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2



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6

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luxury

10

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## Connecting people

Tujuan Gemilang Sdn Bhd's latest offering is the RM600 million Tamarind Square in Cyberjaya. Its executive chairman Ahmad Khalif Mustapha Kamal (left) and executive director Peter Chan liken the development's concept to a tree under which people can gather and interact. See story on Page 4.



# Tamarind Square to bring people together in Cyberjaya

BY WONG KING WAI

Following in your father's footsteps is never an easy task. But Ahmad Khalif Mustapha Kamal, son of MK Land Bhd chairman Tan Sri Mustapha Kamal Abu Bakar, takes it all in his stride.

"My father has achieved a lot and I felt that he has left me a path so that I can take [the business] to the next level," Ahmad Khalif says. "Whatever I've done has been because he has done the work and made it possible for me to move forward."

This has seen Ahmad Khalif team up with Peter Chan, a former employee of MK Land, to form Tujan Gemilang Sdn Bhd. Ahmad Khalif is executive chairman while Chan is executive director of the company.

"I left MK Land in 2004 to pursue personal projects," Chan says. "Eventually, I found an interesting piece of land. It was too big for me on my own, so I spoke to several people, including my old boss Tan Sri Mustapha Kamal. He said he wasn't interested in buying more land, but that his son was looking to come out of MK Land, and suggested the two of us form a new company together."

"Then Tan Sri offered us this 5.4-acre tract, on which PJ Trade Centre sits, and that is how we started. We started in 2005 with the aspiration to do something significant and meaningful, not just some run-of-the-mill project. That is how we came up with PJ Trade Centre."

PJ Trade Centre is an office development with four towers. The RM358 million project, completed in 2009 and with a built-up of 810,000 sq ft, received the Gold Award at the 2013 Fiaci International Prix d'Excellence for the Office Category.

Tujan Gemilang's next project was also an office development, Point92, which sits on 0.92 acres of leasehold land and has a gross development value (GDV) of RM95 million. The project, which was completed in 2012, was sold en bloc to Sarawak-based OBYU Holding Sdn Bhd in 2012.

Both PJ Trade Centre and Point92, now called Menara OBYU, are in Damansara Perdana, Selangor.

The developer's latest offering is Tamarind Square, a RM600 million project on 14.54 acres of freehold land in Cyberjaya. The project, located at the corner of Persiaran Bestari and Persiaran Multimedia, will feature semi-detached shopoffices, a garden mall and a SoHo block.

The concept for this development is likened to a tree. "Tamarind Square is in Cyberjaya, the home of Malaysia's IT industry," says Chan. "The main purpose of IT is to connect people, and the technology in nature that brings people together is the tree. In small towns or villages, people usually gather under a tree, even overseas, to have a cup of tea or a meal, to gossip and to watch performances. So we thought it would be nice to design Tamarind Square with this concept in



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PICTURES BY LEE LAY KIN/THE EDGE



mind, so people can gather under a tree and connect with each other."

Ahmad Khalif agrees, citing how people would gather under trees at Raju's, a popular roti canai place in Petaling Jaya. "If we could replicate some of these elements in a development with greenery, and it isn't too hard, people will appreciate it as it will be different and will want to stay in the area. This will benefit the retailers there."

Chan says the company is targeting IT professionals, students and families for Tamarind Square, which is surrounded by more than 15 residential developments, including UEM Land's Symphony Hills and S P Setia's Setia Eco Glades. Tamarind Square is also within walking distance from Multimedia University and Cyberjaya Smart School.

Cyberjaya's day-time population is estimated at about 50,000 while at night, it is 20,000. Its population is projected to reach 100,000 by 2016, when Tamarind Square is expected to be completed.

## Tamarind Square

Tamarind Square has three main components — 30 four and five-storey semi-detached shopoffices, 72 three-storey garden mall shopoffices and a 15-storey SoHo block. The reason for this mix is because the developer's research shows that shopoffices and SoHos are very much in demand in Cyberjaya.

The semidetached shopoffices will be sold in pairs, with those on Levels 1 and 2 or Levels 3 and 4 sold together

as a unit. For the 5-storey shopoffices, levels 3, 4, and 5 will be sold as one unit. In total, there will be 60 units are up for sale.

"Investors like to buy two floors rather than three or four floors. Almost 80% of the rental income from shopoffices comes from Levels 1 and 2. The other levels give you almost no income," Chan explains.

"So investors only like to buy two levels, which gives them the best return. We also didn't want to sell four levels because the total price would be more than RM6 million, which is not so affordable. We designed it a bit like Solaris Dutamas, with a podium road, so the lower two levels can be accessed from the main street, while the top two levels can be accessed from the podium road."

