NEW STRAITS TIMES

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Property

green building index

Setting the standards

from P5

think green

Messages from

green building index

YAB DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK

PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA

It gives me great pride to congratulate the professional architects and engineers of Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Engineers Malaysia (ACEM) for the launch of the Green Building Index on May 21, 2009.

This is a timely effort for Malaysia. The Government fully supports initiatives such as those driven by the professionals in the Green Building Index. More so when it is one of the first of such rating tools in the world specifically designed for the tropical climate.

The global effects of carbon emissions and climate change are clear. Buildings, cities and the built environment are the products of civilisation. It is also clear that such development contributes significantly to climate change and the increase in carbon emissions. However, with the Green Building Index, it will allow us to undertake development in a more environment-friendly way.

The Government is very serious in its efforts to address the effects of climate change and the need to create a green and sustainable environment, as reflected in the formation of the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water.

The new Ministry will review and formulate policies on green technology so as to enhance the quality of life and to ensure a better future for all Malaysians.

I once again congratulate and applaud the result of the efforts of PAM and ACEM which, with the full support of the building, housing and property industries, have developed this important and unique rating tool for buildings in Malaysia.

I support and wish you every success in its implementation.

"1 MALAYSIA" People First. Performance Now.

YB DATO' SERI KONG CHO HA

MINISTER OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT MALAYSIA

The realities of climate change are clear. We have to act now and work towards creating a more livable and sustainable future for all Malaysians. The Green Building Index will help Malaysians make a better choice on how and where they want to live.

Congratulations to Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers (ACEM) on this timely initiative. It is good to also see that Green Building Index has received the full support of the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (REHDA), Master Builders Association Malaysia (MBAM) and all other stakeholders in the housing industry.

Now that Malaysia has its own green rating tool, we hope that developers will now produce green-rated houses, apartments and condominiums. By using Green Building Index, property developers will be able to plan and implement more sustainable and green projects. This will then increase the options for homebuyers to choose better housing.

With Green Building Index residential rated housing, Malaysians can look forward to live in a greener environment, save costs in energy and water, and lead healthier and more productive lifestyles.

We are grateful also that Green Building Index will spearhead the move for Malaysia to be on par with developed nations that already have their own green rating tools for development.

YB DATO' SHAZIMAN BIN ABU MANSOR

MINISTER OF WORKS MALAYSIA

I am honoured to launch the Green Building Index on May 21, 2009. It is an important green rating tool to assist all those involved in the property and construction sector to become more environment-friendly.

I wish to congratulate Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM) for this huge effort. I am proud that the building professionals have taken the initiative to pioneer this important tool. I am also encouraged to know that the Green Building Index has the full support of all the players in the property, construction and housing industry. This goes to show that the Malaysian development and construction industry is ready to confront important critical issues such as global warming, carbon emissions and climate change.

We must be prepared and be ready to change the old way of doing things. The Green Building Index gives us an opportunity to be able to develop and build in a more sustainable and environment-friendly manner. It is appropriately created and customised for the Malaysian culture and climate. As such it is truly Malaysian whilst at the same time benchmarked against internationally recognised best practices and standards. In addition, it is also one of the first green rating tools developed by professionals for the tropical climate and this has attracted a lot of international interest.

Today, we can look forward to the beginning of a new era where Malaysians can choose to live and work in green rated buildings and homes. These will provide energy and water savings, a healthier indoor environment, better connectivity with alternative transport modes, and the adoption of recycling and more greenery in their communities.

The successful implementation of Green Building Index coupled with the people's will to change the way we have been living will help ensure a better future for all Malaysians.

Syabas PAM and ACEM!

think green

MALEKI GmbH
INNOVATIONS & SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION

As easy as 1,2,3

A step-by-step guide to certifying your building

Green cement to the fore

German company Maleki says its innovative technology has lower carbon footprint

By Abby Lu

Cement is one building material the industry cannot do without as it makes an excellent binder and is durable.

But its production is scrutinised as that accounts for five to seven per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and is an assault on sustainability issues such as resource depletion and pollution.

It is therefore timely that eco-friendly building materials manufacturer Maleki GmbH of Germany introduces its stable of green products that include cement, renders, protective coatings, waterproofing and self-levelling floor compounds.

Company co-founder Hossein Maleki professes these to be superior in terms of the environment, health, safety, durability and cost efficiency.

What's green cement? Maleki board member Matthias Gelber said it is important to understand the cement production process to comprehend what passes as environmentally friendly.

Limestone, a carbonate, is crushed and burned at 1,450 degrees Celsius, a process that uses a large amount of fuel. The result is cement clinker, a material used as a binder system to hold concrete together.

A single tonne of limestone produces 600kg of cement clinker. The question is, where have the other 400kg of raw material gone to? "To the air," said Gelber, "as carbon dioxide."

He stressed this is in addition to the carbon dioxide generated from burning the fuel – a tonne of cement clinker is equivalent to more or less a tonne of carbon dioxide in emissions.

On the other hand, green cement has a lower carbon footprint. Maleki, for example, uses industrial waste such as fly ash and blast furnace slag which is recognised under green building indexes all over the world as a cement replacement.

According to Gelber, no other dry mortar developer internationally can match its high content of recycled material and low carbon footprint for the entire product range.

He also said the Malaysian market is dominated by cement clinker and to promote change and a better environment, the company is planning to introduce its new green binder system. It is in talks with interested parties to form strategic partnerships to mass produce the system using its formula.

Its Malaysian partner Datuk Dr Francis Wong – who is the owner of several environmental consultancy, manpower supply and construction firms – said his interest in Maleki's green building products is driven by his desire to instill greater interest and use of green building materials in the building and construction industry.

