn Bhd senior manager K L Leong.

that each of the three projects has its own dedicated entrance and facilities.

"We realised from our previous projects, sharing facilities is not convenient for residents and there is less privacy. So we decided to do it differently with Ari Permaisuri although we have to sacrifice some land and profit. Ari Permaisuri is our last plot of residential land, so we want to do it right," said Wan Mohamed Yaacob.

Launching this weekend is the second project of the first phase, Rumbia Residence comprising a 35-storey single block condominium with only 284 units.

"There are only two unit built-up sizes — 990 sq ft and 1,227 sq ft. The bigger unit has four bedrooms and three bathrooms. Two of the bedrooms have en-suite bathrooms. The double master suite concept is designed for families," said Soh, adding that every unit comes with two carpark bays.

The price ranges from RM580 psf to RM650 psf while the maintenance fee is 35 sen psf. The project is slated for completion by 2021.

Facilities at Rumbia Residence include a half basketball court, an outdoor futsal court, jogging track, swimming pool, children's

playground, sky gym, BBQ area, multipurpose hall and a four-tier security system.

"We decided to go with high ceilings of 11ft, wide main doors and ample windows that provide good natural light and airflow, instead of giving fittings that buyers may end up tearing down or replace with something they prefer," said Soh.

Meanwhile, Residensi Akasia, the RumahWIP project at Ari Permaisuri, consists of only 200 units in a 24-storey block. The unit built-up sizes are from 807 sq ft with three bedrooms and two bathrooms.

"Akasia has been very well-received given that it is low-density with only 200 units which is very rare among RumahWIPs. It is located in a mature township close to the KL city centre and near a public transport station. We only have a couple more units available," said Wan Mohamed Yaacob.

Dwtasik plans to introduce the last phase of Ari Permaisuri called Ixora Residence during the launch of Rumbia. "We want to start registrations for Ixora during Rumbia's launch," he revealed.

Ixora Residence will consist of 321 units housed within a 42-storey tower. "We are keeping the best for last. Ixora will have its own private driveway leading from the main road to the main entrance. It will also be lake fronting and have unblocked KLCC skyline views," he disclosed, adding that details have yet to be finalised.

Ari Permaisuri is located along Jalan Sri Permaisuri and is accessible via the Middle Ring Road 2, Sungai Besi Highway, Shah Alam Expressway, Maju Expressway, Salak Highway and Jalan Loke Yew. About 500m away is the Cheras LRT station while the Salak Selatan LRT and KTM stations are slightly further.

Give your feedback on proposed property crowdfunding rules

KUALA LUMPUR: The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) is seeking public feedback on the proposed regulatory frameworks for property crowdfunding and initial coin offerings (ICOs). It has published two consultation papers which are available on the SC website.

The property crowdfunding consultation paper follows Budget 2019 which identified crowdfunding platforms as an avenue to provide an alternative funding source for first-time homebuyers while providing investors access to a new asset class.

"The proposed regulatory framework will set the eligibility requirements of first-time homebuyers, criteria of properties which can be listed on the platform, obligations of platform operators and financing limits," said the SC in a statement on March 7.

According to a news report by The Edge Financial Daily, under the proposed framework, platform operators are prohibited from providing funding or financial assistance to a homebuyer or investor, offering investment advice and negotiating terms for and on behalf of individual third parties such as financial advisers and lawyers.

The SC has also proposed that a homebuyer must put up a minimum of 10% or maximum 20% of the property price as the initial amount, to show his or her commitment to the scheme.

In terms of eligible properties to be listed on the platforms, the SC proposed to only allow properties that are newly completed in Malaysia, purchased directly from a developer that is valued at no more than RM500,000, stated the report.

The other consultative paper is on the proposed framework of the ICO, which is an alternative fundraising avenue powered by distributed ledger technology which involves the issuance of digital tokens by an issuer that wishes to raise funds for a project or venture.

"The proposed framework among others, covers the eligibility of issuers, the need for transparent and adequate disclosures as well as utilisation of proceeds of the ICO," said the SC.

The two consultation papers are available at the SC website sc.com.my/regulation/consultation-papers and the public can submit their comments to CPLAWREFORM@seccom.com.my by March 29, 2019.





