

Foreword



ASIA PACIFIC PROPERTY AWARDS

2009

Strike While the Iron is Hot

The mood is buoyant. The buying spree continues - for both developers and property buyers and investors. The word is that developers are snapping up prime pieces of land in the Klang Valley and Penang. That can only mean one thing - there will be more launches in the near future. Better than expected first quarterly results for most of the big players such as Sunway Holdings Bhd and Mah Sing Group Bhd indicate more activities ahead, be they local or overseas launches.

Time and tide wait for no man, and in this case, one cannot sit waiting out the political and economic uncertainties besetting our country and other countries. Land is scarce and prices move only in one direction - UP. So, whichever way the wind blows, which are only like blips in the bigger scheme of things, the buying has to continue in order to stake a claim in the choicest morsels of what remaining prime land there is.

In this matter, the consumers which are made up of property buyers and investors, are in one accord. The mood on the ground is one of voracious appetite. They turned up in full force at the recent **iProperty.com** property expo, snapping up properties worth more than RM100 million within 3 days. The expo has always been a good gauge of the buying public's sentiment. If one needs more confirmation of the trend, stay tuned for the outcome of our next expo from July 30th - Aug 1st at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. Better still, come prepared for some fantastic deals.

Having said that, we also have to be mindful of the undercurrents swirling around us. For some helpful insights, read what Ho Chin Soon, mapmaker extraordinaire aka unofficial property guru, has to say in this issue. From a marketer's point of view, tune in to Dr Daniele Gambero's impressive views, while the down to earth Ir Steven Ng gives the low down on the issues affecting the industry.

And, while you are still digesting the cross-current of news, savour the uncommon wisdom found in the cartoons of Ir Shaik Abdul Wahed Dato' Hj Rahim. Trust engineers to hit the nail right on the head.

Stay alert.

Meeting deadlines and keeping to schedule for an engineering practice is a must...
...regardless of obstacles.



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IPGA IPGA Limited
An ASX listed company (ASX: IPP)

iProperty.com Magazine is published monthly by iProperty.com Malaysia Sdn Bhd,
45-6 The Boulevard, Mid Valley City,
Lingkaran Syed Putra 59200 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

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Printer:
Pencetakan Ombak Sdn Bhd,
Lot 37656, No. 11, Jalan 4/37A, Taman Bukit Mutiara Industrial Area Negeri,
62100 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Distributor:
MMS Media Marketing Services Sdn Bhd



Of Slopes, Satire and Sanity

Re-telling the story of the slope and the engineer

"300 people were forced to evacuate two buildings when a landslide caused part of the retaining wall of a car park to collapse in Jalan Semantan, Kuala Lumpur";

"Two sisters were buried alive when a landslide hit their bungalow in Ulu Yam Perdana near Kuala Kubu Baru, Selangor";

"Tonnes of earth came crashing down a hill onto the grounds of the Taman Terubong Jaya apartments in Butterworth where over 1,000 residents were staying".

Such headlines have become such regular features in the news that some people have become apathetic unless it concerns them directly. Which is unfortunate because landslides do affect all of us whether directly or indirectly. Imagine if a massive landslide occurs at a slope next to the North-South Expressway and it's the holiday season which sees a mass exodus of city folks out of Kuala Lumpur. The ensuing traffic jam would certainly affect a lot of us.

Nowadays, a number of new housing developments are sited on hill slopes which offer "panoramic views" and the feeling of being "on top of the world". Before you rush off to ink that contract, perhaps you should find out more about hillside slope safety and maintenance. It might save lives.

"Real World of Slopes"

For a simple primer on slopes, one of the best in the market has to be "Slopes Made Simple" by Ir Shaik Abdul Wahed Dato' Hj Rahim. Written in a simple style with lots of illustrations, it has great insights on the slope problem. "Civil engineers will also discover many truths about the real world of slopes," wrote University of Hong Kong's Professor Andrew Malone in the foreword.

Excerpts such as these, although steeped in common sense, is but a revelation. "Two structures built along the slope are dependent on each other for their safety. This means that when living in hillside areas, the adjacent or the neighbouring areas become very important. This is because when maintenance and slope safety is not fully understood by everybody and when neighbours ignore each other, issues leading to instabilities can go unnoticed. This in fact is the best stage for disaster."

The book gives a List of Warning Signs of Slope Failure, a list of "Do's and Don'ts", Keeping Safe, Tips on Problem Recognition and Maintenance and How to Keep your Slope Safe. At all times, scientific and technical language is minimized and the language is kept as simple as possible.

"Real World of Engineers"

Now, if I live on a hill slope, I would certainly read this book. And even another book on cartoons written by the same author, an engineer, who really is a cartoonist at heart.

"The Engineer" is a compilation of cartoons representing 30 years of assessment of the

engineering profession in Malaysia. As engineers work with clients, contractors, and architects, the cartoons in fact is an assessment of the entire building industry from the engineer's point of view. Rib-tickling in parts, it gives a whole new insight on what is besetting the industry in Malaysia. This book is for everyone, including the policy-makers, building industry stakeholders, property owners and investors and even the man on the street. ■