"Though Malaysia is a strong proponent of green buildings, the development is relatively slow.

"It's necessary to scale down buildings that create excessive environmental liabilities, and this can be achieved with the use of eco-friendly materials," he said, noting that construction activities worldwide consume three billion tonnes of raw materials, or 40 per cent of total global use.

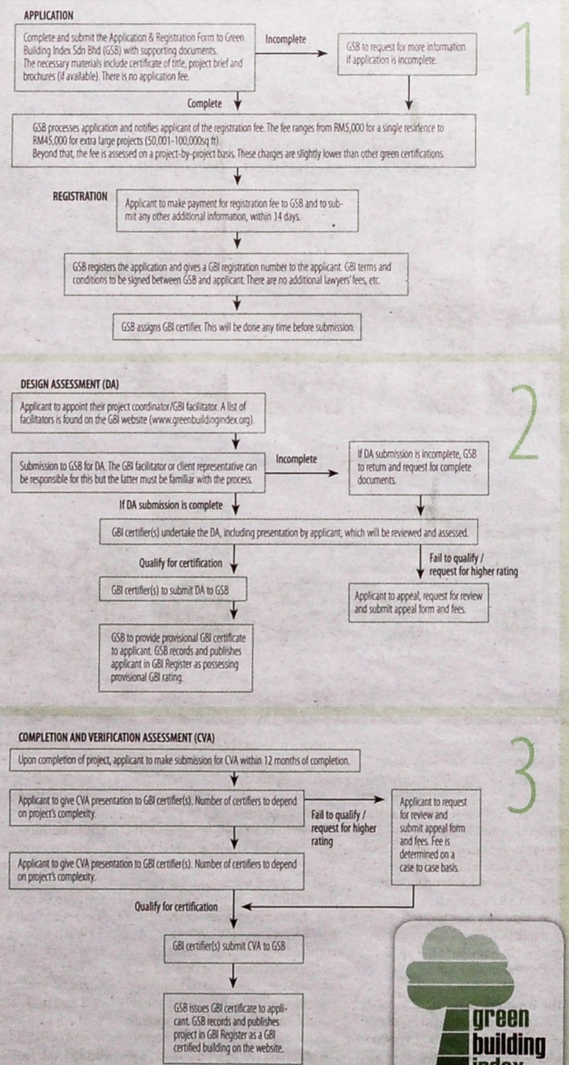
"The earth's resources are limited and infinite growth on the finite planet is not possible," Wong cautioned.

A PhD holder in environmental management, he also suggested the adoption of bio-climatic design principles or ecological design in addition to using green materials to provide greater restraint on unsustainable buildings.

Maleki is scheduled to launch its products later this year in Malaysia. It currently has 28 products in its stable.

For more information, contact Maleki GmbH at +49 541 2024 7992, Matthias Gelber at matthiasgelber@gmail.com, Datuk Dr Francis Wong at +6012 854 5558 or fwcw@esikonsultant.com.my, or email info@malekigmbh.com

The course of getting a Green Building Index (GBI) certification is not that difficult. This flowchart takes you through the three processes of application and registration; design assessment; and completion and verification assessment.



green building index

think green

colourguard™

*Green*ing to the bank

Proposed incentives that add value to sustainable designing and building

Dress up your abode with Pearl Glo

A touch of luxury with shimmery finish yet with no added lead and mercury that harm the environment

Whether one realises it or not, colours have an effect on people positively or negatively.

For that reason, it is important to pick the correct colour scheme for any space.

Take a restaurant: One wouldn't normally paint it a putrid shade, unless one wants the business to fold in record time. The food may be good but nobody would want to patronise the restaurant, much less dine there. And repeat customers? Not very likely!

In the same way, no hospitals would paint their walls black, grey or sickly yellow.

However, if you do like some of these colours, it doesn't mean you can't use them.

You just have to mix and match them with another colour, or two, or more.

After all, no one lives in monocoloured rooms anymore. Thank goodness for that.

The good news is, there are so many different colours to choose from. The bad news is, there are so many different colours to choose from.

Paint companies, like cosmetics companies, have a rainbow spectrum of colours for paint, with every shade you can think of, and then some.

It's no longer a question of plain blue, red, yellow or green. Although that would make it considerably easy for the men and some women as well.

So, if you're planning to freshen up your living quarters, colours help.

A fresh coat of paint can transform your humble abode into something else altogether.

And if you're looking for inspiration, well, ICI Paints (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd has a variety of different paints to choose from and a whole palette of colours to whet your appetite. The Akzo Nobel company is an international leader in advanced coating products.

If it's a luxurious interior you're after, ICI's Dulux Pearl Glo may just be the product for you.

Its Colourguard technology helps to lock in colour for a more dynamic looking interior and for a longer period of time.

Additionally, its mid sheen finish exudes the glow of pearl and the feel of silk to give the interior an added shimmer.

Sounds decidedly decadent, doesn't it. And best of all, the paint's good washability allows you to clean up stains on your painted walls. If your children dirty the walls, no matter. No need to kick up a big fuss.

So, take a colours tour today for a sensory experience. And mind you, the names of the paint colours are equally delicious.

All Dulux paints contain no added lead and mercury that are harmful to the environment.

- *Ivy Chang*

For more information on ICI Dulux Pearl Glo, surf to www.icidulux.com.my or contact the ICI customer careline at 1-800-88-9338.

By Susan Tan

Malaysia's architects, engineers and developers are looking to building a more granite foundation for green developments.

Our very own Green Building Index (GBI) Malaysia, developed by Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia, will lead the property industry towards becoming more environment-friendly.

