

Green Technology Part 1 (2015):

New Straits Times:

To go green, make lifestyle changes

21 DECEMBER 2015 @ 11:02 AM

IT is heartening to note that “going green” is gaining popularity especially among the urbanites and environmental-conscious. As I see it, is a process of changing one’s lifestyle with due consideration given to protecting and safeguarding the environment. The term “going green” is now often used in relation to “green building”, “green technology” and so forth. In a nutshell, it means reducing carbon emissions to not only help the environment, but also ourselves. Even though many Malaysians believe environmental consideration should be given priority, their lifestyles, unfortunately, indicate otherwise.

If we “go green”, we can reduce our monthly electricity consumption. We should also use public transport more instead of private vehicles. When purchasing electrical goods or appliances, we should look for those that are energy efficient. In construction, property developers should design energy efficient buildings and we should use improved insulation and cooling systems as well as promote awareness to encourage more Malaysians to be energy efficient and conserve energy. Let’s walk the talk to a cleaner and healthier environment. n BULBIR SINGH, Seremban, Negri Sembilan

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/12/118329/go-green-make-lifestyle-changes>

Big things ahead for Terengganu's 'Silicon Valley' project

BY ADRIAN DAVID - 14 DECEMBER 2015 @ 2:58 PM

SETIU: Terengganu’s 1,800ha 'silicon valley' project is moving ahead smoothly and is destined to create a positive impact by spurring new industries and towns in the state. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman said the project undertaken by Terengganu Silica Consortium Sdn Bhd (TSC) was centred on green technology and high safety standards. “We can boast of being the first in Asia to utilise such high technology, thus, demonstrating our ability in developing the high-grade mineral. “Terengganu is home to the largest silica sand reserve in Southeast Asia, with more than 80 million tonnes of high grade silica deposits. “The silicon valley project will be a catalyst to rapidly develop the area further once the project kicks off full steam,” he said following a site visit to the silicone processing plant in Bari.

The plant will have a production capacity of 800,000 metric tonnes per year. Present were Setiu district officer Talaha Ali and TSC chairman Tengku Seri Temengong Raja, Datuk Seri Tengku Baharuddin Sultan Mahmud Al-Muktafi Billah Shah. TSC, which has partnerships with companies from India, Japan and France, will harvest the silicon deposits in Setiu and Marang that are located within the East Coast Economic Region (ECER). The project is expected to attract an estimated RM400mil from local and foreign investments over the next five years, to develop value-added and downstream industries in the silicon valley.

More than 80 per cent of the project has been completed and is expected to take off smoothly by March next year. Razif said the silicon valley project would help create many industrialised towns in the region, which in turn would create more than 1,000 jobs and entrepreneurship opportunities for local folk. "We will implement the 'Train the Trainers' programme to assist locals to acquire appropriate skills, so as to jointly benefit from the project. "Selected candidates will be sent overseas to equip themselves with the rudiments of handling the silicon industry. "Through time, we expect locals to gradually replace the numerous foreigners employed here," said Razif.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/12/117247/big-things-ahead-terengganus-silicon-valley-project>

Subang Jaya takes green city lead

BY LIDIANA ROSLI - 7 NOVEMBER 2015 @ 11:01 AM

KUALA LUMPUR: THE city of the future is here, and it is in Subang Jaya via a collaboration between government-owned Prasarana Malaysia Bhd and Sunway Group. Under the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project undertaken by the two companies, fully-electric buses (e-buses) cruise through the neighbourhood on a dedicated elevated highway. The combination of an elevated highway and e-buses are possibly the first of its kind in Southeast Asia. Launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak in June, the BRT service is a technological breakthrough. At a cost of RM634 million, the service, known as the BRT Sunway Line, has a fleet of 15 buses, with stopovers at seven stations and a maximum capacity of ferrying 15,000 passengers a day.

Business Times recently sat down with Zulkifli Mohd Yusoff, chief executive officer (CEO) of Rapid Bus Sdn Bhd — a subsidiary of Prasarana — and Ahmad Hadri Haris, CEO of Malaysian Green Technology Corp (GreenTech Malaysia), the government entity that has been tasked to introduce green technology in Malaysia. "Electricity and green technology, be it solar or hydro, are the energy of the future, and this is what we envision for Malaysia... for the country to position itself as a global hub for green technology by 2020 and subsequently as a green nation by 2030," said Ahmad Hadri. "We are so pleased that Prasarana and Sunway Group have taken the initiative to jointly develop the BRT under a public-private partnership as to usher the future of Malaysia." He said electricity and green technology are significantly cleaner and friendly for the environment, society and the world. "We have just gone through bouts of terrible haze in this country with many blaming Indonesia for it, but what we haven't taken into consideration is the carbon emissions from fossil fuel used in vehicles, which are also detrimental to our air quality. "Air pollution has become a big problem that is hard to manage as the transportation sector is the biggest contributor to this... Global cities such as London, California and Shenzhen have introduced e-buses to tackle this issue, and for Malaysia, we have Subang Jaya to take the lead," said Ahmad Hadri.

Meanwhile, Zulkifli said Rapid Bus has some 2,000 buses servicing the Klang Valley, Penang and Pahang, but only 15 are electric. "I am not surprised if one day we would go fully electric as green is the future, but for now it is hard to envision that given the cost of such buses." He said diesel buses cost between RM600,000 and RM700,000 each, but an e-bus costs a couple of million ringgit after taking into account foreign exchange pressures. Maintenance for e-buses, however, is significantly

cheaper than diesel buses, said Zulkifli. "It is expensive at this point to buy e-buses because they come with a new technology... but as the government is targeting to have 2,000 e-buses in the country by 2020, we expect the price to decrease somewhat between now and then." He said Rapid Bus is currently in talks with Petaling Jaya City Council to have four e-buses servicing the area, and the Sabah government.

At the tabling of the 2016 Budget recently, the prime minister had announced a RM2.5 billion allocation for the development of two new BRT projects between Kuala Lumpur and Klang, of which works are expected to commence next year, and in Kota Kinabalu. "Representatives from the Sabah government had visited the BRT Sunway Line and have voiced their interest to have the same technology for Kota Kinabalu," said Zulkifli. He said the e-buses can ferry up to 15,000 passengers a day, but since August, it has only registered some 6,000 ridership a day. "We offered free rides for the first two months after its launch, in June and July, and saw some 12,000 passengers a day, but ridership has fallen to some 6,000 a day since we began charging in August. "We believe this is because only one stop is connected to the Keretapi Tanah Melayu, and this is at the Sunway-Setia Jaya Line," said Zulkifli.

He added that these days, it is all about integrated transportation systems. "People drive to train stations, take the train, get off and get on the BRT — the more integrated our lines, the better our ridership." The next integrated BRT-KTM line would be the USJ7 Line, slated to be completed in June next year. Both Ahmad Hadri and Zulkifli are excited about the potential of e-buses in creating their own comprehensive ecosystem. "An e-bus can last up to 10 years, but its batteries which admittedly are the most expensive part of the bus can last up to 15 years. "These batteries can then go on a second life and be used to generate power for a small house or the likes. "In fact, I feel it would be prudent for Prasarana to set up a new company in next 10 years to just cater to selling these second-hand batteries," said Ahmad Hadri. At the rate Malaysia is going in developing its green technology, he is confident that there will be a market for such batteries in the next 10 years.

"We are living in a very exciting time where we could foresee the world stop relying on fossil fuels and tap green energy instead. "Of course, these are early days and we have a long way to go, but with the backing of the government, we are definitely on the right track to usher a new, cleaner future for Malaysia," said Ahmad Hadri. Fully elevated with a distance of 5.4km, the BRT Sunway Line are serviced by 15 e-buses. With a top speed of 80kph, the e-buses are fully equipped with universal access facilities and can take 67 passengers with 25 seated. They also come with free WiFi. The seven stations are Sunway-Setia Jaya, Mentari, Lagoon, SunMed, SunU-Monash, South Quay and USJ7. The SunU-Monash station houses the "park 'n ride" facilities with 1,153 parking bays, including 102 for women drivers and 23 for special-need persons.

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Govt paying special attention to green technology

7 NOVEMBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

GREEN is the new black and the government is going all out in making this happen. Under the Economic Transformation Programme, green technology is given special attention as it is one of the six Entry Point Projects (EPPs) that are expected to help grow the Gross National Income (GNI) by fourfold to RM78.7 billion by 2020. Incentives include tax investment allowance for the purchase of green technology equipment, income tax exemption on the use of green technology services and systems, as well as the implementation of the National Carbon Reporting Programme (MYCarbon) for the corporate sector by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry.

