

'Bubbling' up a storm

Has the bubble tea craze made an impact on the commercial properties where they operate? See Pages 6 and 7.



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Sunway to develop RM544m mixed development in Kota Damansara

Sunway Bhd has inked a privatisation agreement with the Selangor State Development Corp (PKNS) via its 60:40 subsidiary with the latter, Sunway PKNS Sdn Bhd, to develop a mixed development on a prime 9.5-acre parcel of leasehold land in Kota Damansara, Selangor.

In a statement on Monday, Sunway said the proposed development will comprise serviced apartments and lifestyle retail units with an estimated RM544 million in gross development value and is targeted to be completed in 2025.

The development is surrounded by a host of retail amenities including Sunway Giza, Sunway Nexis and IKEA Damansara; educational institutions including Sri KDU and SEGi University as well as healthcare institutions.

FT ministry increases qualifying age for 'Residensi Wilayah' to 21

The Federal Territories Ministry has increased the qualifying age for Residensi Wilayah applicants to 21 from 18.

Its minister Khalid Abdul Samad described the age of 18 for applicants of Residensi Wilayah, which was rebranded from Rumawip (Federal Territory Affordable Homes) on Feb 1, as impractical.

"The previous age of 18 was not practical because some may still be at school and unemployed. Their names had probably been misused by certain parties to buy (Residensi

Stamp duty exemption for HOC home buyers extended till Dec 31



Putrajaya has agreed to extend the Home Ownership Campaign (HOC) for another six months from July 1, 2019 until Dec 31, 2019, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng announced in a statement on Sunday.

This means that the stamp duty exemption for HOC first-time homebuyers has also been extended to the same period.

With the HOC, a home priced between RM300,000 and RM2.5 million purchased from a developer registered under the HOC enjoys a discount of 10% and a stamp duty exemption of 100% that is limited to the first RM1 million of the property's price while the remaining value

is subject to a 3% rate. There is also a 100% stamp duty exemption on the loan agreement.

Meanwhile, first-time homebuyers from the secondary market will from July 1 receive stamp duty exemption on the memorandum of transfer and loan agreement for property purchases priced no more than RM300,000. For purchases of between RM300,001 and RM500,000, a similar stamp duty waiver is applicable (limited to only the first RM300,000 of the house price). They are applicable for sale and purchase agreements completed between Jan 1, 2019 and Dec 31, 2020.

Wilayah houses which do not cost more than RM300,000).

"We are concerned that these parties might use the names of children to buy the houses and then a number of years later transfer ownership to themselves," he said during the ministry's monthly assembly on Monday.



More than 51,000 units of unsold properties in Johor as of 1Q2019

The Johor State Assembly was told there are 51,459 units of unsold properties that were either com-

pleted, still under construction or yet to be constructed in the state with an estimated value of RM36.75 billion as of the first quarter of this year.

"SoHo/serviced apartments (commercial) recorded the highest number with 30,127 of unsold units valued at RM20.78 billion, followed by residential properties with 17,462 units (RM10.95 billion)," said State Housing, Communications and Multimedia Committee chairman Dzulkefly Ahmad.

He was responding to a question by Yeo Tun Siong (PH-Pekan Nanas) who wanted to know efforts taken by the state government to tackle the issue of unsold properties in Johor.

In the residential property segment, two- and three-storey ter-



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raced houses recorded the highest number of unsold units with 6,518 units worth RM3.72 billion, followed by condominiums/apartments with 5,643 units (RM2.64 billion).

**LAUNCHES + EVENTS**

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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.

So you want to be an architect?

Date: July 6 (Sat)
Time: 2pm to 2.30pm
Venue: Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, Hall 8, KLCC, Kuala Lumpur
Contact: (03) 2202 2866



How can you achieve the dream of becoming an architect? This talk by architect Norzaini Mufti provides information to those considering architecture and encourages them to make an informed decision. Norzaini is the co-founder of Z&SR Architectural Ventures Sdn Bhd.