According to PAM immediate past president Dr Tan Loke Mun, GBI has received the full support of building and property players from its inception.

The rating system will provide the opportunity for developers to design and construct green, sustainable buildings that can provide energy savings, water savings, a healthier indoor environment, better connectivity to public transport and adopt recycling and greenery for their projects.

GBI is intended to promote sustainability in the built environment and raise awareness among developers, architects, engineers, planners, designers, contractors and the public about environmental issues.

How are green buildings important? They are designed to save energy and resources, recycle materials and minimise emission of toxic substances throughout their life cycles.

They harmonise with the local climate, traditions, culture and the surrounding environment, and are able to sustain and improve the quality of human life while maintaining the capacity of the ecosystem at local and global levels.

In addition, green buildings have many benefits such as better use of building resources, significant operational savings, and increased workplace productivity.

Building green sends the right message about companies and organisations – that they are well run, responsible, and committed to the future.

The GBI team looks to propose the following incentives:

Federal government

1. It could offer tax incentives for a fixed period of three years for GBI rated developments based on the amount spent on their green technology. Application of green building design is estimated to increase the cost of projects by between five and 20 per cent.
2. Stamp duty for contractual transactions could be reduced or waived for GBI rated projects
3. Levy imposed on projects by CIDB could similarly be reduced or exempted for the GBI ratings achieved by the project. This could be worked out in two stages, during the Design Assessment stage and upon completion and verification assessment of the project.
4. Consultancy firms that invest in training employees in green building technologies could be offered tax rebates from their profits based on the amount spent on training.
5. The government could work out a scheme whereby developers could apply for special loans with lower lending rates to finance the cost of implementing green features (leading to GBI certification) in their developments.
6. Service tax exemption for all services provided for a GBI project or incorporation of green technology.
7. Tax breaks or reduction for owners and developers with projects that further achieve GBI Gold and Platinum ratings as direct result of increased investment.
8. Double tax deduction for tenants who rent or lease GBI Gold and Platinum buildings
9. Greenbuildingindex Sdn Bhd that operates GBI to have pioneer tax free status for 10 years.
10. Import tax and sales tax exemption for all GBI related or green-tech related equipment for use on GBI certified projects. All such equipment will have international or approved green labelling.

State and local governments

1. Reduction in quit rent and assessment rates could be offered for a set period of time (renewable every three years to coincide with GBI renewals to sustain their GBI rating status) to property owners based on their GBI ratings.
2. A higher plot ratio or density could be offered for GBI rated developments.
3. Projects committed to achieving GBI Gold and Platinum – the highest GBI levels – could be given OSC (one stop centre) Priority fast lane approval. Rebate on building plan fees could also be considered for these types of projects.
4. Existing buildings that propose to be refurbished to turn them green could be offered building plan fees exemption, quit rent and assessment rates reductions.
5. Reduction in car parking requirements for GBI rated buildings that achieve scores for provision of alternative means of public transport, priority parking for multipassenger vehicles, bicycle provisions and interconnection between buildings to facilitate pedestrian movement.
6. Stamp duty exemption or reduction for all sale and purchase as well as tenancy contracts in respect of GBI rated buildings and projects.
7. Increased roof space heights to facilitate installation of rainwater harvesting and storage.
8. Preparation of design guidelines to encourage the use of green garden roofs, green walls and landscaping to reduce the heat island effect.
9. Offer grants and present awards for best GBI rated projects in the state and local authorities.
10. Establish a green procurement policy where all state and local government premises (owned or rented) must be GBI certified.
11. Establish a green policy to ensure that all future proposed state and local government building projects achieve at least GBI Gold.
12. Set up, support and finance pilot projects in several categories from low cost housing, suburban housing, condominiums, office building and so forth to set new green building benchmarks for the state, city or municipality.
13. Set up a special task force committee at state and local government levels to facilitate, promote and expedite the implementation of GBI rated buildings.

Private sector

1. Property and asset valuers to understand and value GBI rated buildings appropriately taking into account the benefits and life-cycle savings of GBI rated buildings to building owners, tenants and end-users. Higher valuations will mean higher asset values for GBI rated buildings.
2. Banks and financial institutions can provide lower interest rate loans for developers, building owners and purchasers of GBI rated buildings and properties. This will augur well for their corporate social responsibility in supporting and financing a more sustainable future.

green building index

NEW STRAITS TIMES FRIDAY, MAY 22, 2009

The green common factor

A number of groundbreaking pilot projects are looking forward to be GBI certified

By Abby Lu

One of the building industry's highly anticipated events – the unveiling of Green Building Index (GBI) Malaysia – finally took place at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

And doing the honours of officiating the launch of the country's very own green building rating system was Minister of Works Datuk Shaziman Abu Mansor.

GBI, in incubation and continual refinement since last year, is a joint effort by Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM). After receiving tremendous support from the government and industry players, many are now looking forward to having their buildings green rated.

Here's a peek at some pilot projects:

1 First Avenue, Bandar Utama

A 25-storey office building comprising office spaces with landscaped sky terraces, six basement floors for car parking and Mechanical and Electrical (M&E) services. Some of its energy saving features include a chilled-water storage air-conditioning system and rainwater harvesting mechanisms.

Scheduled for completion in December, the 2.3 million square feet building is a project by Bandar Utama City Corp Sdn Bhd.

Viva Residency, Jalan Ipoh

A mix development comprising residential units and commercial/retail outlets, the soon-to-complete Viva Residency will be green certified.

It is being constructed in three phases: Phase A comprising four-storey shoplots with an open plaza; Phase B with three-storey shoplots, a five-storey car parking space and a 19-storey apartment tower; and Phase C with two-storey shoplots.