The Green Technology Financing Scheme (GTFS) offers guarantees on financing and rebates on the interest charged by financial institutions. Basically, it is money back in the pockets for green technology players. GTFS also provides easier access to financing for those looking to develop sustainable technology. It had an initial total financing of RM1.5 billion but the amount was increased to RM3.5 billion in 2012 due to overwhelming participation. GTFS provided financing for 188 green projects amounting to RM2.2 billion from 2010 to June this year through collaboration with 26 financial institutions. Upon commencement of projects, more than 3,000 green jobs and RM4.43 billion in green investment are expected. In the 2016 Budget themed “Prospering the Rakyat”, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak stressed the importance of innovation in green technology. He also extended the deadline for the GTFS by two years to December 31 2017.

“We are extremely pleased that the government had extended the implementation of the GTFS until December 2017 with a fund of RM1.2 billion,” said GreenTech Malaysia chief executive officer Ahmad Hadri Haris recently. “That RM1.2 billion is, however, the balance of the original fund allocation of RM1.5 billion. “To date, we have disbursed between RM500 million and RM600 million a year, so another additional two years would allow us to fully utilise the initial allocation.” Ahmad Hadri said he wasn’t surprised that the government had chosen to extend the deadline as his firm had been frequently engaging with the Finance Ministry.

“The Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, which is an international agency promoting policies that improves the economic and social wellbeing of the people around the world, had said the GTFS was a success story for Malaysia. “It had contributed RM7.9 billion to the gross domestic product (GDP) and we are expecting it to contribute 144,590 jobs by 2020 and RM22.4 billion in the national GDP.” Ahmad Hadri added that he was grateful that the government had recognised the potential of green technology to the economy, especially in the final crucial years towards Vision 2020.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/11/govt-paying-special-attention-green-technology>

MoU signed between Jambatan Kedua and IBC

BY PRIYA PUBALAN - 3 NOVEMBER 2015 @ 11:10 PM

GEORGE TOWN : A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed in Seoul on Monday between Jambatan Kedua Sdn Bhd (JKSB) and Incheon Bridge Corporation (IBC) South Korea to explore new territory in bridge management and maintenance knowledge. The MoU was signed by JKSB managing director Datuk Ismail Mohamed Taib and IBC president Soo Hong Kim witnessed by Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof at the 25th World Road Congress held in South Korea. Ismail said the tie-up was aimed at enhancing the relationship between two companies, two countries and as well as to conduct joint research of bridge management and maintenance.

He said activities such as exchange of case study, exchange of personnel, joint organisation seminars, workshops, conferences, meetings and other similar programs related to bridge management and maintenance will be carried out frequently. "The MoU signing marks another history in developing practical collaboration in research and trainings with South Korea. "With this, Malaysia will learn more from Incheon's strategies and techniques especially in maintaining the Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Bridge," he said in a statement. Ismail added that both the Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Bridge and Incheon Bridge shared a resemblance, especially in the decorative lights.

JKSB is the first concessionaire in Malaysia to adopt Green Technology in construction of JSAHMS where it exploits renewable energy source such as the use of photovoltaic solar panel and the wind turbine to generate electricity. The Sultan Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah Bridge was officially opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak on Mar 1 last year. The bridge links Batu Maung on the island to Batu Kawan on the mainland with an overall length of 24 kilometres.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/11/mou-signed-between-jambatan-kedua-and-ibc>

It's time for us to protect the environment

1 NOVEMBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

AS a consumer advocate, I welcome the allocation of RM877 million for greater green technology use under the 2016 Budget. It is time we begin to seriously protect and save the environment, and we can start by having respect for life and nature. Without respect for nature and its biodiversity, there will be no desire to protect it. Developing respect means recognising that all living things have a right to live on this planet and that we should do no harm to them.

We should practise the "3Rs" — reduce, reuse, recycle (in order of sequence). The sequence is important as source reduction is usually the best way to minimise wastage. Reduce by not creating the wastage or minimise waste in the beginning; Reuse by using the items several times or for another purpose; Recycle by sending the waste to be processed as a resource. A person can save energy by using energy efficient equipment. We can go a step further by spreading the environmental message and educating family, friends, classmates or colleagues. BULBIR SINGH, Seremban, Negri Sembilan

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/11/it%E2%80%99s-time-us-protect-environment>

Innovation a priority in 2016 Budget

BY DR AHMAD IBRAHIM - 29 OCTOBER 2015 @ 11:01 AM

The 2016 Budget has been tabled. The positive and negative comments are expected. Some applauded the budget, while a few questioned the measures proposed. Considering the fact that it was prepared during trying times, the government deserves credit for a fairly balanced budget. It addresses the major concerns, yet maintains a small deficit of 3.1 per cent, despite the apprehension about income. The low crude oil price has taken a toll on the nation's revenue. An average price of US\$48 (RM204) per barrel is used for the budget, meaning the income from petroleum would deplete significantly. The low palm oil and rubber prices are not helping. There is hope that the dry El Nino weather will support palm oil prices. As for rubber, the mood is sceptical, especially with the slowing Chinese economy. Even the weakening of ringgit is influenced by the Yuan devaluation. Luckily, we have the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

As gestured cynically by the prime minister, GST has become the nation's saviour, making up for the shortfall from petroleum. The GST income in 2016 may touch RM39 billion. This puts to rest the earlier complaints about GST. Essentially, the budget has outlined five priority targets; strengthening economic resilience, increasing productivity, innovation and green technology, empowering human capital, advancing Bumiputera agenda and easing the cost of living of the rakyat. But, for us scientists and innovation activists, the priority to increase productivity, innovation and green technology is highest on our radar. This is because we are convinced that innovation is the investment that will take the nation towards the high-income, inclusive and sustainable economy that we aspire. However, implementation is key. The budget has proposed implementing three measures to boost productivity through innovation.

The target is to attain an annual labour productivity growth of 3.7 per cent. One is to accelerate innovation and entrepreneurship. As the custodian of this strategy, RM1.5 billion is allocated to the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti). And, in 2016, the ministry will anchor the Malaysia Commercialisation Year initiative. Small- and medium-scale enterprises (SMEs) are the principal target for productivity increase since they contribute significantly towards job growth. The budget has proposed that for those SMEs spending up to RM50,000 on research and development (R&D) projects, they can claim double tax deduction automatically. The Malaysian Innovation Agency, which promised the world in R&D commercialisation when first formed, is given RM100 million. A recent addition to the innovation ecosystem, MaGIC (Malaysian Global Innovation & Creativity Centre), has been getting rave reviews from the media, gets RM35 million. While another new initiative, the Public-Private Research Network, is allocated RM50 million to accelerate demand-driven innovation.

These allocations confirm that the government is serious about innovation. The construction industry was also featured highly in the 2016 Budget. With the recent research by Khazanah highlighting the declining housing affordability issue, the budget gives clear signals to the industry that it has to change and embrace the deployment of new cost efficient technologies. One which

stands out for mention is the Industrialised Building System (IBS). More companies will be asked to adopt the IBS technology. For this, an IBS Promotion Fund of RM500 million will be set aside to provide soft loans to developers and contractors. This should lead to the adoption of sustainable construction as is advocated in the recently launched Construction Industry Master Plan by the Construction Industry Development Board. In a world where the depletion of resources is very much evident, green and sustainable practices have definitely caught on.

Green technology is the way to go if the country is to carve a slice of the global expansion in the green economy. This is where the Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry will take the lead. The government targets to reduce the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions to 40 per cent of gross domestic product in 2020. But, in pursuing the green business, we should avoid repeating the mistakes made when the nation ventured into electrical and electronics. We should not neglect to invest in R&D and technology development and design, as well as branding. Otherwise, we will only get the crumbs of the green economy! The writer is a Fellow at Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/10/innovation-priority-2016-budget>

The hard choices have been made

BY PROF DATUK DR JOHN ANTONY XAVIER - 25 OCTOBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

This increase is welcomed as 2016 represents the first year of annualising the 11th Malaysia Plan. The increased capital expenditures on infrastructure and human capital development for productivity improvement, the promotion of technological capabilities of SMEs and green technology will enhance the competitiveness of the economy to secure our targeted growth rate of four to five per cent and to stay on course to becoming a high-income advanced nation by 2020. Incentives for upgrading technology, commercialisation of research and development and innovation are all the more imperative amid our slipping global innovation index. Malaysia is ranked 33rd among 144 countries against the enviable 7th position of Singapore.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/10/hard-choices-have-been-made>

Full text of PM Najib Razak's 2016 Budget speech (For full article click the link below)