When a developer raises the

MAINTENANCE FEE



BY NATALIE KHOO

Let's say you bought an apartment unit and signed the sales and purchase agreement (SPA) in 2015. The developer told you that the maintenance fee for the development was 35 sen psf. Fast forward two years, to January 2017, you received the keys to your brand new unit. As an added incentive, the developer offered you free maintenance for the whole of 2017 which essentially meant you would start paying for your maintenance fee in January 2018. However, just eight months after you begin paying the monthly maintenance fee of 35 sen psf, you receive an email informing you that there will be an increase in the maintenance fee from 35 sen currently to 65 sen — nearly double the amount. What's more, the new rate will take effect the following month (September). As the purchaser, what would your reaction be?

If you have been paying RM400 a month including sinking fund, the increase will set you back an additional RM260 a month. The question you would most probably be asking at this point in time is: "Why so high suddenly?"

The above scenario is based on a true story. Feedback received indicates that cases of maintenance fees being raised substantially from the initial fee imposed by the developer is a common occurrence.

The developer's side of the story

Reasons given by the developer for the significant fee hike in the case above were:

1. It was a low-density development. The pain of a price hike is amplified in a development with fewer units as the maintenance cost is shared among the units.
2. The fee hike was inevitable after the developer offered free maintenance for one year upon vacant possession (VP). Besides, the Defects and Liability Period (DLP) which ran from January 2017 to December 2018 would be expiring soon.
3. The developer has the right to raise the maintenance fee as a meeting had been held with residents of the condominium a few months prior and a majority vote to increase the maintenance fee was passed.
4. The cost of maintenance is higher than earlier estimates.

"We are not professional managers," said the developer. The initial maintenance fee was set at 35 sen when the project was being marketed. The figure was derived based on the number of facilities the developer had planned for the project and on the supplier's quotation of cost. Post VP, the developer appointed an independent property management company to manage the building. The developer claimed that from the initial calculation, a 35 sen psf maintenance fee would suffice but when the professional property managers came in, they recommended more security guards and more maintenance and cleaning shifts, meaning higher costs incurred. At 35 sen psf maintenance fee, the developer found that it was not enough to cover the cost of maintaining the building and had to fork out its own money to cover the deficit. There are audited accounts to prove the actual cost incurred.

5. No complaints from a majority of the unit owners



“You bought it on your own, you can exit on your own.”
— Tan

EdgeProp

MALAYSIA'S BEST MANAGED PROPERTY AWARDS 2019

Buyers MUST know

Excellent property management is key to the value appreciation of any strata-titled property investment.

An opulently designed project, for instance, will naturally cost an arm and a leg for proper upkeep.

So, before buying property in any project, question the initial monthly maintenance quoted by the developer, and ensure that it is realistic. Bear in mind that the warranty period of many big ticket items such as elevators will cease sooner than you think.

Dilemmas such as these are what prompted the introduction of EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards. Through this initiative, the first of its kind, we aspire to put a deserved spotlight on the developers who are responsible, not only to their shareholders, but to consumers.

Watch out for the findings of this year's awards.



Au Foong Yee
Editor-in-Chief
& Managing Director
EdgeProp.my

So then, what can unhappy owners do to ensure that the fees imposed are justified?

Are you an unhappy owner?

Being faced with a maintenance fee hike post DLP is quite common, simply because the theoretical calculation of cost and the cost of actual maintenance can never be the same. More often than not, it has to be raised. Whether this is ethical or not, is debatable.

Chur Associates founder and managing partner Chris Tan tells EdgeProp.my that the Strata Management Act 2013 has a built-in protection mechanism for strata unit owners — the key is to ensure that owners make it a point to participate in the decision-making with regards to any service charges or maintenance fees of the development as soon as possible.

"That is why the JMB (Joint Management Body) is formed after one year. Technically the 35 sen psf charge is meant for only one year as a JMB will then take over [the management of the building]."

According to a letter issued by the Commissioner of Buildings in December 2018 for the case above, the developer is in charge of the administration and maintenance and there is no need for a JMB as a book of strata register has been opened. A Management Corporation (MC) will be formed when at least 25% of the aggregate share units are transferred to the owners.

Under normal circumstances, the developer has ONE YEAR from the delivery of the first strata unit to purchaser to set up a JMB. The JMB consists of both strata unit owners and the developer (no strata title yet). Once strata titles have been issued, and 25% share units have been transferred to the owners,



an MC (owners only) can then be formed. Once the MC is formed, the owners can then decide on the level of property maintenance and management they want and the fee they are willing to pay for them.