Partly targeted to rejuvenate a dilapidated and neglected part of Jalan Ipoh into a vibrant and contemporary lifestyle hub, Viva Residency boasts several green features in its common areas: A rainwater harvesting contraption on the podium level to water plants on that level; sub-metering for lights to segregate them in groups and enable more efficient usage; and energy-saving lights.

Additionally, openings in south-facing walls are minimised to reduce heat penetration and large overhangs are incorporated to shade windows and openings. Whenever possible, corridors, car parking areas and stairwells are designed for natural lighting and ventilation.

KL Eco City, Jalan Bangsar

A project aspiring to attain GBI Platinum rating is the proposed KL Eco City to be located on a 24-acre site fronting Jalan Bangsar and opposite the Gardens/Mid Valley City development.

To be jointly developed by the SP Setia Bhd group and KL City Hall, it will comprise commercial and residential components including office towers, hotel and retail premises.

Currently at the planning stage, the project will feature ecologically sustainable designs, energy saving devices and abundant landscape.

Rehda Headquarters, Kelana Jaya

Scheduled to be completed in 2011, the new HQ of the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association will comprise a multipurpose hall, training rooms, offices, resource centre, boardroom and a grand atrium over a 29,601sq ft site.

It will involve demolishing the existing single-storey structure and converting the courtyard into a covered atrium with natural lighting and ventilation.

Other sustainable design approaches include a ventilation block wall which acts as a second skin to the building envelope. According to its architect Clement Wong, the "double skin" feature not only protects the building's interiors from heat but also allows it to "breathe" through ventilation blocks. Another feature is the "vertical vegetation screen", a living green wall that provides the same effect as the ventilation block wall.

To reduce carbon footprint during construction, the building will use materials such as fair-face concrete block walls and off-form concrete that has less embodied energy compared to common clay bricks. Such materials also do not require additional cement plaster rendering and paint finish.

In line with the green agenda, the project will have photovoltaic panels on the rooftop and a rainwater harvesting system for watering the landscape.

Setia City Mall, Setia Alam, Shah Alam

The reportedly RM750 million retail mall in Setia City – the commercial hub of SP Setia Bhd's Setia Alam township in Shah Alam – is also scheduled to be GBI rated.

A four-level mall with a gross area of 1.23 million square feet, the developer has appointed The Jerde Partnership to create a landmark in the city. The firm is a United States-based design architect known for coining the term "placemaking" and designing iconic places such as Japan's Roppongi Hills and Las Vegas' Bellagio.

Its first phase will offer 699,660sq ft of nett lettable area to local and international retailers.

SP Setia said it is committed to help reduce the carbon footprint of the mall's construction, operation and management.

This includes minimising waste and carbon emissions through smart procurement and construction such as selecting efficient and sustainable equipment and fixtures, as well as using passive design to ensure minimal solar gain and loss of air-conditioning via building orientation, shading and insulation.

To ensure success, a member of the development team will be devoted to managing the project's sustainability initiatives.

The Beneton, Bangsar

A 14-storey condominium that will house only 22 units, it will boast a host of sustainable features ranging from M&E fittings such as low energy consumption lightings and rainwater-harvesting device to architectural elements.

Design-wise, the building will feature large overhangs to shade the windows and will be enveloped by a "double skin". Its architect Ken Wong said the moveable skin will provide a very efficient buffer from the external environment.

It also serves to enhance the condo's cross ventilation and complement the large overhangs to allow windows to be opened even on rainy days and reduce heat penetration while maximising use of natural light and airflow, the latter to reduce the need for air-conditioning. Landscaping will also help shade the building.

The architects are currently conducting research on the selection of materials to best lower the building's carbon footprint.

Lot E, KL Sentral

With its construction expected to commence in June, the development of Lot E – a premium mix-use commercial and retail development set within a park – will see KL Sentral having its very own green lung come 2011.

Comprising office buildings, a high-end retail as well as a business and hospitality centre, there will be a total nett lettable area of 468,000sq ft for offices and 86,251sq ft for retail and F&B.

Immediately adjacent to one of KL's most important transportation hubs, it will feature landscaped "event spaces" that are integral to the development scheme.

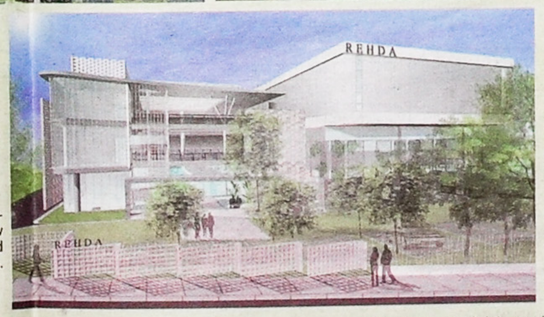
Other sustainable design aspects include a building envelope that uses double glazing with low-emissivity coating and glazing that allows 50 per cent of visible light. The use of such high grade glazing will allow the building to save up to 30 per cent in energy expenditure for cooling.

Also, among many other sustainable features, the project will have extensive greenery – green roof terraces, sky gardens and vertical gardens – in keeping with its vision of creating a verdant green environment.

(*Right*) Located along Jalan Penaga, Bangsar, The Beneton will feature a double skin façade to serve as a buffer against the external environment.

(*Left*) Lot E, KL Sentral, will serve as a green lung for the area when completed in 2011.

(*Left*) The developer of the RM750 million Setia City Mall is committed to help reduce the carbon footprint of the mall's construction, operation and management.