23 OCTOBER 2015 @ 7:53 PM

SECOND PRIORITY: INCREASING PRODUCTIVITY, INNOVATION AND GREEN TECHNOLOGY To raise productivity, we need to accelerate innovation and creativity. The use of green technology will also ensure sustainability of the nation's natural resources. Therefore, the Government has targeted an annual labour productivity growth of 3.7% through:

Measure 1: Accelerating Innovation and Entrepreneurship. To make the nation a competitive technology hub in the region, RM1.5 billion is allocated to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI). The year 2016 will be declared as Malaysia Commercialisation Year towards

spurring commercialisation of R&D products by local research institutions. The following initiatives will be implemented:

First: SMEs that incur expenditure on R&D projects up to RM50,000 for each year of assessment are eligible to claim double tax deduction automatically. This facilitation is provided for the years of assessment 2016 to 2018; Second: RM100 million to Malaysian Innovation Agency (AIM); Third: RM200 million under the Funding Scheme for Technology and Innovation Acceleration by Malaysia Debt Ventures Berhad; Fourth: RM35 million to MaGIC as a Leading Regional Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hub, including RM10 million as initial allocation for the Corporate Entrepreneurs Responsibility Fund; Fifth: RM30 million for several youth entrepreneurship programmes such as Global Entrepreneurship Community, BAHTERA, GREAT, 1MET, National Innovation Competition and a Pilot Coding Project in schools; and Sixth: To accelerate demand-driven innovation activities in 2016, the Government will allocate RM50 million for a Public-Private Research Network.

Measure 2: Leveraging Advancements in Technology. To enhance the use of technology in the construction sector, the Government will promote the use of Industrialised Building System (IBS). In this respect, the Government will encourage more companies to adopt the IBS technology. For this, an IBS Promotion Fund of RM500 million will be established through the SME Bank to provide soft loans to developers and contractors in category G5 and below.

Measure 3: Inculcating Green Technology. The Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water will implement various projects including to provide clean water supply by building water treatment plants with an allocation of RM877 million. A sum of RM515 million is allocated to ensure the reliability of electricity supply in Sabah. The Government targets to reduce the intensity of greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) to 40% of GDP in 2020 through:

First: RM45 million for the implementation of an Electricity Mobility Action Plan including energy audit process; Second: Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) will offer a quota of 100 megawatts per year under the Net Energy Metering Scheme to encourage the use of solar photovoltaics; and Third: Extend the implementation period of the Green Technology Financing Scheme until 31 December 2017 with a fund of RM1.2 billion.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/10/full-text-pm-najib-razak%E2%80%99s-2016-budget-speech>

Pressing need for sustainable construction

BY DATUK LIM CHOW HOCK - 17 OCTOBER 2015 @ 11:02 AM

Sustainable construction sounds like big words — but the idea is simple and its impact far-reaching — affecting each of us individually. The Institution of Engineers Malaysia (IEM), which represents all fields of engineering, believes that sustainability has been an issue of interest for all stakeholders in the engineering industry. There is a pressing need for Malaysia to adopt it with greater vigour. In simple words, sustainable construction aims to meet the present-day needs for housing, working environment and infrastructure without compromising future needs. Sustainable consumption and production are important to be incorporated because it promotes economic growth without

compromising the environment or jeopardising the needs of future generations. This means efficient use of natural resources, minimising use of hazardous substances, and reducing pollution and waste. In Malaysia, the government has been promoting sustainability initiatives since 2000 and ever since then, many pilot projects have been initiated.

At the 15th Conference of the Parties (COP-15) in Copenhagen, the government of Malaysia had committed to adopt an indicator of voluntary reduction of up to 40 per cent in terms of emissions intensity of gross domestic product (GDP) by the year 2020 compared with the 2005 levels. The government is aware of the need for sustainable construction and have initiated many sustainable and energy-efficient programmes such as Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS), Small Renewable Energy Power Programme (SREP) by the Energy Commission (Suruhanjaya Tenaga), Feed-in Tariff (FiT) by Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA) and Building Sector Energy Efficiency Project (BSEEP) by Public Works Department (PWD). However, the major challenge in implementing sustainability methods in the construction industry is to achieve win-win outcomes in order to attain mutual benefits for the environment and the industry's economic cost benefits.

By raising awareness among buyers to demand for sustainable houses, housing developers will be pushed to improve specifications of their development projects which should include certain sustainable elements to attract buyers. Long-term commercial developments will eventually see the benefits of cost saving in adopting sustainable construction and green technologies, where the maintenance cost of the building and infrastructure will reduce in the long run. All these would result in overall savings. On the marketing side, developers can also promote the long-term cost savings of their development that complies with the green rating that promotes energy efficiency. However, there are still some obstacles towards the implementation of sustainable construction. Cost is still the main priority of any development.

Obviously, sustainable construction increases project cost. Developers must be convinced that solving sustainability issues will add value to the development and the public should be prepared to pay a higher entry cost to enjoy such benefits. Unfortunately, the industry still lacks understanding about sustainable construction. As such, more construction players should be involved in sustainable construction and encouraged to deepen their knowledge on sustainable construction. The government should play a more active role in promoting sustainable construction such as providing incentives to developers who would like to promote sustainability in their projects, and promote new developments which adopt green technology by encouraging developments with green rating. Tax incentives can be given to developers which achieve certain green rating.

The government may lead by example where projects by the government and government-linked companies (GLCs) should specify green rating, energy efficiency and sustainable construction as a requirement in project specifications as an important strategy to ensure contractors adopt the concept of sustainable construction. IEM is a learned society for the engineering fraternity and we have been actively promoting the concept of sustainable construction to our members. We do this by increasing their level of knowledge and awareness on the concept of sustainability as well as sustainable construction. IEM will continue to organise training sessions with regards to sustainable construction, energy efficiency and green technology to disseminate knowledge on the latest techniques and technologies to our members.

Our institution has also been actively engaging various stakeholders in government agencies such as Energy Commission, SEDA, PWD, MiGHT, Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN), Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB), the local councils, and more to develop strategies for the nation's sustainability agenda. The development of sustainable cities should place high importance on enhancing green-based development and optimising low carbon resources. Environment-friendly practices such as green buildings, green lifestyles, and sustainable consumption and production should be embedded in the development of sustainable cities. Sustainability is not just about green and efficient cities.

Sustainability refers to the efficient use of limited resources such as water, land, energy and other raw materials, and holistic management of residues — solid waste, effluents or emitted gases. Sustainability is about you, about us, and about our future generation. Let's join hands to work for our future together. The writer, formerly a director of the Division of River Basin and Coastal Zone Management with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia (DID), is President of the Institution of Engineers, Malaysia

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/10/pressing-need-sustainable-construction>

Construction industry needs to embrace new technologies

BY DR AHMAD IBRAHIM - 9 OCTOBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

WHEN I first started working in the early 70s, as a fresh graduate with a government statutory body, I was earning a salary of RM850 a month, or the equivalent of RM10,000 a year. The cheapest car then, a Mini Clubman, was only RM6,000. For someone staying with parents and with minimal spending on living expenses, the car could have been bought cash after working for a year. I took a government loan to buy a Mini and I only paid RM80 a month. At that time a single-storey terrace house in Ampang Jaya was selling for around RM10,000. They were, therefore, more affordable. And that was in Kuala Lumpur. It is very different now. A recent study by Khazanah Research Institute has found that houses were now less affordable. As expected, the developers have disagreed with the findings. Let us look at the facts. A fresh graduate nowadays cannot hope to earn much more than RM2,500 a month. That is about three times the salary in the 70s. But, the cheapest terrace house in Kuala Lumpur is now selling at no less than RM400,000.

In fact some are saying it is more like RM600,000 a unit. This means while a graduate's salary has increased three times, house prices have jumped almost 40 to 60 times. Buying a house is almost out of the question. You may have to spend a lifetime paying the housing loan. The cost escalation is not just limited to the housing sector. The entire construction industry in the country has seen rising costs. Why are our construction costs high? Is it because the industry is less efficient? Or is it because construction companies operate on too high margins? Has it got something to do with supply and demand? Comparisons made in the study with other countries suggest that here we are less cost efficient. For example, we spend a longer time to build. In the Philippines, the study reported that some basic houses can be built in less than a month!

Technology is definitely the deciding factor. Here, builders still shy from using cost-saving technologies like the Integrated Building System (IBS). Such technology is already widely used in the developed economies. Why? Because IBS uses much less labour. And, the quality is more assured because the parts are mostly fabricated in a factory. Here, we are still happy using the labour intensive approach. This is because we are still able to source for inexpensive labour from nearby countries. What will happen when these countries improve their economic conditions? We may not enjoy the abundant immigrant labour as we do now. Are we prepared for this change? Nowadays, developed countries are not just talking about using labour efficient construction technologies. They are also busy implementing material saving technologies.