A book of strata register would have been opened during the JMB period. The only thing preventing the formation of an MC is the requirement that at least 25% of the aggregate share units be transferred to the owners. The problem is that there could be many owners who are unwilling to pay the stamp duty in the Memorandum of Transfer in order to obtain their strata title and hence the requirement to have a minimum of 25% of the aggregate share units transferred may not be achieved.

“If I am advising the person who is complaining about the steep hike in maintenance fee (in the above case), I would want to know the easiest way to get everybody involved so they can all participate in the management of the place and therefore determine the charges.

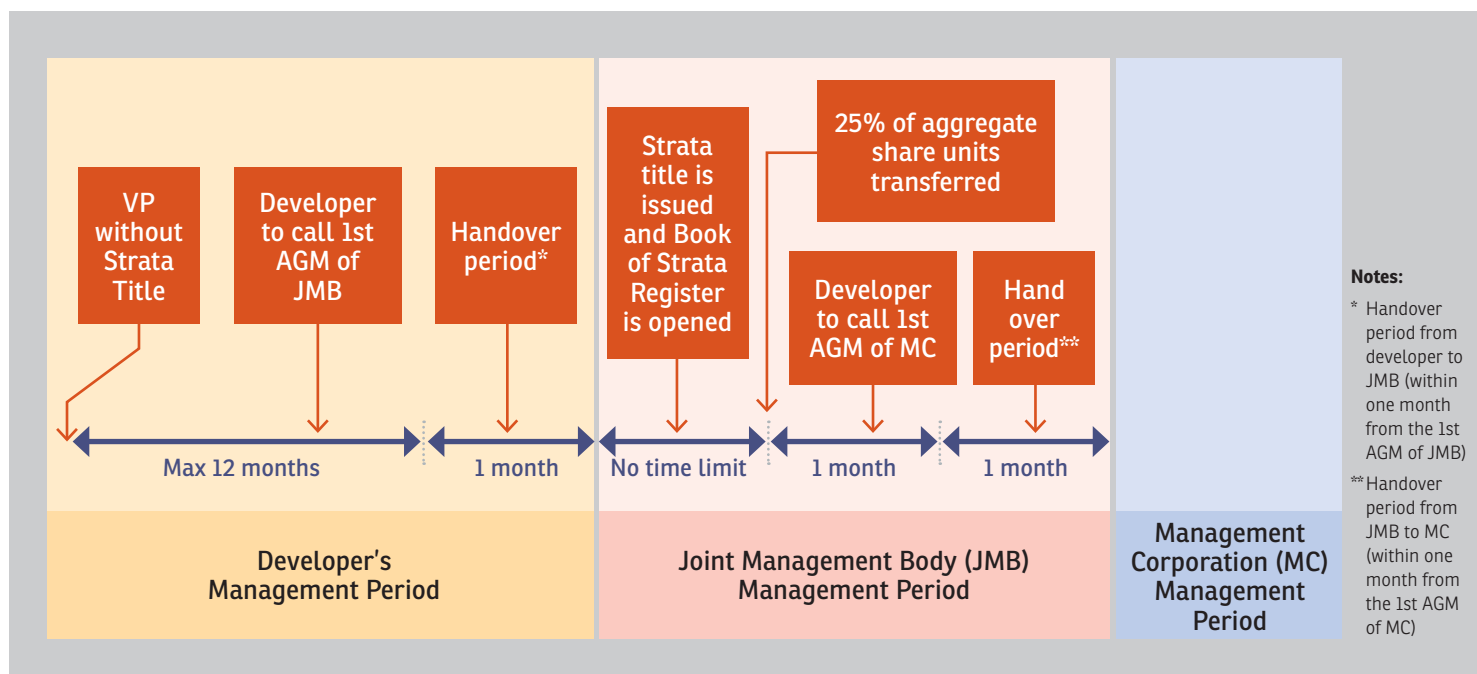
“Once you get involved, then you will know whether the 35 sen or 65 sen psf is justified and you will also know all the nitty gritty details and be able to decide on the level of [maintenance] class you want,” offers Tan, adding that the level of maintenance varies from standard to premium.

“With the participation of the owners, the majority can decide on the maintenance level. In the instance that the strata title is not issued, call for a JMB meeting or ask for help from the Commissioner of Buildings,” he says.

If the strata title is already issued and what is lacking is the 25% of the aggregate share units that have yet to be transferred to the owners, then maybe the rest of the owners can lobby for everyone to pay their stamp duty to get the 25% transferred.

“Once you have hit the threshold, you can carry out the Annual General Meeting.