Tomorrowland Pavilion

Date: July 3 to 6 (Wed to Sat)
Time: 9am to 7pm
Venue: KLCC Convention Centre, Hall 8
Contact: (03) 2202 2866

Visit the Pavilion of Tomorrow which will feature exhibitions, VR simulations, interactive art and talks on possibilities in architectural and urban design for the future. ID Architects Singapore will be showcasing their computational design process and VR capabilities for architectural design.

Splashing Sunday!

Date: July 7 (Sun)
Time: 10am to 4pm
Venue: Berkeley Uptown Sales Gallery, Lot 75 & Lot 1874, Jalan Delima / KU 1, Off Jalan Kapar, Klang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 9212 3068

Join Paramount Property for a "Splashing Sunday" with exciting activities lined up just for you

and your family. Experience living and time well-spent with your family like a resident at the new Berkeley Uptown development.

Family Fabulous Fun at Dragonfly Park

Date: July 6 (Sat)
Time: 5pm to 7pm
Venue: Eco Grandeur Sales Gallery, Lot 6232, Persiaran

Mokhtar Dahari, Bandar Puncak Alam, Selangor
Contact: (03) 3270 2525
There's going to be so much fun at the Dragonfly Park that you and your family won't want to miss this event. See you at the Dragonfly Park at Eco Grandeur. Mystery gifts await the first 50 kids.

Jade Hills Raya Bonanza

Date: July 7 (Sun)
Time: 5pm to 10pm
Venue: Jade Hills Sales Gallery, Persiaran Jade Hills Utama 1/1, Kajang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 8741 9890
Hosted by Gamuda Land, guests can treat themselves to a Japanese buffet and grab some Starbucks cards and tiffin sets for free, while stocks last. Guests also stand a chance to win up to RM434,000 worth of cashback when they purchase a home in Jade Hills.



S P Setia Raya Open House

Date: July 6 (Sat)
Time: 6.30pm to 10.30pm
Venue: Setia Eco Templer Sales Gallery, 1, Jalan Ipoh - KM20, Taman Rekreasi Templer, Rawang, Selangor
Contact: (03) 6092 2288
Join in the festive cheer with S P Setia at its Hari Raya open house in Setia Eco Templer where you can also take part and win up to RM30,000 at the lucky Uncang pick!

CARE-riety with HOPE

Date: July 5 and 6 (Fri and Sun)
Time: 11am to 6pm
Venue: Sunway Iskandar Sales Gallery, Lot G - 01 & 02, Sunway Citrine Hub, Persiaran Medini 3, Medini Iskandar, Iskandar Puteri, Johor,
Contact: (07) 509 6575
Calling all pet lovers, join HOPE (an NGO that provides shelter for dogs and cats) at the event in Sunway Iskandar to enjoy various activities such as a charity car wash, food carnival and a cat adoption drive.

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Villamas to build lifestyle mall in Seri Kembangan

BY NATALIE KHOO

PETALING JAYA: Property developer Villamas Group wants to elevate the quality of life for those living in Seri Kembangan, Selangor with its upcoming mall called META_mall which is part of its meta_city mixed-use transit-oriented development.

Speaking to EdgeProp.my, Villamas Group CEO Gan Teck Seong shares that the proposed mall with 350,000 sq ft of net lettable area will be the “heart” of the entire meta_city development, acting as the converging point for all the components there.

meta_city is a RM1.8 billion project on a 12-acre leasehold site to be developed over 10 years. Its components include two towers of serviced apartments and Small-office Home-offices, branded suites, a hotel, an office tower and the shopping mall.

“The mall will be the place where people come to obtain their daily amenities, for recreation as well as for entertainment. On top of that, it is also to serve their lifestyle needs which means that we are bringing in lifestyle elements of high standards including food and beverage outlets, classes for children and so forth to serve the needs of the neighbourhood,” Gan shared, adding that currently, Seri Kembangan is short of a quality lifestyle mall.

LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



Gan: A mall is not successful on its own as it is all about the synergy of the whole area,

“There is the immediate captive market from the residents living here as well as the hotel visitors and office occupants,” he added.

Currently, the developer is working closely with retail consultant TheLOT Associates to bring in brands that are more attuned to the younger generation to create an energetic feel to the mall.