And, energy efficient technologies. Green design construction has increasingly become common in the developed economies. They invest heavily in construction research and development to bring such resource efficient technologies to the industry. In Malaysia, I believe this is what the Construction Industry Development Board is also doing. But, the industry is unfortunately less responsive. Even the suggestion for houses to be first built before they are sold has met with strong resistance from the industry. This does not augur well for the future of the industry. Buyers are the ones who suffer when projects are abandoned, especially when monies are already paid and loans already committed. The Construction Industry Transformation Programme blueprint, launched last month by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, provides positive recommendations for the nation's construction sector.

It is a comprehensive implementation plan which encompasses 18 initiatives, four strategic thrusts in Quality Safety and Professionalism, Environment Sustainability, Productivity as well as Internationalisation. Najib had said the construction industry would be one of the key sectors that will propel Malaysia into prosperity and catapult it towards a high-income nation. What needs to be done now is to translate the plan into action. Implemented properly, it will go a long way in supporting the nation's green economic ambitions. The elements in the blueprint which spell out the strategies for sustainable construction will not only improve the safety and environmental record of the construction industry, it will also prepare the industry in good stead to compete for global construction projects. It is time the industry recognises the importance of the blueprint. It is the recipe that the industry needs to transform for the betterment of the nation. The industry cannot forever remain complacent and be dependent on foreign labour. The writer is a Fellow at Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/10/construction-industry-needs-embrace-new-technologies>

Malaysia looking into powering the country with renewable energy: PM

BY SYED UMAR ARIFF - 11 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 12:07 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is looking into powering the country with renewable energy, in an ambitious project to develop its green economy. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the government is looking into installing and increasing capacity of renewable energy in phases -

985MW in 2015, 2,080MW (2020) and 4,000MW (2030). "These are ambitious. 4,000MW is enough to power a city of a few million people. But we are intent on accelerating growth in this area.

"We are considering proposals to incentivise this, such as the introduction of net-metering for the residential, commercial and industrial sectors," said Najib at the launching of International Greentech & Eco Products Exhibition and Conference Malaysia. Najib also described renewable energy as one of the country's key component in its green economy. He said development in renewable energy scored a breakthrough following the introduction of the Feed-in Tariff Mechanism in 2011. "This allowed the electricity produced from indigenous renewable energy sources to be sold to power utilities at a fixed premium price for a specific duration." Also present was Energy, Green Technology and Water Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/malaysia-looking-powering-country-renewable-energy-pm>



GreenTech targets RM2.7b by year-end in green financing

BY LIDIANA ROSLI - 9 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 11:18 AM

KUALA LUMPUR: Government-owned Malaysian Green Technology Corporation (GreenTech) is targeting to raise RM2.7 billion in green financing by year-end from the existing RM2.2 billion. According to its chief executive officer, Ahmad Hadri Harris, the RM2.2 billion is generated from the approved financing of 188 projects, via 26 participating financial institutions. "We have financed RM2.2 billion worth of green projects from 2010 to 30th June 2015 and we are targeting to increase that figure to RM2.7 billion by year-end," said Hadri to reporters at the International GreenTech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference Malaysia 2015 (IGEM). "We will achieve this target by financing between 20 and 30 more green projects by December this year." He said the 188 already approved projects are expected to generate a total of RM4.43 billion in green investment in the country.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/greentech-targets-rm27b-year-end-green-financing>

Federal and Selangor government to conclude water deal on Tuesday

6 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 9:25 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The Federal and Selangor state government will conclude their water deal negotiation tomorrow. In statement the Energy, Green Technology and Water ministry said this will see the deal inked at a ceremony in Shah Alam. It will see four agreements under the restructuring of Selangor's water services industry sealed between Pengurusan Aset Air Berhad (PAAB) and Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn. Bhd. (Air Selangor). " The four agreements are the Facilities Agreement, Lease Agreement, Rights of Use Agreement and Settlement Agreement, which are Condition Precedents to effect the Master Agreement for the restructuring exercise, " it said in a statement today. At the same event, Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Maximus Ongkili will hand over to Selangor Menteri Besar Mohamed Azmin Ali the Facilities and Service Licenses issued to Air Selangor.

"This is the final Condition Precedent to the Master Agreement that needs to be fulfilled by the Federal Government," it said. The statement from the ministry said that with the conclusion of the agreements and handing over of the licenses, the critical Condition Precedents would be completed and fulfilled. This means the Master Agreement will take effect from Sept. 9, 2015, it added. "With the Master Agreement in effect, Air Selangor can now hand over the required land titles with value of up to RM2 billion to PAAB in order for PAAB to provide the necessary funds for Air Selangor to take over the Selangor water concessionaires," it said.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/federal-and-selangor-government-conclude-water-deal-tuesday>

Malaysia set to become regional green technology hub

22 JULY 2015 @ 3:10 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will become the green technology hub in the region, judging from the success of the previous five editions of the International Greentech and Eco Product Exhibition and Conference Malaysia held. Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili said the response to the conference had been good, and since 2010, it had generated over RM6 billion in green business leads. "This has spurred the growth of the green technology sector within Malaysia and further afield through cross-country promotion and dialogues that are crucial to the progress of this nascent sector," he said in a statement today. He also said the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak will officially launch the 6th International Greentech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference Malaysia (IGEM 2015), which will be held here from Sept 9-12.

The four-day event is set to attract 50,000 visitors and 400 exhibitors from over 20 countries. To date, some 300 booths have been taken up by 72 exhibitors, out of which 125 booths in the form of pavilions will be occupied by leading green technology companies from Germany, Spain, the Netherlands, Taiwan, Japan, South Korea and Singapore. Ongkili said the ministry was pleased that IGEM 2015 would continue to be ASEAN's foremost green technology exhibition and conference. "We are confident that this year IGEM will once again contribute significantly to Malaysia's socio-

economic growth.” The event, themed “Powering the Green Economy“, is organised by the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water and co-organised by Malaysian Green Technology Corporation. It will feature exhibits that strategically focus on the green technology sectors namely energy, transport, building, waste and water. – BERNAMA

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/malaysia-set-become-regional-green-technology-hub>

PM launches country’s first green public transportation system

1 JUNE 2015 @ 10:04 PM

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak today launched the country’s first public transportation system using environment-friendly technology. He said the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Sunway Line, developed by the Prasarana Group and the Sunway Group, was a public transportation project of international standard and a pride of the nation. “This project fulfils the desire of the government to develop an efficient, reliable and convenient public transportation system,” he said when launching the line near here. Najib also launched an electric bus, which made its way into the Malaysia Book of Records as the country’s first electric bus deployed on the public transportation system. The prime minister said today’s achievement reflected the use of smart technology in the effort to ease traffic congestion and reduce carbon emissions. Najib said that as such, the public transportation system especially in the Klang Valley had to be streamlined, and the BRT had to be extended to other public transportation projects.

The prime minister said the government had made the development of public transportation one of the National Key Results Areas (NKRA) as it realised that it was a vital challenge in the National Transformation Plan. “We have placed public transportation in the NKRA because we have so far failed to establish a fully integrated public transportation system. As such, we have set up the Prasarana Group and the Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD) to streamline public transportation in the country,” he said. Najib said the government had also allocated RM23 billion to construct the new Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) line to connect Sungai Buloh to Putrajaya. At the same time, the government had also announced the construction of the third Light Rail Transit (LRT) line, costing RM9 billion, to link Bandar Utama, Shah Alam and Klang, he said. -- Bernama

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/pm-launches-country%E2%80%99s-first-green-public-transportation-system>



PUNB offers loans for green technology entrepreneurs

26 MAY 2015 @ 3:29 PM

MALACCA: Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Bhd (PUNB) is making available loans to entrepreneurs involved in the green technology sector in the country. Chairman Tan Sri Mohd Ali Rustam said as a body charged with developing potential entrepreneurs, PUNB is ready to offer such loans as it sees the sector as having huge potential to expand at present. PUNB will offer loans of between RM50,000 to RM4 million for green technology entrepreneurs based on the size of projects as well as type of business being undertaken.