Handing over process of a strata development



If the 25% is not met, it is not the fault of the developer that the owners don't want to pay the stamp duty,” he adds.

What if you are the only unhappy owner?

Under the Strata Management law, decisions are always carried out on a majority rule. So if you are the only unhappy owner, there is little you can do because the majority still wins.

“Then people will ask me, what do I do? Sell and exit. If you feel that this building's maintenance cost is going up and will go up even further beyond what you think is reasonable and so forth, then the best thing to do is ask yourself whether you should dis-

pose of this property, exit and go to another scheme? You bought it on your own, you can exit on your own,” says Tan.

According to Tan, it is fine to reduce the maintenance cost but sometimes that would mean having to compromise on the maintenance or security of the building and others.

The EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards organised by EdgeProp.my has raised awareness among property developers to cut the frills when it comes to design and the kind of facilities provided in a project as they all come with a cost at the end of the day, stresses Tan, who is also a judge at the awards.

He points out that many purchasers buy into a development because it is low densi-

ty but in a low-density project, owners will have to contribute more as the share units are shared among fewer owners.

When asked if it is common to expect a surge in the maintenance fee after the DLP in low density developments, Tan says one has to be prepared for it, especially if the owner has not participated actively when the JMB was formed and when crucial decisions were made.

“You are involved in the JMB one year after the DLP. If management and maintenance is carried out well during this period, all these maintenance issues will not flow past the DLP. At the end of the day, the most important thing is to have the involvement of the shareholders,” Tan concludes.



FEATURE

China millennials click up a storm buying Asian property online

BY ZHANG DINGMIN

BEIJING: Ice Chen, a 36-year-old bank manager in Beijing, hasn't been to Bangkok lately, but she just bought two apartments there.

The millennial is among younger Chinese flocking to specialist online platforms to buy international real estate.

The biggest of the sites, Uoou.com, reported a 60% surge in transactions to 5 billion yuan (RM3 billion) in 2018 and predicts a doubling this year. Much of the money is flowing to destinations in Southeast Asia, where prices look cheap compared to Beijing or Shanghai.

“The demand is very strong among the middle class holding extra cash,” said Liu Yuan, the Shanghai-based head of research at property broker Centaline Group. “Purchases have become simpler with online platforms.”

Driving the boom are the younger, tech-savvy generations, according to Uoou, which was founded in 2015 and competes with the likes of Shiju, the overseas property unit of Shenzhen World Union Properties

The Bangkok skyline. Buyers from mainland China and Hong Kong bought about 15,000 new Bangkok apartments, half of all purchases by foreigners



Consultancy Inc, and Seattle-based Beimeigoufang.com, whose name means “buying properties in North America.”

Convenience is the lure. Buyers can select a property within hours by making an initial payment of less than US\$1,500 (RM6,131). As a one-stop-shop, Uoou is also a conduit for purchasers to get mortgages from over-

seas banks, find tenants and collect rent. Among buyers, about half purchase without visiting the property, while about 22% buy sight unseen and all online, without phone calls or a face-to-face meeting with an agent.

Southeast Asian property may be popular because the low prices mean down payments are manageable for buyers navigating

China's currency controls, which include a US\$50,000 annual foreign-exchange quota. (There's also an official ban — which it's possible to skirt — on putting the money into overseas property.)

As well, countries such as Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines lack the barriers to foreign purchases erected in New Zealand, Canada, Singapore and Australia.

Thailand was the most popular destination last year for Chinese buyers searching through Juwai.com, a site for international properties. Buyers from mainland China and Hong Kong bought about 15,000 new Bangkok apartments, half of all purchases by foreigners, the research provider estimates.

The motivation for offshore investments isn't hard to fathom. While China's real estate market is showing signs of faltering, many homes are pricey after the market's lengthy bull run, and there's a web of government controls that restrict purchases.

Throw in uncertain prospects for the yuan, and diversification looks appealing. — Bloomberg

FEATURE



PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



There are over 100,000 units of PPR homes for the B40 group. Ensuring a good quality of life is now the government's priority.



How can your organisation contribute to uplift the PPR community?

- CSR programmes with the community
- Direct funding to the Community Fund/Trust
- Work with NGOs in the community
- Work with the Housing and Local Government Ministry
- Send volunteers
- Offer scholarships
- Offer internships
- "Adopt" a PPR kid/PPR community
- Provide training and jobs
- Refurbish or renovate PPR facilities
- Contribute assets/resources

Public-private partnerships a vital part of National Community Policy

BY TAN AI LENG

We have read and heard of a number of unfortunate incidents that involve residents of People's Housing Programme (PPR) schemes. Sexual harassment, suicide, children left alone in unsafe living environments, drug addiction, gang-fights and more, PPR schemes seem like dangerous places to live in.