Partly meant as a rejuvenation programme for a certain portion of Jalan Ipoh, Viva Residency is a mixed development that aims to become a vibrant lifestyle hub.

Digital rendering of the new Rehda head quarters.

(*Right*) 1 First Avenue, a new office complex in Bandar Utama, will have a chilled-water storage air-conditioning system, among other green features.

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Panasonic
ideas for life

Dawn of new era

Malaysia's launch of two green building ratings concurrently for residential and non-residential properties are a first in the world

Lighting up responsibly

Panasonic's eco light bulbs can save up to 80 per cent in electricity consumption

Those who switched their lights off during the recent Earth Hour must have experienced a sense of loss at the absence of illumination, possibly one of the most important features of modern homes.

However, usage of lights at home and the workplace also contributes to energy consumption. If every bit counts, it would help to cut electricity expenditure via energy efficient bulbs.

These include Panasonic eco bulbs that are fast gaining popularity in the market in view of rising awareness of climate change.

Panasonic Malaysia Sdn Bhd's spiral Eco Bulb consumes up to 80 per cent less energy than conventional incandescent bulbs.

It is also more durable – having a life cycle of 15,000 hours compared to 6,000 to 10,000 hours of normal energy saving bulbs. An incandescent bulb, on the other hand, has a life cycle of 1,000 hours or less.

The longer life cycle is a plus point as that translates into one less spent bulb in the landfills, hence minimising waste as well. This is thanks to Panasonic's newly developed "quadrible coil in electrode" that sustains a bigger volume emitter, thus making it last 15 times longer.

Another advantage of the Panasonic eco bulbs is size. According to a Panasonic spokesperson, energy saving bulbs have not been suitable for several applications and lighting fixtures due to their bigger size.

"However, Panasonic's high-density bending technology can increase the replacement of incandescent bulbs to energy saving lamps thanks to the latter's ultra small size," she said.

Light bulbs are only one among Panasonic's stable of eco-friendly products. Earlier this year, Panasonic Corp made it to the Global 100 Most Sustainable Corporations in the World.

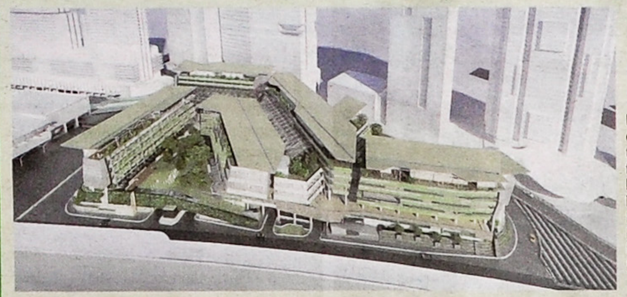
Also, in October last year, the company announced its three "eco ideas" declaration for "manufacturing", "products" and "everybody, everywhere".

With these declarations, it stays committed to being a responsible company that is proactive in helping to preserve the planet's ecology.

It has pledged to reduce 300,000 tonnes in carbon dioxide emissions from its global manufacturing activities, design and manufacture energy efficient and environmentally friendly products, and promote environmental activities such as reforestation and marine conservation.

Locally, the company sees the need to address consumer concerns about rising electricity tariffs and increased fuel prices by introducing energy-saving household appliances that include Inverter powered refrigerators, air-conditioners and washing machines. - *Abby Lu*

For more information on the product and other environmentally-friendly appliances, visit www.panasonic.com.my



Despite the downturn, the market for green buildings has grown. Pictured is MRCB Bhd's Lot E at KL Sentral.

By Boon Che Wee

The launch of the Green Building Index (GBI) – the country's own green building rating jointly developed by Pertubuhan Akitek Malaysia (PAM) and the Association of Consulting Engineers Malaysia (ACEM) – by Minister of Works Datuk Shaziman Abu Mansor yesterday marks the beginning of the green wave of our nation.

Green building has become a global phenomenon. Once an emerging trend with a small market, green building has grown in spite of the downturn and green seems to be one area of construction insulated by it.

The rapid expansion can be attributed to growing public awareness of green practices, recognition by property owners of the bottomline advantages, establishment of market accepted indices for building performances such Malaysia's GBI and, very importantly, effective "green stimulus" intervention from all levels of governments.

Greening the nation

For the pioneering years of GBI, we seek government support to offer tax incentives for a fixed period of, say, three years for GBI certified developments, and further tax break or tax reduction for developments certified for GBI Gold and Platinum, the rating's highest recognitions.

The government may also consider reducing stamp duty for contractual transactions, and the Construction Industry Development Board levy on construction contracts of GBI certified development, or have them exempted for GBI Gold and Platinum projects.

Exemption of import tax and sales tax for green labelled equipment as well as products and service tax for GBI certified developments will be added incentives for developers and property owners.

At the state level, we encourage state governments to set up coordinating committees to promote, facilitate and expedite approvals of incentives for GBI certified developments.

This may include priority and fast track OSC (one stop centre) processes; added consideration for green installations and equipment and insulating roof space that exceed prescribed building control height limits; reduced car parking provision in consideration for spaces provided for recycled-water tanks, non-fuel and multi-passer vehicles, inter-building pedestrian links and such; and exclusion of built-up areas that contribute to the greening of the projects from computation of plot ratios.

We would also propose to state governments and local authorities to consider reducing quit rents and assessments for GBI certified properties for a set period of three years to coincide with the renewal period for GBI certification.

They can also consider establishing green procurement policies for their properties and initiate, finance and implement pilot GBI housing and community projects to showcase and set benchmarks for the state, city or municipality.