Interestingly, one of its anchor tenants will be Farm in the City (FITC), a unique animal petting farm where visitors can meet more than 100 types of animals close-up amidst tropical trees.

“Currently, it is operating in an open area so it will be nice to have FITC in a mall where it is within a controlled and comfortable environment. It will also attract kids and families,” said Gan.

Villamas is also looking to build a link-bridge from the proposed Taman Putra Permai mass rapid transit station to the mall to provide seamless connection for visitors to the mall.

Plans are also being drafted for a convention centre to be integrated into the mall.

On the issue of retail and mall space oversupply in the market, Gan said they are

not overly concerned as he believes retail complexes are the way forward for greater Kuala Lumpur.

“Traditionally, we have shop houses but retail complexes are the way to go. We have malls concentrated in certain areas resulting in oversupply but in Seri Kembangan, we do not have such concept malls. We are pioneering it,” Gan explained.

However, he believes retail complexes will get more sophisticated going forward. “There is no such thing as conventional malls anymore. Malls need to have their own character because they are serving certain needs of the population [in that area].

“For example, if you are positioning yourself as a regional mall, you need to be of a certain size or certain tenant mix. A mall is not successful on its own as it is all about the synergy of the whole area,” Gan emphasised.

In early June, the group launched Tower A residences at meta_city comprising 396 SoHo units (built-up of 450 sq ft) and 594 serviced apartments (built-up of 659 sq ft to 864 sq ft) with selling price from RM280,000.

Since its launch, more than 50% of the units have been taken up. The group is currently looking to launch its Tower B – a serviced apartment tower called BLIZ with unit built-ups from 757 sq ft to 1,230 sq ft at an indicative selling price from RM480,000.

Stamp duty exemption is great, but please review RPGT too

BY CHIN WAI LUN AND NATALIE KHOO

PETALING JAYA: First-time homebuyers in the secondary market can rejoice with the recent announcement of stamp duty exemptions.

First-time purchasers of homes from the secondary market get stamp duty exemption on the memorandum of transfer and loan agreement for property purchases priced no more than RM300,000. For purchases of between RM300,001 and RM500,000, a similar stamp duty waiver is applicable (limited to only the first RM300,000 of the house price). They are applicable for sale and purchase agreements completed between Jan 1, 2019 and Dec 31, 2020.

“I would like to thank the government for listening to the ‘rakyat’. Back in March, MIEA had issued a statement urging the government to extend the National Home Ownership Campaign incentives to sub-sale properties, and I believe this will really help the [housing] market,” said Malaysian Institute of Estate Agents (MIEA) president Lim Boon Ping.

Lim added that the cost of purchasing sub-sale properties can be quite hefty and this extension would be able to alleviate the burden of homebuyers.

Moving forward, Lim hoped that the government would be able to get banks to provide better access to financing for homebuyers.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Institute of

Professional Estate Agents and Consultants (MIPEAC) secretary general Low Weng Soon told EdgeProp.my that it welcomes the move by the Finance Ministry to extend the stamp duty exemption to include sub-sales.

“Historically, properties in the secondary market are generally cheaper than those from developers within the same locality with the exception of a comparison between a newly completed project against the original price by the developer,” said Low, highlighting that there is the additional advantage of selecting completed units, some even enhanced with renovation.

However, he said the threshold of the stamp duty exemption should be granted for the first RM500,000 for first time homebuyers as that would reflect a more realistic figure especially for properties in cities such as Penang, Klang Valley and Johor Bahru.

He added that more needs to be done to encourage homeownership. He suggested that first-time homebuyers be allowed to utilise part or the whole of their Employees Provident Fund (EPF) contributions for their monthly loan instalments.

“However, a mechanism is needed to ensure that if the said property is either sold or refinanced, whatever amount contributed from their EPF accounts must be returned back,” said Low.

The Association of Valuers, Property Managers, Estate Agents, Property Consultants in the Private Sector Malaysia (PEPS) also believes the stamp duty exemptions for



HARIS HASSANI | THE EDGE

Lim: Banks should have a social responsibility to ensure people get to own a home, especially first-time home buyers.



LOW WENG SOON

Low: If the said property is either sold or refinanced, whatever amount contributed from their EPF accounts must be returned back.



LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my

Kong: Extending the stamp duty exemption to the secondary market properties will provide more options for first-time homebuyers.

first-time homebuyers on the secondary market will “open up and stimulate the sub-sale market”.

“Extending the stamp duty exemption to the secondary market properties will provide more options for first-time homebuyers compared with previously when they were only limited to buy from developers,” said PEPS president Michael Kong.

To stimulate the market further, PEPS urged the Finance Ministry to review the Real Property Gains Tax (RPGT) which aims to curb property speculation.

“The tax is now extended to the sale of properties which is owned even after five years, which we feel is not right as it seems like another form of income tax.

“This will deter property investment if owners have to pay the RPGT even after five years of owning their property. It cannot be retrospective.

“Those who own a property from 20 to 30 years ago will have to pay this tax. If the law is reverted to its previous stance where you only pay RPGT if you dispose your property before owning it for five years, then this will give the market more confidence,” stressed Kong.

MIPEAC concurred that a review of the RPGT is needed. “The RPGT rates introduced in the 2019 budget has caused unnecessary burden, especially for those who have a real need to sell the properties they have owned for more than five years, be it for medical reasons, for children’s education or even to settle debts,” noted Low.



PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

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Q | Is it a good idea for the Management Corporation or Joint Management Body to set up a company to manage finances? Who is ultimately responsible for the funds?

Under the Strata Management Act 2013 (SMA), the Management Corporation's (MC) and the Joint Management Body's (JMB) ultimate function is to properly maintain and manage the subdivided building or land, and the common property.

No provision in the SMA allows the MC, or the JMB to set up a company to manage finances.

Instead of having a company, the MC or JMB may set up a small finance committee led by one of the elected committee members for the purpose of managing the funds efficiently.

Q | We are thinking of opening a nursery using the community hall space in our condominium. Does the Management Corporation need approval from the authorities?

Pursuant to sub-paragraph 3 (4) in the Third Schedule of the Strata Management (Maintenance and Management) Regulations 2015, the Management Corporation/Joint Management Body (MC/JMB) shall "where applicable, manage, maintain and secure suitable operators for any of the common utilities, amenities and services in the common property, such as launderette, convenience store, cafeteria, nursery and others". They, however, "must be maintained to reasonable standards of safety and health for the convenience, comfort and enjoyment of the proprietors and occupiers".

Assuming the community hall space is part of the common property, we are of the view that pursuant to the said Sub-paragraph 3 (4), subject to approval from the relevant authority, the JMB/MC has the power to manage and maintain the community hall as a nursery and secure a suitable operator to operate the nursery for the benefit of the parcel owners.



CHRIS TAN
Managing partner and founder of Chur Associates; EdgeProp Malaysia's Best Managed Property Awards 2019 judge and EdgeProp.my Symposium on Excellent Property Management 2019 speaker

If you have any questions regarding property management, please email editor@edgeprop.my. Questions will be answered at the discretion of the editor and the respective experts.

Disclaimer: The answers are only proposed solutions by the expert based on the limited information given in the questions.



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NEWS

Co-living with pub crawls, rooftop yoga, spreads to Canada

BY ADELA SULIMAN

TORONTO: Canada is getting its first big taste of co-living rentals -- the housing trend that's spreading amid the global affordability crunch.

Dream Unlimited Corp is developing a 24-story tower in Ottawa that will have communal apartments alongside regular rentals. Common Living Inc, which bills itself as the largest co-living operator in the US, will manage the building and offer perks such as rooftop yoga and comedy shows.

The apartments — likely two or three bedrooms — will be fully furnished, come with cleaning services and share common areas such as kitchens. Monthly rents will start at about C\$1,225 (RM3,869), about 30% less than similar one-bedrooms in the area. Regular units in Dream's building will start at about C\$2,065 per month.

"We're doing a number of things where we are trying to provide affordable housing," Michael Cooper, president of Toronto-based Dream, said by phone. "It's a big issue."

The tower, slated to be completed in 2022, is part of a 34-acre C\$1.8 billion project that Dream is developing in Canada's capital, Cooper said. About 25% of the tower will be communal units.