"Most of these problems could be avoided if we have a caring community that is sensitive towards such issues, a society where its members have mutual respect for each other," said Datuk Dr Mary Wong, the deputy secretary general of the Housing and Local Government (KPKT) Ministry, during her presentation entitled "National Community Policy: Accelerating a new urban agenda," at the Malaysia Urban Forum on Feb 19, 2019.

According to data from the National Housing Department (JPN), in 2017, there was a total of 184 PPR projects nationwide including 41 under construction, offering a total of 109,152 housing units to the B40 group (Bottom 40%).

However, providing housing does not ensure a good quality of life.

"Housing is merely the hardware. The software is equally important in building a healthy and safe community for children to grow and be nurtured into a generation that has the courage and the knowledge to pursue their dreams," stressed Wong.

"The biggest challenge is to change the mindsets and attitudes of the PPR residents and community," she added.

Wong and KPKT officers have visited some of the PPRs in the country and found that most residents live in an unhealthy and unsafe environment that could jeopardise the future of the younger ones.

Housing is merely the hardware. The software is equally important in building a healthy and safe community for children to grow and be nurtured."
— Wong



An unsafe living environment, she said, may prevent parents from allowing their children to play in the common areas of the PPR. PPR residents are also not able to afford childcare services and so may have to leave their young children alone at home behind locked doors thinking they will be safe, but accidents happen.

In September 2018, a three-year-old girl who was left alone at home died after falling from the balcony of a 17th floor unit in a PPR flat in Kota Damansara.

According to Wong, such cases keep occurring as most parents have to earn a living which leaves them no choice but to leave their children alone at home.

Another common problem is drug addiction among youths, which then leads to other social problems such as vandalism, thefts, fights and even murder cases.

Community empowerment

There is no single solution to deal with the problems involving PPRs but certainly the living environment of the PPRs could be improved, said Wong. This could be achieved through meaningful activities that involve PPR residents.

Hence, KPKT recently launched the National Community Policy or Dasar Komuniti Negara (DKN). One of its objectives is to instil a sense of empowerment and ownership among PPR residents so that they realise the need to take care of the common properties or public facilities in their respective PPRs. To effectively execute the DKN, eight clusters have been identified for a holistic approach to the issues faced by PPR residents.

However, efforts to empower the community and to uplift their living environment Wong added, would not be successful if they were left to the government alone.

The eight clusters of the DKN

(areas that need help)



1. Infrastructure and maintenance
2. Cleanliness, environment and health
3. Safety
4. Education, awareness and skills
5. Caring for the needy, elderly, women, children and disabled
6. Social services
7. Entrepreneurship and social business
8. Sports and recreation

"The government wants to cultivate strategic cooperation or partnership between the community and the government, NGOs as well as the private sector," she elaborated.

"There are many things that private companies could do. For instance the Kotak Cantik programme where personal hygiene packages containing a toothbrush, toothpaste and comb are distributed to teach school children the importance of brushing their teeth and to keep themselves clean and neat," Wong noted. This simple activity not only improves their personal hygiene but will also encourage them to keep a neat appearance and to build their self-confidence.

Some corporate bodies, she revealed, are also planning to turn neglected common public spaces into attractive functional areas that could encourage PPR residents to use the space for reading, to hold classes for the children or as a gathering place for residents. "We could enhance community bonding and build a sense of belonging through such initiatives to uplift their living environment.

"Besides that, private firms could also help interested residents to start their own small businesses by providing the relevant training. Cooking classes, digital marketing classes as well as internship opportunities could equip residents and young students with the skills to earn a living," she said.



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BY SHAWN NG

Tired of the hustle and bustle of city life? Looking for a place to build a holiday home or maybe just to grow your own Musang King durians? Bina Puri Holdings Bhd's The Valley in Karak in the district of Bentong, Pahang has been created with you in mind.

Officially launched on March 2, The Valley @ Bentong offers agricultural lots suitable for building a home or to plant crops and fruit trees, or both. The developer will assist buyers in building a home and even help you plant durian trees.