Very soon, we would require one inter-ministerial and inter-governmental green building policy to map out complementary measures from all ministries and all levels of governments and facilitate property developers, owners and tenants in maximising their financial incentives and support for their green building initiatives.

Greening across borders

GBI has received international attention for being the first and todate the only non-governmental and profession-driven green building rating developed for the tropical climate.

Through PAM's and ACEM's regional networks, the GBI team had kept their regional counterparts informed on GBI's development status.

Just as we have benefited from the generous sharing of other green building rating organisations, we have shared what we have learned and experienced in GBI's development to our counterparts in the region, with the possibility of them adapting or adopting Malaysia's GBI in their countries, our training of their GBI professionals, and opportunities to collaborate on pilot projects.

There is potential for GBI to be the common green building rating for all countries with similar climatic and development conditions, at least for the region.

Greener futures

It took the GBI team of PAM and ACEM less than nine months from the idea of a green building rating for Malaysia to the launch of not one but two green building ratings concurrently for residential and non-residential properties – a first in the world.

As soon as the launch was over, and to meet the request of the industry, the GBI team is now planning the drafting of new sets of green building ratings – one for new neighbourhood and township developments and another for 'retrogreening' of existing buildings.

Boon Che Wee is PAM deputy president, a member of the PAM Sustainability Committee and a director of GBI Sdn Bhd.

green building index

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LUMBERmart™

Obama's green political machine looks mean

But it's hit by opposition from coal mining states which fear jobs will be threatened

Green Collection leads the way

This is Lumbermart's first step in supporting the drive towards sustainable buildings

Tan (left) and Lee with some timber samples from Lumbermart's Green Collection.

For consumers seeking eco-friendly lifestyle choices, they can rest assured that Lumbermart Sdn Bhd's Green Collection of timber flooring products is either Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified or approved by international associations dedicated to socially responsible industry practices.

It also comes with non-toxic GreenGuard-certified floor finishes that use a waterborne technology that ensures indoor air quality is not compromised as well as a powerful system that evacuates airborne dust to eliminate risk of dust pollutants to reduce health hazards.

All this ensures positive indoor air quality which is a key consideration in Malaysia's Green Building Index (GBI) standard, said Lumbermart director Charles Lee.

"Our Green Collection is environment friendly and comes from renewable resources.

"It's also reasonably priced, easy to install and made of formaldehyde-free composite wood to ensure indoor environmental quality."

Lee said Lumbermart advocates the need for GBI, is committed to the national push towards sustainable buildings, and it's Green Collection is the company's first step in that direction.

The Green Collection comprises the Sustainable Forest Initiation (SFI)-certified American red oak and American white oak, Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Scheme (PEFC)–certified Tasmanian oak, FSC-certified thermo pine as well as plantation timber wattle and bamboo.

"As a socially responsible company, Lumbermart is working with other industry players to drive the understanding of timber as an eco-friendly building material," he said.

According to Lee, timber as a building material is valued for its character, warmth and texture; is natural, renewable and biodegradable; a non-toxic and energy efficient material to grow and manufacture; the only major building material whose production yields life sustaining oxygen and absorbs carbon dioxide, the main agent of global warming; and produced from solar energy.

Jeff Tan, another Lumbermart director, said the Green Collection is sourced from suppliers that have ensured independent certification.

"Our green label on our timber flooring range is backed by high standards that allow customers the option of making a purchase decision that supports the environment for future generations.

"We agree there's a need for a balance and the sustainability standards address issues that make it possible to log natural forests in a sustainable manner. This will enable a stable ecosystem and allow timber harvesting to continue indefinitely at the same rate as replacement timber growth."

Tan added Lumbermart will help drive industry best practices to ensure the growth of sustainable buildings through adopting the GBI certification.

"There's every sign that GBI is about to sweep the building industry and Lumbermart's Green Collection is suitable for both residential and commercial projects." - *Zoe Phoon*

Obama's green stimulus package is going to make a difference, according to new reports by the US Department of Energy.

By Susan Tan

Environmentalists rejoiced when United States President Barack Obama claimed his victory in the last election. When Nobel Prize Laureate Steven Chu was hired as energy secretary and Harvard professor John Holdren was nominated into his green team, it was clear that Obama is intent on mowing down on climate change and gearing up for an ambitious green revolution.

Just a week in the White House, two memoranda were issued. One orders the Transportation Department to work out rules for automakers to improve fuel efficiency by 2010. The other allowed California's Environmental Protection Agency to set strict tailpipe standards. Eight per cent or US$60 billion (RM215.81 billlion) of Obama's gasp-inducing US$787 billion (RM2.83 trillion) stimulus package is dedicated to greentech and cleaner energy.

It may seem with the US economy crumbling, Iraq blowing up its military and national budgets, and the US image taking a serious beating, environmental issues would be at the bottom of the mire.

Perhaps, the green enthusiasm to put energy and environment on top of the agenda might be Obama's best strategy yet. With green leadership, the administration adds a brand new spark plug to the economy and salvation for the country's image as a responsible global leader.

The global impact from his leadership is significant. Efforts to tackle climate change could result in doubling the current world market for environmental products and services of US$1.37 trillion (RM4.93 trillion) a year to US$2.74 trillion (RM9.85 trillion) by 2020, according to Worldwatch Institute last year.

A total of 2.3 million people found renewable energy jobs in recent years and projected investment of US$630 billion (RM2.27 trillion) by 2030 is envisaged to translate into at least 20 million jobs. Besides, green initiatives will bolster bilateral ties between the US, India and China, the largest global emerging markets – something the Bush administration never set in motion.

For property industries worldwide, the green movement may foster a green building boom. US green building consultant Jerry Yudelson (http://www.greenbuildconsult.com) predicted earlier this year the Obama administration is likely to create a massive impact on commercial design and construction practices.