Communal living has been growing in Europe and the US, with firms like Germa-

ny's Medici Living Group investing more than 1 billion euros (RM4.67 billion) to fuel expansion. The living arrangements, which resemble upscale student residences, are gaining traction among mobile millennials who don't want to accumulate belongings, can't afford the soaring rents of many cities and like the instant communities they create.

Another co-living firm, Node Living UK Ltd, also announced its first Canadian location on Monday in tech hub Kitchener-Waterloo, Ontario. London-based Node said it will provide housing for about 50 people in 38 apartments where rents will start at about C\$1,000 per month.

Cooper said its project is a win-win for renters and developers: cheaper for those who can't cover the cost of an entire apartment, and more rent per square foot for property owners.

"If people have all of these activities right within their building, they're going to be much happier," Cooper said. "We'll be able to drive better returns in this model than we would with a traditional apartment."

Co-living units have provided between 20% to 30% premiums in Common Living's other projects in the US, said Jake Chai, director of international real estate at the New York-based firm. It's especially attractive to developers in a market like Canada, where yields have been tight as property values,



A rendering of the Ottawa tower

land prices and construction costs have soared, he said.

While Canada has seen smaller startups and operators experiment with co-living concepts, Dream says it's the first big developer to delve into the space in the country. It's looking at opportunities to expand its co-living portfolio.

New York-based Common announced a US\$300 million-plus (RM1.2 billion-plus) expansion in April to Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Atlanta and San Diego. The shift to Canada will be Common's first foray outside of the U.S. It's currently negotiating a pipeline of more than 500 bedrooms with developers in Toronto. — Bloomberg

DREAM UNLIMITED CORP

COVER STORY



Bubble tea property hotspots

BY CHIN WAI LUN

Bubble tea needs no introduction. Not so long ago, we would see queues forming at the pasar malams but bubble tea has now gone upmarket. Back then, vendors will have bright-coloured powdered mixes arranged in a row and once added with what is known as the 'tapioca pearls' or boba (the more glamorous name they are called today), they are shaken in stainless steel cocktail shakers.

Now, bubble tea has evolved beyond these powders. The still multi-coloured concoctions laden with chewy boba have taken the F&B industry by storm, with brown sugar and fresh milk brews being the latest trend.

Popular bubble tea stores will often see snaking long queues with excited patrons holding their wares up high for a snapshot.

Are they a boon or a bane? EdgeProp.my takes a look at three areas in the Klang Valley — Cheras Traders Square, Sri Petaling and SS15 — that are well-known for their bubble tea offerings to check out how the bubble tea craze has impacted the shop rentals there.

Based on observation, bubble tea shops seem to be located in commercial centres that are already well-known for their F&B offerings and their proximity to educational institutions to target the youths; hence these three locations.

Senior negotiator at Starcity Property Beh Yein Shiang tells EdgeProp.my that bubble tea shops in one area tend to attract other bubble tea operators to congregate there.

"When people start calling those areas [commercial centres] 'bubble tea streets', it is already a form of advertisement. Thus, it appeals to other bubble tea brands to establish a store in that area — to ride on the trend," explains Beh.

The top three areas for bubble tea

PICTURES BY LOW YEN YEING | EdgeProp.my



14 stores*

SS15, Subang Jaya

Arguably one of the busiest sections in Subang Jaya, SS15 was developed by Sime UEP Properties Bhd (now known as Sime Darby Property Bhd), with the project being completed in 1988. And today, this commercial hub of Subang Jaya is famous for its 'bubble tea street' — Jalan SS15/4 — dubbed by visitors and netizens as such. The hub is also flanked by two residential areas.

Easily accessible from the Federal Highway, SS15 is also linked to other major highways like Shah Alam Expressway (KESAS), North Klang Valley Expressway (NKVE), New Pantai Expressway (NPE), North-South Expressway and Lebuhraya Damansara-Puchong (LDP).

The SS15 LRT station that began operation in mid-2016 as part of the Kelana Jaya LRT line extension has further improved accessibility to the area, being adjacent to Jalan SS15/4.