“If the entrepreneur shows good potential and turns in an annual profit, he can apply for the loan,” he told Bernama. Citing an example, Mohd Ali said PUNB is ready to help entrepreneurs involved in the manufacturing products from waste and recycled materials. At the same time, he also expressed support for those entrepreneurs involved in the renovation of houses or buildings to be green technology friendly, such as installing solar panels or transparent roofing. “They have the potential to be given loans by PUNB, providing they meet the conditions set,” Mohd Ali said. He said green technology played an important role in daily lives and with PUNB’s initiative, it is hoped that more new innovations can arise in the field for the benefit of the people. – Bernama

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/punb-offers-loans-green-technology-entrepreneurs>

Bina Puri to build massive sewerage treatment plant in Kuala Lumpur

26 MARCH 2015 @ 1:45 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Bina Puri Sdn Bhd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Bina Puri Holdings Bhd has won a massive sewage treatment plant project to provide for the expected increase of urban dwellers in Setapak for the next 20 years. This award to expand and upgrade the existing Bunus Regional Sewage Treatment Plant at Jalan Chan Chin Mooi, Titiwangsa, will increase its treatment loading capacity of sewage discharges by three times of 1.1 million residents expected by 2035. Green technology will utilize the byproduct, biosolids, to generate electricity and this regional treatment plant will free up land of smaller treatment plants for commercial and residential uses, green lungs and gardens. It will also relieve nuisances suffered by residents who have complained of foul smells and clogged sewage pipes. Bina Puri Holdings Berhad Group Managing Director, Tan Sri Datuk Tee Hock Seng, JP said in a statement to Bursa Malaysia that its subsidiary Bina Puri Sdn Bhd has been awarded the contract by the Sewage Services Department under the Ministry of Energy, Green Technology and Water on 20 March this year.

This project, costing RM291.16 million will be completed within 18 months. It entails the construction, equipping, testing and commissioning of the Bunus Regional Sewage Treatment Plant including maintenance of the project for 12 months. This project to expand and upgrade the existing Bunus Regional Sewage Treatment Plant in Jalan Chan Chin Mooi, Titiwangsa, will increase its treatment loading capacity to handle and additional sewage discharges of 750,000 residents in the vicinity. The laying of 36km of sewage pipes that is included in the project will cater to the expected growth of residential and commercial real estate within Setapak. "With this award, we have managed to secure RM419.66 million projects in the first quarter of this year and confident there will be more opportunities to secure further projects by year end. "The project is expected to contribute positively to the net assets and earnings of Bina Puri Group for the financial year ending 31 December 2015, " he said. With the latest award, the Group's un-built book order stands at RM2.11 billion to date.

The new treatment plant will be built on the existing Bunus Regional Sewage Treatment Plant on a 19.388-hectare site that is flanked by the DUKE highway in the north and the Titiwangsa Golf Course in the south and settlements on the East and West. The treated sewerage waters will be discharged into Sungai Gombak and ultimately Sungai Klang. The Bunus project is part of the River of Life sewage masterplan for Greater Kuala Lumpur / Klang Valley under the National Key Economic Areas blueprint. Its mission is to reduce the number of smaller treatment plants and to free up the land they are sitting on for commercial and residential purposes, green space and public gardens. This master plan will also facilitate the application of green technology utilizing biosolids for electricity generation, reduce pollution loading on water sources and public complaints of foul smell. The Bina Puri Group has been actively participating in the tender for projects both local and overseas, and would make the appropriate announcements on further projects secured to keep investors and the public informed from time to time. -- Bernama

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/bina-puri-build-massive-sewerage-treatment-plant-kuala-lumpur>

MMK building to transform PJ urban landscape

BY ISKANDAR TAJUDDIN - 15 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 5:26 PM

PETALING JAYA: A RM385m Mercu Mustapha Kamal (MMK) building is billed to transform the urban landscape of Petaling Jaya by end of 2016. The two-tower office complex will connect to the community through its green sustainable features, various amenities as well as accessibility and integrated community facilities. The establishment of the towers will also see 50 percent less energy used compared to the conventional office buildings. EMKAY Group Project consultant, K Mohanachandran K R Kunjan said this is another value-added service to the Petaling Jaya (PJ) community and transforming it into a new Central Business District. "MMK construction which started in October 2013, comprise a 27-storey Tower 1 with a net floor area of 285,091 sq ft and a 14-storey Tower 2 (213,719 sq ft)," he said in a Media Briefing on Mercu Mustapha Kamal at Damansara Perdana today. "Tower 2 will be ready for occupation by the first quarter of 2016 and will be on sale with a net area of 183,000 sq ft," said Mohanachandran. He said Tower 1 will be completed in October 2016 and ready for occupation by the end of December 2016.

"Our group is now taking a step further with the construction of MMK, our first 'connected' building. Among the facilities available are retail units, a banquet hall with a capacity for 1,000 pax, a Muslim prayer hall, wheelchair accessible lifts and 1,113 carpark bays," said Mohanachandran adding MMK was also developed by EMKAY Group subsidiary Paradigma Intan Sdn Bhd. Other MMK sustainable features include automatic control of lighting and zoning, energy efficient lights, waste management, sky gardens on multiple floors among others. Mohanachandran said MMK is easily accessible via major highways, given its strategic location at the entrance of Damansara Perdana. Even commuters can access the Towers through bus services and the upcoming MRT. At the event, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Paradigma Intan Sdn Bhd executive director Datuk Fazwinna Mustapha Kamal and MKN AT-Life Sdn Bhd managing director Azmil Khuzaid Zakaria which saw the latter appointed to provide consultancy services in advertising. Witnessing the signing were EMKAY Group Company secretary Lai Fook Pui and MKN AT-Life executive director Srikanth Ramachandran.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/mmk-building-transform-pj-urban-landscape>

Housing a source of growth

BY TAN SRI DR. SULAIMAN MAHBOB - 15 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

GIVEN the expected feeble global economic environment, policymakers must set their eyes on domestic demand so as to energise economic performance of the country. The country and the government are right in pushing activities, such as construction and housing, as these activities generate strong industrial linkages and multiplier effects both in terms of income and employment. In that regard, the pursuit of building affordable homes is right, as it not only addresses the slack in domestic demand but more importantly bringing homes to the low-income families. This is indeed a form of a distributive measure, with our national concern for social inclusion. Certainly for most of us, a decent house ownership adds to family satisfaction and overall wellness. However, what is the

standard for a decent house? Reflecting on strict Islamic family standards, that children who are growing up (say about 6-7 years and above) should not sleep with their parents and that sisters and brothers of that age bracket should not be in the same rooms, too, at least there should be three rooms, one for the parents, one for boys and one for girls, and two bathrooms, plus a family hall and a kitchen.

Unfortunately, in the past, we had provided with just two rooms as the standard for low-cost houses in our public housing programme. With a growing family, such standards are much to be desired and not good for healthy family development. Many became slums. The other major concerns in our housing programme are pricing and affordability. Given that many of our working population earn incomes below RM3,000 per month, many of our workers can ill afford to buy houses which have decent standards mentioned earlier. The rising cost of living exceeding income increases restraints on many families to purchase houses of reasonable standards, notwithstanding the availability of funding by the banking institutions.

While we applaud the authorities in pushing for affordable homes programme, the subject involves many dimensions, such as pricing and standards, as well as consideration of location, and support facilities, such as schools, availability of community halls and children's playgrounds, the matter is serious enough to warrant a high-level policy attention at both Federal, State and local government levels, particularly in view of the fact that land is a state matter and housing standards and by-laws are matters of local governments. Thus housing is a complex and complicated matter that demands lots of policy attention and coordination and a serious attention by all public officials. It is not a "touch and go" matter. In fact it should be a KPI for many public officials in relevant departments for which construction and housing matter most.

Additionally in-situ improvements of houses in traditional villages should not be forgotten, too, as I do see many dilapidated houses in several states such as Johor, Kedah and Pahang. Can zakat funds be used to repair houses? Housing matters are increasingly critical as urbanisation proceeds and urban-based activities become key components of economic growth. It is equally compelling as society becomes more conscious of the importance of quality of life and their democratic rights. Lack of concern for affordable and decent housing for society is tantamount to an abeyance of duty by the authorities both at the federal, state and local government levels. For this reason I share the enthusiasm of the government in pushing for the affordable homes programme given that homes mean so much to Asian families.

The issue at hand is how much public officials understand and grasp this matter. One can say it as a simple matter of pricing or standards. Yes this may be true. However, it is more advisable and important to examine the subject beyond those two concerns only. One may want to consider the matter from the perspectives of financial sustainability, mental wellness, future social changes (aging, etc), healthy urban built environment, and others. Given our federal structure of government and the role of local governments whose manpower is not as trained and skilled as those at the Federal headquarters, it may be important to examine the affordable homes subject again as a serious development matter and significant public programme delivery issue the way other nations do. We should not be shy to learn from our neighbour, Singapore, whose public housing programme has been successful.