It said green building will become a permanent part of the economic, financial and cultural landscape. This, hopefully, will cause a snowball effect which will encourage the rest of the world to build sustainably.

But currently, it seems that Washington is applying brakes to the green machine. Obama's plan to reduce US emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 using a "cap-and-trade" system, where emitters will be charged for every tonne of carbon dioxide emitted into the air, which will generate funding for green jobs and renewable energy (solar and wind) and a smart grid to get the power to customers, has been hit with opposition in the coal mining western states which fear their brown jobs will be threatened.

It remains to be seen whether the green machine will plough through these hiccups.

Recent reports, however, are encouraging: New figures released by the US Department of Energy predict that the country's carbon emissions will be 1.3 per cent lower come 2013 than previous expectations in view of the stimulus package's contribution to renewable energy.

The United Nations will reconvene on June 1 for more leads on moving forward. In the property and development arena, one can only hope that people will start seeing that green building is indeed favoured.

With the iconic Empire State Building undergoing a US$20 million (RM79.12 million) environmental efficiency makeover, the bets are the rest of the world are going to go ape with green.

green building index

think green

PILKINGTON
NSG Group Flat Glass Business

Green carpet roll call

Celebrity lifestyles and endorsements do help get the eco message across

This is one of the designs by architecture firms commissioned by (inset) Brad Pitt to help rebuild New Orleans' Ninth Ward destroyed by Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

By Susan Tan

Celebrities are going green. We're not talking about the "Incredible Hulk" or the "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" but about stars who are transforming trends through influencing movies, cars, fashion and homes.

First on the eco-razzi list is former United States vice president and Nobel Peace Prize winner Al Gore who started the green movement with Oscar-clincher "An Inconvenient Truth".

Following his footsteps on the silver screen is Leonardo DiCaprio propagating an all new sink or swim message in the documentary "11th Hour" – sink with global warming bringing apocalyptic droughts, famine, severe flooding, record rainfall, hurricanes, acid rain and extreme temperatures or swim in the stream of environmental consciousness. It features other green celebrities from ex-Soviet prime minister Mikhail Gorbachev to Stephen Hawking.

DiCaprio is also on the long list of celebrities – including Alicia Silverstone, David Duchovny, Brad Pitt, Cameron Diaz, Ellen DeGeneres, Ewan McGregor, Prince Charles, Robin Williams, George Clooney and Jay Leno – who have traded in their fuel-guzzling rides for hybrids.

And where would celebrities be without their fashion? Most fashionistas would be clued in about Anya Hindmarch's sell out "I'm not a Plastic Bag" craze.

Unsurprisingly, vegan Paul and the late Linda "Beatles" McCartney's fashion celebrity daughter Stella McCartney is doing her family proud with her line of green-conscious fashion styles under the Gucci group, including denims, accessories, lingerie and line for Adidas developed from organic materials.

Natalie Portman follows suit with an innovative and animal-product-free shoe line, Te Casan.

If the style pundits are right, eco couture will prevail and go the way of hybrids.

Glitterati aside, some celebrities are getting down to the ground with their eco endeavours. Robert Redford leads the pack, starting his green crusade since he was 24, purchasing a plot in Utah which he named Sundance, then paving a green paradise for budding artists. Sundance is a place where the noobs has a natural environment to inspire them.

Brad Pitt's rebuilding efforts in Hurricane Katrina's aftermath at the New Orleans' Ninth Ward is more than just providing shelter. Each home built comes with solar panels and energy-efficient appliances and the project is to be one of the largest "green neighbourhoods".

"The Incredible Hulk" star Edward Norton is a vocal advocate for the environment and recently received the Harvard Medical School's Global Environmental Citizen Awards with Jordan's Queen Noor.

He is a trustee for his late grandfather's Enterprise foundation, a national non-profit body that provides affordable housing for low-income people in large cities.

He also runs the Solar Neighbours Program which matches each celebrity purchase of a solar energy home system with an installation for a low-income family home in Los Angeles.

This cause has been supported by Owen Wilson, Brad Pitt, Danny DeVito, Robin Williams and Salma Hayek.

Norton regularly contributes to the Grand Canyon Trust, the Wilderness Society and Earthjustice.

Green building and alternative energy advocates also include thespian Cate Blanchett whose home in Australia is powered entirely by solar panels. She is also a director of the Sydney Theatre Company and aims for the theater to be fully carbon neutral within five years.

In Britain, K.T. Tunstall has turned her home eco-friendly and performs for "green" events, travelling to each in a tour bus that runs on biodiesel fuel.

Same goes for Elizabeth Hurley who has quit acting to raise a family on a 400-acre organic farm from where she supplies organic meat from her humanely raised cattle.

In Canada, Alanis Morissette lives in her home equipped with solar panels and campaigns against oil drilling in Alaska.

Among Asian celebrities, Gong Li's attention is on garbage processing. As a delegate to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, China's lower house, she has put forward a proposal to clean up the environment.

Bollywood's Amitabh Bachchan, Aishwarya Rai and Madhuri Dixit propagate the cause through tours and films.