Bubble tea stores are a ubiquitous sight here for a commercial hub that is already well-known for its many mamak restaurants and cafes. Visitors to the 'bubble tea stretch' can see queues already forming at some bubble tea outlets (especially on weekends) even before their opening hours



from 12pm. And these long queues usually go on till late night before closing, about 12am to 1am.

Once again, traffic congestion is one of the main grouses for visitors in SS15, especially along the 'bubble tea stretch'. In an interview with EdgeProp.my, MPSJ councillor Chia Yew Ken concurs, drawing comparison to a similar issue faced by drivers on the Jalan SS15/4D 'banking stretch'. "SS15 is a unique commercial centre and being

nearly 40 years old, unfortunately, parking spots are limited compared to the newer strata-based centres and SoHos.

"There were also suggestions by housing residents in the area to enforce a no-car zone on selected streets. This was not possible as the wishes of other stakeholders (the business owners) had to be taken into account," adds Chia.

As for shop rentals, director of Arianna Consultants Daniel Teh, who is a property agent familiar with the area, opines that the rise in rent rates due to demand is both good and bad.

"It is good news for property agents and landlords but tenants bear the brunt of the hike [in rental rates].

"I am currently charging a bubble tea operator [established in 2018] along Jalan SS15/4 RM5,000 a month for the ground floor unit. Now, I am being offered up to RM12,000 per month for a similar ground floor unit in the same location," says Daniel.

According to data obtained by EdgeProp.my (as of June 2019), ground floor shop units in Jalan SS15/4 have asking rents from RM6,000 (1,650 sq ft) to RM12,000 per month (7,428 sq ft).



BEH YEIN SHIANG

Beh: When people start calling [commercial centres] 'bubble tea streets', it is already a form of advertisement.



CHIA YEW KEN

Chia: SS15 is a unique commercial centre and being nearly 40 years old, unfortunately, parking spots are limited compared to the newer strata-based centres and SoHos.



IVAN TEH

Ivan: [Cheras Traders Square] was already mostly taken up then. And that was before the entry of bubble tea brands in March 2019.



7

stores*

Bandar Baru Sri Petaling

Bandar Baru Sri Petaling or Sri Petaling for short is a mature township established in 1977. The latest development of commercial shoplots located in Zone J was completed in 2014. The rest of the zones — namely Zone D, F, H, K, L, M, N and P are mostly residential areas.

This 620-acre township developed by I&P Group Sdn Bhd (now a wholly-owned subsidiary of S P Setia Bhd) is located just 15km south of Kuala Lumpur and is easily accessible via major highways such as the KL-Seremban Highway, KESAS, NPE, Middle Ring Road 2 (MRR2) and the KL-Putrajaya Highway (MEX).

Well-known for its F&B offerings, this township has also become a hotspot for bubble tea operators, though their numbers are not as high as the other townships mentioned here. Similar to Cheras Traders Square, the stores are scattered across the commercial centre within Zone J. The busiest stretch would be along Jalan Radin Bagus 8 where the most number of bubble tea stores are concentrated at.

When asked for her thoughts on the current bubble tea trend, Starcity Property's Beh Yein Shiang strikes a rather upbeat tone, citing brisk business.

"They (bubble tea operators) are fantastic and we [property agents in Sri Petaling] welcome them. The queues are a sight to see, with many students in line usually. And they (the operators) have cleared many of the previously vacant shoplots," says Beh.

While the trend did make the place more vibrant, it also brought along some incon-



veniences. Traffic congestion is a major gripe of those visiting Sri Petaling — especially at Jalan Radin Bagus 8.

"The road is always blocked especially by customers [of bubble tea shops] who tend to double and sometimes, triple park their vehicles," adds Beh.

Neighbouring tenants are also not spared from the exodus. "They are frustrated as some bubble tea stores see long queues which block the neighbouring store fronts, thus affecting their businesses," says Beh.

Meanwhile, monthly shop rental rates have spiked, offers Beh. Rental for a ground floor unit in Jalan Radin Bagus 8 was hovering around RM8,000 per month one to two years ago before the influx of bubble tea stores.