The workers there even at the lower level of job echelon own decent homes which they can afford based on their household incomes and such homes are amenable for renovation when the need arises later. I would therefore urge public sector officials take this affordable homes programme initiative of the leadership seriously and give their best policy analysis and planning so that our public housing programme is a source of our pride in the years to come. We do not want to see slums and eyesores evolving from our low-cost housing programmes in the past. Surely our standards should be better than before. And we should not blame public sector fiscal deficit for having low standards either. The writer is chairman of the Malaysian Institute of Economic Research

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/housing-source-growth>

Robust future seen for construction sector

12 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

AS most industries in Malaysia are hoping for a wind of change in the local economic landscape, the construction sector remains confident. Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) chief executive officer Datuk Seri Dr Judin Abdul Karim said the sector would continue to be robust. There are many high-value projects already in the pipeline despite the current challenging economic condition. "Besides the Light Rail Transit 3 (Line 3) project, affordable housing and highway projects are also coming on stream," he said. Besides, with the development in Pengerang, Johor, being chosen as an oil and gas hub, it would add strength to the construction sector, he added. The Pengerang deepwater terminal is a RM5 billion project with storage capacity of five million cu m and land reclamation of 201ha. The construction of a deepwater jetty facility there would be able to facilitate very large crude carriers.

Most analysts have positive expectations on Malaysia's construction sector. The government's announcement of several mega projects, including the Mass Rapid Transit 2 (MRT2), Line 3 and more Bus Rapid Transit projects under the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP) will be a major boost to the industry. RHB Research Institute (RHBIB) said development expenditure during the 11MP was projected at RM260 billion, which is 16 per cent higher than the RM223.6 billion incurred during the 10th Malaysia Plan. Urban public transport is a key focus area under the 11MP, as 75 per cent of the population in Malaysia will live in cities by 2020.

The 11MP has set a 40 per cent public transport share in the Klang Valley by 2020 from 17.1 per cent last year. "This is hardly a surprise to us as we hold the view that spending on MRT developments will be one of the key pillars of support for the construction sector in Malaysia over the next decade and beyond, particularly in the Klang Valley and Penang," RHBIB said. RHBIB maintained an "overweight" stance on the construction sector. Hong Leong Investment Bank (HLIB) Research expects construction sector in Malaysia to continue its upward momentum in the future. HLIB Research also maintained its "overweight" outlook on the sector. "The current construction sector's data on contract awards validates that the momentum of job wins remains strong for contractors. 11MP has witnessed a 13 per cent allocation increase to RM260 billion, which will help sustain the flow of contracts for the next five years."

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/robust-future-seen-construction-sector>



Devoting our 'energy' to Otec

BY DR AHMAD IBRAHIM - 11 SEPTEMBER 2015 @ 11:00 AM

KUALA Lumpur recently hosted the third international symposium on ocean thermal energy conversion (Otec). Held at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia campus, the event brought together Otec experts from around the world. Close to 200 people attended the two-day event. The findings spoke about the tremendous potential Otec offers. What became clear was that Otec has garnered support around the world in academia and business. My first encounter with Otec was a few years ago when I was introduced to it by an old colleague, Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Jaafar, known among fellows of the Academy as Datuk A.B.J. He has now established a name among Malaysian science enthusiasts as a crusader of science and innovation. If we are looking for a model technopreneur, then he counts as one of the few in the country who qualify.

He is not one to give up on anything he believes in. I remember a few years back, he was pushing hard to commercialise a solar drying technology for smoked banana, or "pisang salai". I was harassed into visiting his commercial operation in Malacca. He had this dream to turn the venture into a big business for his home state. And he was enthusiastic about the project and had thought about strategies to create the value chain for the product in Malacca. Some people confided in me that he may have been a descendent of Hang Tuah or Hang Jebat, judging by his strong fighting spirit. It was unfortunate that the venture did not make it as planned.

Marketing was the biggest challenge he found. And now, he is passionate about Otec. He has been going around for the past few years trying to convince people that Malaysia should not miss out on this opportunity. Since Otec is new to Malaysians, he met many sceptics. Many question its economics. Some doubt that it will ever attract the right support to get it moving. But giving up is never in his vocabulary. His persistence found the right buy in. UTM saw Otec as an opportunity for it to be among the world pioneers in this emerging technology for renewable energy, which promises to be sustainable. We should be reminded of the fact that not all renewables are sustainable. Well, there is no doubt that Otec is. What was revealed about Otec by experts at the symposium proved to be eye-opening. It is easy to understand why.

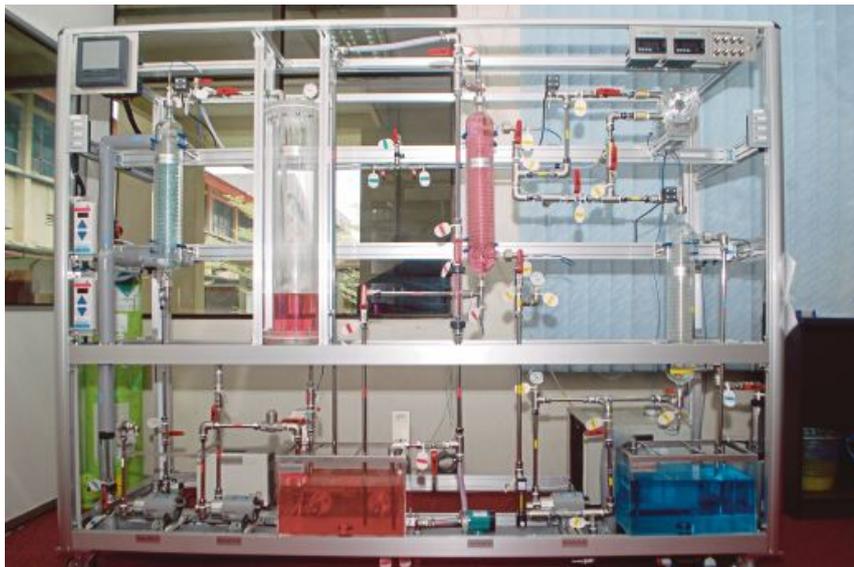
What Otec offers will provide the answers we need in the search for sustainable energy. What better way to produce the energy that the world needs than to generate it from the most abundant

resource in the planet, water. Otec involves the exploitation of the temperature gradient in many parts of the ocean. The difference in temperatures is harnessed to drive power turbines to generate electricity. Experts say a temperature difference of around 20°C would do the trick. And Malaysia has such spots. But that is not all. Through Otec, a major by-product is clean water. We know that water is also what the world desperately needs in view of the expected shortages in the coming years, no thanks to climate change.

An important plus point for Otec is its low carbon character. In fact, Otec does not emit greenhouse gas. That is positive for climate change. The only other energy conversion that does not emit greenhouse gases is nuclear. But nuclear has yet to get rid of its toxic radioactive wastes. Otec does not produce any such hazard. Instead, we were told that Otec offers the most inexpensive route to produce hydrogen gas, the ultimate fuel that many have hailed as the energy of the future. Yes, Otec is the answer.

The writer is a fellow at the Academy of Sciences Malaysia and a UM adjunct professor

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/devoting-our-%E2%80%98energy%E2%80%99-otec>



Struggling to meet sustainability demands

BY DR AHMAD IBRAHIM - 20 AUGUST 2015 @ 12:00 PM

PAHANG, the largest state in the peninsula, is known for its rich natural resources. Over the years, the state has attracted much investment, both local and foreign, in the mineral sector. At one time, timber resources also brought much wealth to the state. Unfortunately, as a result of unsustainable logging, timber income has significantly dwindled. But the state still has abundant economic potential in mineral deposits. The challenge is how to sustainably harvest such deposits. As the biggest state in Peninsular Malaysia, Pahang is always in the news. Winning the FA Cup must surely count as among the positive news. Lately, however, the state has had a spate of negative publicity

with environmental issues dominating the news. The Cameron Highlands tragedy, which attracted much debate in the media, has yet to be fully resolved.

Now, after the infamous Lynas controversy has more or less died down, a new mining-related publicity has emerged. The state's bauxite mining activity has received negative media coverage. This does not augur well for the state as it struggles to bring more economic prosperity to its people. Fortunately, there is still hope for corrective measures. In the global pursuit of sustainable development, mining is one of the major sectors which need to embrace change. This is because mining is not only an industry which emits significant greenhouse gases due to its high energy intensity, but more importantly, it is a sector which has contributed much to air and water contamination during its operation. It is, therefore, understandable that any attempt to regulate carbon emissions attracts strong objections from the mining industry.

In Australia, the government's recent failure to implement the carbon credit scheme was blamed on strong protests by big businesses, especially the mining sector. Of course, mining is a major revenue earner in Australia. It can ill afford to offend the sector too much. But the good news is that the mining business in Australia is not one to ignore the growing world demand for sustainable production. The industry does realise that it is only a matter of time before it simply has to conform to reality. At the moment, it is just buying time to relook its processes and redesign its operation. It has been widely reported that the industry is seriously investing in newer and more sustainable processing technologies to effectively reduce the carbon footprint, yet maintain the viability of the business.