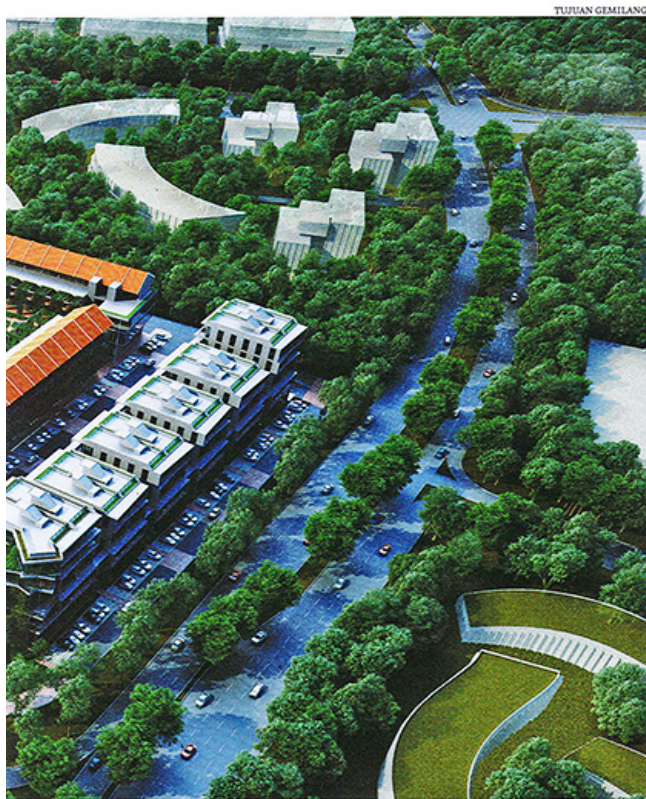
The semidetached shopoffices have a private garden beside it, which can be used for alfresco dining. The selling price for the lower units facing the main road starts from RM3.7 million, while the upper units facing the podium road start from RM3.3 million. Each unit has a built-up of 4,006 to 4,428 sq ft.

Tamarind Square will be sold in three phases. Phase 1, offering 44 units of semidetached shopoffices and 44 Garden Mall shopoffices, was launched on June 28. Some 80% of the shopoffices have been taken up.

Phase 2 will have the remaining units for sale, while Phase 3 will be the SoHos. Phase 2 will be launched in either September or October.

The 3-storey Garden Mall shopoffices were designed specially to eliminate dirty back lanes and provide a more uplifting ambience. "We wanted to reinvent the traditional Malaysian shopoffice and came up with the





(Clockwise from left) An artist's impression of Tamarind Square; the shopoffices with mall-like amenities, such as escalators; one of the garden courtyards within Tamarind Square; and semi-detached shopoffices



garden mall," Chan says. "So, instead of shopoffices in rows, we designed ours in a figure eight with a garden in the middle of each circle."

The built-ups of these shopoffices are from 3,777 to 5,991 sq ft, while the selling price starts from RM2.7 million.

The Garden Mall is divided into North Court, Centre Court and South Court. North Court and South Court will have a central garden of about one acre in size.

The North Court garden will feature seven tree houses of about 300 sq ft each. Each tree house can be used as a small shop, or reading room, or yoga zone, or meeting room, or a quaint place for students to hang out at. In South Court, there will be a 3-storey community centre.

The design of the Garden Mall shopoffices, as well as the two gardens, provide green space for families, students and professionals to get close to nature. "The building cascades up and there will be trees on the terraces, so it will look like a cascading hanging garden," Chan explains.

"Usually people either only go to a shopping mall or to a park to be with nature. We are trying to combine the two, with this idea of going to a shopping mall to be with nature."

To reduce energy consumption, common areas will not have any air conditioning while plenty of local materials will be used in the project. Chan says that upon completion, rents are estimated to be about RM5 psf, which is the prevailing market rate, with yields of about 8%.

The 15-storey SoHo block, which is still in the planning stages, will have about 500 units. "We feel that there is strong demand for shopoffices, so we decided to sell the shopoffices first," says Chan. The SoHos are slated for launch next year.

Tujuan Gemilang will retain 100,000 sq ft for recurring income. This will comprise some Centre Court units, which have a total built-up of 40,000 sq ft, and another 60,000 sq ft that will be leased to a supermarket retailer, he adds.

#### Future plans

Ahmad Khalif says Tujuan Gemilang has not decided on its fourth project just yet. It is looking for land and possibly a joint venture. "We are a small company, so a JV would allow us to do more things rather than buy a piece of land and have all our capital tied up," he adds.

Ahmad Khalif's responsibilities go beyond just those at Tujuan Gemilang, with his appointment as group CEO of Emkay Group last year. He is also a director of Setia Haruman Sdn Bhd, the master developer of Cyberjaya, as well as other companies. While this may overwhelm some people, he isn't too worried.

"I've always benchmarked myself against my dad, and he's been doing this for the past 30 years. If he can do it, so can I," he smiles. "Secondly, I have a big team at Emkay, Setia Haruman and Tujuan Gemilang. Chan is a great mentor to me on the business side and also my progress as a person. So having people like him



We feel that there is strong demand for shopoffices, so we decided to sell the shopoffices first – Chan

and the rest of the team have helped develop me to where I am."

Standing out in a crowd can be difficult, but for Tujuan Gemilang, a key difference is its clear development objective. "First and foremost, our projects have to be significant — they have to challenge convention, they have to reinvent the existing prototype," says Chan. "It somehow has to push the industry forward."

With the 13th general election over, Ahmad Khalif feels that the market will perform positively until the end of the year. "The macro fundamentals are still strong. We still have 5% to 6% GDP growth and robust domestic demand and liquidity is still there in the market," he says.

"There is some concern over the tapering of quantitative easing but for now until the end of the year, interest rates are relatively low, government projects on infrastructure are good, and the oil and gas industry is expanding. So overall, the fundamentals are strong and will support the property market until the end of the year."

With Chan's experienced hand on the plough with him, Ahmad Khalif looks set to leave an indelible mark on the property industry, just like his father.