Transaction data by EdgeProp.my shows that the monthly rent for shop units here as of June 2019 ranges from RM1,900 (1,650 sq ft) at Jalan Radin Tengah to RM12,000 (1,920 sq ft) at Jalan Radin Bagus.



13

stores*

Cheras Traders Square

The newest kid on the block. Cheras Traders Square is a commercial centre located in Batu 9, Cheras Selatan in Selangor.

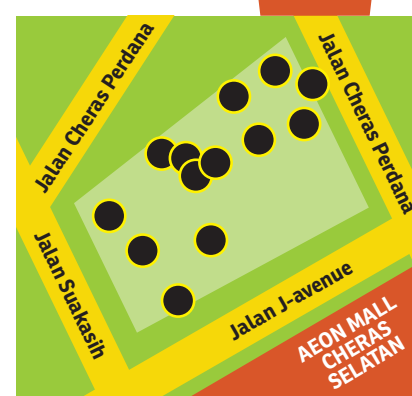
Developed by SCP Group, the centre consists of 196 leasehold double-storey shopoffice units, with Phase 1 launched in 2015. It is located along the Kajang Dispersal Link Expressway (SILK), and other townships such as Bandar Mahkota Cheras, Bandar Tun Hussein Onn and Balakong are just a short drive away.

Despite being relatively new, Cheras Traders Square has already seen an influx of bubble tea stores, with an outlet scattered at nearly every street. During a site visit in early May 2019, EdgeProp.my discovered that a large number of stores are yet to be opened or undergoing renovations, with banners actively seeking staff.

Senior negotiator of Yit Seng Realty, Ivan Teh explains that before the bubble tea phenomenon, many other F&B outlets have set up shop in the centre.

"The project [Cheras Traders Square] was already mostly taken up then. And that was before the entry of bubble tea brands in March 2019," says Ivan, noting that most businesses received their keys in 2017.

In terms of how the demand for



bubble tea stores are driving up rental prices, Teh does notice a difference.

"I would say about a 5% to 10% increase, so yes, rental is affected," says Ivan.

Current listings (as of June 2019) on the rental market here obtained by EdgeProp.my are priced from RM1,550 (700 sq ft) to RM18,000 per month (4,350 sq ft).

Traffic conditions however, are bearable, according to him. "Since Cheras Traders Square consists of only double-storey office units, this means fewer business units which translate to fewer cars and more parking.

"It is not that difficult to find a parking spot here," Ivan says, drawing comparisons to other commercial centres which have units with more storeys.

Top five favourite boba drinks

We succumbed to temptation and just could not resist trying a few drinks during our visits to check out the bubble tea streets. Here are our top five picks.



TIGER SUGAR

Tiger Sugar's Brown sugar boba milk with cream mousse

Although this brand is not present at the three locations mentioned, it deserves a mention. The cold fresh milk and warm, fragrant brown sugar make a splendid combination (although a bit too sweet sometimes), with added creaminess (or cheesiness) from the mousse. The pearls are fragrant and have just the right softness and chewiness.



GONG CHA

Gong Cha's Signature winter melon tea

One of the earliest brands in the local bubble tea scene. This is still a favourite go-to for old time's sake. A dollop of Gong Cha's signature thick milk foam is an ideal mix to the sweet and refreshing winter melon tea, giving it a slightly salty and creamy texture. Goes well with pearls too.



THE BLACK WHALE

The Black Whale's Brown sugar whaletball avocado milk

This is one of the latest additions to the bubble tea craze. This drink is on the pricy side, but the warm brown sugar goes really well with the avocado milk and chewy pearls (whaletballs). The 50% sugar level is just nice — not too sweet yet retaining the refreshing taste of the avocado.



Daboba's Roasted brown sugar pearl milk tea

The drink features a roasted cheese topping. Both tea and brown sugar are fragrant as well. Highly recommended to take a few sips (cups are designed for that) of the milk and cheese foam before mixing the drink into a creamy concoction.



Xing Fu Tang's Brown sugar boba milk

The drink is not too sweet although there is caramelised sugar on top. It tastes slightly salty, flavourful and creamy. The large stir-fried pearls are this brand's speciality, although if it is overcooked, it will not be as chewy.

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