Australia is not alone. Miners in the United States and many other countries have embarked on similar initiatives for change. The University of Queensland (UQ) in Australia has, for a number of years, actively researched and studied new approaches in mining to make it not only more sustainable but also responsible. They enjoy good support from mining companies in the country. At the height of the Lynas controversy, the Academy of Sciences Malaysia took the initiative to engage the group, which comes under UQ's Centre for Responsibility in Mining. Since then, we have been exchanging notes about the latest development in sustainable mining. The local mining industry may want to engage the academy, together with the UQ group, to help it implement sustainable growth. After all, mining is essentially about the selective extraction of a target mineral from a mass of earth containing many other elements.

The trick is to develop an extraction process that not only achieves the separation efficiently, but also consumes less energy and produces less waste. Such clean technology should also be applied to transport and logistics. In the local bauxite case, improvement is needed in transporting the concentrate ore from the mining site to the port. What is clear is that the world will continue to demand all kinds of minerals to feed the global economic growth. We, therefore, cannot totally dispense with mining. At the same time, there has to be much innovation in mining if it is to effectively reduce its carbon footprint. Failing to change would spell dire consequences, not just for the world, but the mining business itself. Embracing sustainability is, therefore, no longer a negotiable option for the mining industry!

The writer is a fellow of the Academy of Sciences Malaysia and adjunct professor at Universiti Malaya

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/struggling-meet-sustainability-demands>

Johor Strait Development Corridor Master Plan timing could be wrong: Consultant

BY CHUAH BEE KIM - 14 AUGUST 2015 @ 7:00 AM

JOHOR BARU: The Johor Strait Development Corridor Master Plan is a good policy, but the timing could be wrong, said a property consultant. KGV International Property Consultants executive director Samuel Tan, who has viewed the master plan, which is up for public viewing at six venues until Aug 19, said he understood the need for the state government to protect the interest of Malaysian property owners and to ensure sustainability of the environment. However, he said the implementation of the master plan now could possibly deter investors from coming to Iskandar Malaysia. Tan said the 99-year lease imposed on foreign property owners, which is one aspect of the master plan, could drive investors to areas which have no such restrictions. “This would drive the investors to go to Medini, a premium waterfront urban development that has no restrictions on foreign ownership, no minimum price threshold for foreign property buyers, and where investors are exempted from real property gains tax until December 31, 2025.

“The price threshold of RM2 million for landed properties and RM1 million for strata-title on foreign property owners could spur developers to push up prices of properties built for Malaysians in Iskandar Malaysia,” said Tan, adding that foreigners would pay three times more for quit rent and assessment as compared with Malaysians in the growth region. Tan was commenting on the Johor Strait Development Corridor Master Plan, which was unveiled last week and covered housing, green technology, sustainability, reclamation and setting up of international zones for foreign property owners. The corridor for development stretches 98km from the Tanjung Piai in the west to Sungai Johor in the east, and covers areas that are expected to have a population of 1.5 million people by 2025.

State Housing and Local Government Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Latif Bandi said the state government would uphold environmental concerns including preserving the Ramsar wetlands sites in areas of the master plan. He said that local authorities would not grant approval for the development of new coastal projects situated on environmentally sensitive areas, without a Detailed Environmental Impact Assessment report. The viewing period for the Johor Strait Development Corridor Master Plan is until Aug 19 at six venues — Johor Baru City Council, Johor Baru Central Municipal Council, Pasir Gudang Municipal Council, Pontian District Council, Iskandar Regional Development Authority office and Dato Abdul Rahman Andak building in Nusajaya. Viewing is from 9am to 4pm.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/johor-strait-development-corridor-master-plan-timing-could-be-wrong-consultant>

State govt urged to rethink policies, projects

10 AUGUST 2015 @ 11:00 AM

GEORGE TOWN: The DAP-led state government has been urged to rethink its development policies to safeguard the environment as well as the well-being and quality of life of its people. The call comes hot on the heels of the New Straits Times' report of rampant quarrying taking place on mainland Penang. Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) said the demand for quarry materials, such as rocks and sand, was due to rapid development and reclamation projects, and to support the state's infrastructure projects. Its president, S.M. Mohamed Idris, said quarrying should be stopped indefinitely. He said besides the impact on communities, the extraction and exploitation of finite resources were a concern. "We need to review our development policies... how to meet housing needs in a sustainable manner for a growing population, stop building more roads (or tunnel link in the case of Penang) and opt for an alternative development model that prioritises environmental protection and conservation.

"The collapse of ecosystem services rendered by our green hills is a possibility if action is not taken," he told the NST. Idris said quarrying had changed Penang's landscape. "Our once green hills have been blasted and tripped bare. Some areas will be flattened soon. Rocks that take thousands of years to form are blatantly extracted. "The most obvious impact of quarrying is a change in geomorphology and conversion of land use, besides the visual change of the landscape. "The ecological functions of the hills are also affected as there are no more trees." He said CAP had raised the issue with the state government before, adding that although the administration was "going green" in some aspects, not enough effort was being done.

"Several development projects have been approved on hills, which means cutting of hill land and earthworks, which will render the hills barren and turn them into concrete structures." Idris said CAP and Sahabat Alam Malaysia were aware of the rampant quarrying in mainland Penang. "We found quarrying activities in Simpang Empat near Nibong Tebal recently. "We will be investigating the activities and following up with the state government."

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/state-govt-urged-rethink-policies-projects>

Construction, service, manufacturing sectors to grow under 11MP

21 MAY 2015 @ 1:03 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The construction, service and manufacturing sectors are expected to transform and grow under the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP), driven by government's strategies to propel the country towards a developed nation by 2020. The construction sector is becoming more important due to higher demand for modern and efficient infrastructure, said the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department in the 11MP. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tabled the five-year plan (2016-2020) in the Dewan Rakyat today. Under the 11MP, the sector is expected to grow 10.3 per cent per annum with a contribution of RM327 billion or 5.5 per cent to the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2020. This is in comparison with the estimated record of an average annual growth rate of 11.1 per cent during the 10th Malaysia Plan, which was supported by

expansion in the civil engineering, residential and non-residential sub-sectors. The EPU said the government would introduce the Construction Industry Transformation Programme 2016-2020 to propel the industry forward and meet market demand.

The transformation of the construction sector will be underpinned by four main strategies, including driving productivity by increasing technology adoption and modernising construction methods. The other strategy also include enhancing knowledge content by increasing human capital quality, accelerating capacity and capability building of small and medium enterprises and Bumiputera contractors. It is also aim at reducing the mismatch between labour demand and supply. The services sector will be guided by the Services Sector Blueprint, which aims at unlocking the potential of the sector and transform it to become more knowledge intensive and innovation-led. In the new Malaysia plan, the sector is expected to grow at 6.9 per cent per annum, contributing 56.5 per cent to the GDP in 2020, and providing 9.6 million jobs. The 11MP will focus on the development of sub-sectors and industries that are tradeable, have high-knowledge intensity and linkages with the rest of the economy, and the potential to generate high-income jobs.

Industries such as Islamic finance, oil and gas services, private healthcare, private higher education, ecotourism, halal industry and professional services will be further promoted. Meanwhile, to facilitate international market penetration, Malaysia halal standards will be linked to international standards to enhance global acceptance. The manufacturing sector will aid transition towards more high-value, diverse and complex products, driven by three catalytic sub-sectors, namely chemicals, electrical and electronics as well as machinery and equipment. The sector will also be supported by industries with high potential growth such as medical devices and aerospace.

The transition will be underpinned by enhanced research and development, more sustainable manufacturing practices, greater compliance to global standards, and collaboration between stakeholders. The EPU said to this end, five strategies had been identified to grow and energise the manufacturing sector, such as stimulating innovation-led growth and ramping up internationalisation. – Bernama

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/construction-service-manufacturing-sectors-grow-under-11mp>

11MP encourages sustainable energy use to support growth

21 MAY 2015 @ 1:06 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is committed to ensuring energy security for the nation while improving infrastructure and service delivery for the oil, gas and electricity sub-sectors as ways to encourage sustainable energy use to support growth. Underpinning these efforts were continuing policies to rationalise energy subsidies and move towards a market-based energy pricing so that energy resources are utilised optimally, said the Economic Planning Unit (EPU) of the Prime Minister's Department in the Eleventh Malaysia Plan (11MP). Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak tabled the five-year (2016-2020) plan in the Dewan Rakyat today.