Located about 3.5km from Karak town, the 1,596-acre development is divided into four zones: the 600-acre Kerau homestead zone; the 224-acre Karak Spring durian plantation zone; a 339-acre future development and a remaining 433 acres of land which are being sold to a group of investors.

The Kerau homestead development is spearheaded by Bina Puri subsidiary Karak Land Sdn Bhd. Here, one can opt to buy a lot ranging from one to five acres to build a home or to start planting durians and other fruits such as bananas and papayas.

Under the National Land Code, owners of agriculture land are allowed to build one house which shall not occupy more than 20% of the entire land area or more than two hectares of the land, whichever is less, for themselves or any persons employed, for agricultural purposes. Other buildings are allowed provided they are ancillary to the agricultural purpose.

For new lot owners at Kerau who want to plant durians, Bina Puri will help connect them with local durian farmers who can be appointed to look after their durian orchards.

Meanwhile, the developer also offers a home building package for a cute little dome-shaped house specifically designed by the developer. The built-up is about 300 sq ft priced at RM80,000.

"We purchased the land back in 2013 and we soft launched Kerau Phase 1 in December 2016 with a total of 158 lots. We achieved more than 70% sales within six months. Due to the overwhelming response, we subsequently decided to open Phase 2 which comprises 138 lots with selling prices starting from RM5.88 to RM8.09 psf," said Bina Puri group executive director Datuk Matthew Tee during a visit to The Valley with EdgeProp.my recently.

Lots for Phase 1 range from one to two acres, while Lots in Phase 2 range from one to five acres.

To date, Phase 1 is already 91% sold at prices ranging between RM3.50 to RM7 psf while Phase 2 is about 32% sold. Bina Puri expects to sell the remaining lots by end-2019, Tee said.

According to him, most buyers are in the 40- to 60-year-old group who came all the way from Subang Jaya, Petaling Jaya, Shah Alam and Klang, looking to retire here or start a homestay business.

Notably, there are also younger buyers in their mid-30s wanting to construct their own weekend home or venture into the plantation business.

At about RM300,000 per acre, the Kerau agriculture lots are more affordably priced compared with other places in Bentong, said Tee, citing Janda Baik where land prices can go up to RM900,000 per acre.



The Kerau offers agricultural lots that allow one to build a home or plant his or her favourite crops and fruit trees, or both.

Creating an agri-retreat in the hills of Karak for durian lovers

PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



From left: Keong Wee, Kee Leen and Tee at The Valley.



Above: A river named Sungai Kerau runs through the development.



Above (left): Bina Puri offers landowners the option to build a dome-shaped house.



Above (right): One of the estate owners is raising livestock on his land.

"Apart from that, accessibility to this development is good as the entrance is just along the Karak main road," he said, adding that it is also accessible via the Kuala Lumpur-Karak Expressway.

Bina Puri Properties executive director Ng Keong Wee pointed out that buyers are attracted by the infrastructure and facilities provided in The Valley.

"We provide tarmac roads, proper drainage, electricity from TNB substations that we are building and treated water from PAIP (Pahang Water Management Bhd).

"We are also creating ponds to store spring water from the hills and provide water to owners for free for two years, so that they can irrigate their crops," Keong Wee said.

Moreover, there will be two guard houses at the two entrances to the development and a club house which will have a swimming pool, gym, outdoor barbecue area, tennis court and an event hall.

All in all, the infrastructure and facilities at Kerau cost about RM20 million to RM30 million, said Keong Wee.

An untapped market

With rising demand for the Musang King durian, Bina Puri is getting into the action as well and has ventured into the agricultural business by planting some 5,000 Musang King durian trees in the 224-acre durian plantation zone in The Valley via its subsidiary Karak Spring Sdn Bhd.

"The success rate of these durian trees are quite good because the soil here is very good for durians. The first harvest is expected in the next five to six years," said Karak Land and Karak Spring Sdn Bhd director Datuk Ng Kee Leen. On top of that, the developer is also breeding fish such as tilapia and Patin in the water ponds that are storing spring water.

The Valley marks the first venture by Bina Puri into the homestead development and agricultural business, which the company believes is an untapped market that has a lot of potential.

"While people are going into urban areas and build houses there, we decided to go rural and do something different," Tee quipped.

The move is also in line with the developer's aim to diversify its income sources through the recurring income from the durian plantation.

"There was some doubt in the beginning, but things look bright," said Wee Keong, who is also a director in Karak Spring.

Looking ahead, future development on the 339-acre site could be a commercial, plantation or homestead development to complement the Kerau.

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