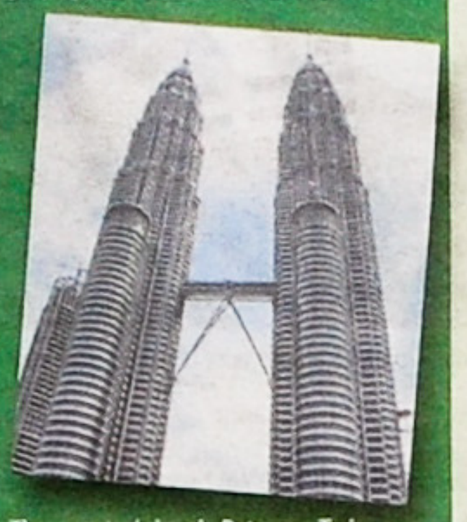
In Malaysia, Maya Karin lends her celebrity power to the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry. She even has a green wedding at the Forest Reserve Institute Malaysia in Kepong!

Celebrity endorsement, even though sometimes criticised as facetious by hardcore environmentalists, does help get the message across. We can't help but think going green is now cool, rewarding and important for everyone now. After all, we follow celebrity lifestyles, hairstyles and fashion – a great excuse to be up to trend.

green building index

Revolutionary glass

Celebrating the 50th anniversary since its invention, Pilkington glass reduces the impact of glassmaking on the environment



The country's iconic Petronas Twin Towers would not be what it is without high performance glazing.

What would prestigious projects such as the Kuala Lumpur International Airport, Mulieris Towers in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the Cocoon Tower in Tokyo's Shinjuku, Japan, be like minus the contribution of high performance glazing? Certainly not the icons they are today.

One such glassmaker that has made these amazing glass structures possible is United Kingdom-based Pilkington, which is celebrating the 50th anniversary of its invention of the float glass process that makes the company the world's market leader.

The process of floating molten glass on tin before allowing it to cool has revolutionised the global glass industry. That eliminated the previous technologies which required grinding and polishing, and wasting around 30 per cent of the glass in the process, to achieve a perfect surface.

The new process cuts costs, increases output, improves product quality and reduces the impact of glassmaking on the environment.

The float process has since been licensed to more than 40 manufacturers in 30 countries. Today, 380 float lines are either in operation, under construction or being planned worldwide, producing a combined one million tonnes of high quality glass a week.

Pilkington was acquired by the NSG Group of Japan in 2006, one of the world's largest producers of glass for buildings, automotive and some specialist applications including the growing photovoltaic sector. The group operates in addition to having interests in 51 float lines worldwide. The Pilkington name lives on as the principal brand of the enlarged entity.

Malaysian Sheet Glass Sdn Bhd (MSG), established in 1971, is part of the NSG Group which shares its technology and branding and enables MSG to offer a good range of advanced products such as Pilkington Reflite, a high performance reflective glass that enhances energy efficiency in buildings.

In addition, the Group also has in its stable a large number of value added products that meet Green Building Index (GBI) standards in most countries.

Pilkington's branded products – which reduce cost and maintenance, enhance property values, promote environmental awareness through lowering energy cost and ultra violet transmittance that helps to prevent colour fading and degradation of plastic materials – fulfil GBI requirements.

Recognising the role of glass in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and mitigating effects of climate change, the NSG Group supports initiatives to utilise glass to reduce energy consumption of buildings, vehicles and equipment as well as to generate or conserve energy.

Its role is indeed important: Energy used in making high performance products is quickly paid back. Light, comfort, wellbeing, style and sustainability are the benefits of today's high performing windows and glass building façades, all made possible through the invention of Float.

- Abby Lu

Shaziman: Let's have more environ-friendly buildings

By Adeline Paul Raj
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MALAYSIA must move towards having more "green" buildings, Works Minister Datuk Shaziman Abu Mansor says.

He plans to propose that all upcoming government buildings be "green", or environment-friendly, in their design.

"In future, I hope whenever there are new government buildings to be built, criteria like energy savings and usage of recycled water would be taken into consideration. This can bring down operations cost for the government," he told reporters at the launch of the Green Building Index (GBI) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The GBI, developed by the Malaysian Institute of Architects and the Asociation of Consulting Engineers Malaysia, is essentially a rating system that gauges how "green" a building, be it residential or non-residential, is.

"It was initiated to provide the building industry a common and verifiable mechanism to benchmark buildings within the Malaysian context," said Serena Hijjas, a GBI accreditation panel member.

Shaziman signs a plaque to symbolise the launching of the forum. Looking on are GBI accreditation panel chairman Ar Lee Chor Wah (right) and Organising GBI chairman Ar Boon Che Wee. — Bernama picture

For now, the GBI will assess new buildings. Later, it will develop a framework that will enable it to also assess existing buildings.

Building owners, developers and consultants can apply to have buildings assessed for a marginal fee, Serena said.

"So far, we've done pilots on 11 projects, and more are coming in, so the take-up rate has been very encouraging," said Tan Loke Mun, another accreditation panel member.

Asked if the government plans to make it mandatory for all property developers to have their projects assessed, like in Singapore, Shaziman said it was too early to say.

"It's still at an initial stage. But on the government's part, we encourage the move towards green buildings," he remarked.

In Malaysia, the GBI will rate buildings based on six key criteria, namely energy-efficiency, indoor environmen quality, sustainable site planning and management, materials and resources, water efficiency and innovation.

A building will be assessed at the design stage as well as a year after it is first occupied, and then again every three years to ensure that it is well-maintained.

A building can be assigned a Platinum, Gold, Silver or Certified rating, depending on the scores achieved.

'Award jobs to eco-conscious firms'

THE government should emphasise on awarding contracts to eco-conscious companies to spearhead the growth of more environment-friendly businesses in the country.

Green Purchasing Network Malaysia president Datuk Mustafa Mansur said the government's support could help create a whole new sector of corporations acting in an environmentally-responsible manner.

The government should take the lead in encouraging businessmen to come out with more green products and services," he said after opening the National Conference on Green Procurement in the public sector in Kuala Lumpur yesterday