The EPU said encouraging sustainable energy use to support growth was among the key initiatives in strengthening infrastructure to support economic expansion. It said the aims would be achieved through five strategies, including strengthening stakeholder coordination and collaboration in the energy sector through greater institutional collaboration on energy planning and engaging end-users on efficient energy consumption.

The other strategies are ensuring the security and reliability of supply for the oil and gas (O&G) sub-sector within a market-based approach; enabling growth in the O&G sub-sector; managing supply diversity for security of the electricity sub-sector; and improving the sustainability, efficiency; and reliability of the electricity sub-sector. – Bernama

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/11mp-encourages-sustainable-energy-use-support-growth>

11MP Thrust Four: Pursuing green growth for sustainability and resilience

21 MAY 2015 @ 12:27 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The government will move away from a “grow first, clean-up later” development model to a resilient, low-carbon, resource-efficient and socially inclusive in the 11th Malaysia Plan. This will require fundamental changes across every major aspect including how policy is determined, how institutions are regulated, how responsibilities are shared and how people value their environment. “With increasing intensity and frequency of extreme weather events, adopting green growth has now become an imperative for Malaysia. It represents Malaysia’s commitment to renew and, indeed, increase its commitment to the environment and long-term sustainability,” the Plan elaborated. Malaysia like the rest of the world is faced with a growing population and demand as well as a natural environment that is increasingly under stress.

Through the Plan, the detrimental impact of socio-economic activity on environmental systems will be reduced. “Natural capital, including forested areas, biodiversity, and water resources as well as its ecosystems, is valued and sustainably managed. “Development gains are protected, thus ensuring wellbeing of people across generations,” the Plan stated, adding that energy use will be efficient and renewable energy widely used. The first focus area will be to strengthen the enabling environment for green growth in which the government will provide the relevant policy and institutional framework for green growth. To do this, the government will enhance regulatory and institutional framework, coordination, capacity as well as monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. Full report in NST print edition tomorrow

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/11mp-thrust-four-pursuing-green-growth-sustainability-and-resilience>

Bamboo trade deficit to be eliminated in 5 years: MTIB

19 MAY 2015 @ 3:20 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Timber Industry Board (MTIB) said today exports of bamboo-based products could be boosted so as to eliminate the industry's trade deficit within the next five years with the transformation of the local industry. Its Director General Dr. Jalaluddin Harun said Malaysia's bamboo exports, currently averaging around RM250,000 annually, can be boosted by introducing value-added products to match or even exceed the country's bamboo imports, valued at RM4.3 million in 2014. "The transformation of our current bamboo industry into a new era of higher value-added products will enable the industry to start contributing to the national economy," he told a media conference on the sidelines of the inaugural 'International Seminar on Bamboo' here today. The two-day event that began today covers bamboo plantations, harvesting and preservation, product development, machinery as well as promotion and marketing, and is attended by representatives from the International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR) and the International Centre for Bamboo Research (ICBR), as well as local and ASEAN participants.

Jalaluddin said the transformation efforts now focus on the creation of more value-added products, establishing the right supply chains and identifying the technical requirements to encourage technological innovation. Bamboo products in construction and architectural works such as for flooring, flooring skirting, frames and doors, as well as dining set furniture could be developed as new local value-added products, he said, pointing out that bamboo's 'green material' status would be its biggest selling point. He said bamboo is now considered as an important alternative material to timber, and the government through the MTIB is implementing activities according to the Bamboo Industry Development Action Plan for 2011-2020. The action plan covers the establishment of bamboo plantations and sustainably managed existing natural resources, development of value-added products, research and development, and marketing, trade and promotion. – BERNAMA

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/bamboo-trade-deficit-be-eliminated-5-years-mtib>

Govt to allocate RM15b for green tech in 11MP

21 APRIL 2015 @ 3:21 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is allocating more than RM15 billion in the 11th Malaysia Plan (11MP) as part of a game-changing move to introduce green technology initiatives into the economy. Director-General of the Economic Planning Unit Datuk Seri Dr Rahamat Bivi Yusoff said about RM3 billion to RM4 billion annually has been set under the 11MP to create environmentally-sustainable development. The 11MP, outlining the economic growth plans between 2016 and 2020, will be announced in May. Rahamat Bivi said there would be a wider implementation of green growth related initiatives to ensure continuity between the current Malaysia Plan and the upcoming 11MP. "Green will part of the whole planning process.

"The main focus is on sustainable consumption and production, which promotes doing more and better with less, meaning that high productivity and quality with less resources and very minimal

pollution," she told reporters after the opening of the Towards Green Growth in Malaysia Conference here today. Among the attendees were United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Malaysia Resident Representative Michelle Gyles-McDonnough and British High Commissioner Victoria Treadell.

Rahamat Bivi stressed the need for greater commitment from state and local authorities as well as the private sector and the public to ensure greener growth. "The society and people at large will also need to play their part, particularly in terms of their lifestyle and daily practices," she added. Meanwhile, Gyles-McDonnough said UNDP is committed to supporting Malaysia's efforts to advance the green growth agenda from planning to implementation in the 11MP by putting the green growth model into practice at the subnational and local levels. The two-day conference was organised by UNDP, in partnership with the UK government. -- BERNAMA

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/govt-allocate-rm15b-green-tech-11mp>

CIDB in talks with Kedah's state agency to build affordable houses using new technology

BY CHERYL YVONNE ACHU - 17 MARCH 2015 @ 1:57 AM

KUALA LUMPUR: The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) expects to complete negotiations with a state government agency in Kedah by end of this year to build 200 affordable homes using Bayer MaterialScience's lightweight polyurethane composite panels there. "As of now, we have not signed any agreements and discussions are still ongoing. We are in the process of evaluating the implementation of this technology in Kedah," CIDB chief executive Datuk Seri Dr Judin Abdul Karim said. Judin said the energy efficient building solution will be combined with renewal energy solution in close co-operation with other business partners of Bayer MaterialScience like Philips, Schneider and local builders.

"With Bayer's MaterialScience's affordable housing solution, construction time can be reduced by as much as 35 per cent compared with precast concrete," he said. "The polyurethane panels have excellent insulation properties to make the house more energy efficient by reducing the temperature within it, and leading to lower electricity bills, as well as a reduced carbon footprint," he told reporters after the launch of the affordable housing project's model house by Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, here yesterday. The model house, built on a 2,000 square feet site, was commissioned last August and completed within five weeks.

Judin said the model house project also marked the successful technical cooperation and knowledge sharing between Bayer MaterialScience and Kedah state agency for a more sustainable construction sector in future. Earlier, Fadillah said the affordable housing project is in line with the government's aim to build one million affordable and comfortable housing for people. "I am very pleased to see the strong collaboration between Bayer MaterialScience and CIDB to provide economical and practical solutions to tackle the issue of housing shortage and meet the need of both low income sectors of the population as well as the society at large," he said.

Meanwhile, Bayer MaterialScience executive committee member for sustainability Richard Northcote said the completion of the model house has brought the company a step closer to contribute towards sustainable development.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/cidb-talks-kedah%E2%80%99s-state-agency-build-affordable-houses-using-new-technology>

Kedah looks set to build affordable houses using new technology

16 MARCH 2015 @ 2:09 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The Construction Industry Development Board (CIDB) hopes to conclude discussions with a state government agency in Kedah by year-end to build 200 affordable houses using Bayer MaterialScience's lightweight polyurethane composite panels. CIDB Chief Executive Officer Datuk Seri Judin Abdul Karim said the new technology would translate into savings in time and costs, as the solution enabled construction time can be reduced by as much as 35 per cent compared with precast concrete. "The polyurethane panels also have excellent insulation properties. This makes the house more energy efficient by reducing the temperature within it, and leading to lower electricity bills, as well as a reduced carbon footprint," Judin added. He was speaking after Works Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof unveiled the prototype house here today.

Meanwhile, Fadillah said CIDB, Bayer and its partners, namely, PU Profile, Square Panels and Philips Malaysia have successfully developed an array of innovative and economically sustainable solutions in affordable housing. "I want to reiterate my utmost support to the strong collaboration between CIDB and Bayer to provide economical and practical solutions to address the housing shortage issue," he added. The model house, built on a 185 square meter site, was commissioned last August and completed within five weeks.

The price for a basic design 106 square metre house is from RM76,000 a unit. Judin said going forward, CIDB would continue to leverage on Bayer's technical know-how and expertise, focusing on sustainable housing. Bayer MaterialScience Executive Committee Member (Sustainability), Richard Northcote said the successful completion of the model house has enabled it to contribute towards sustainable development. "It also enables better access to affordable and comfortable housing to those who most need it, especially low-income families," he added. - BERNAMA

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/kedah-looks-set-build-affordable-houses-using-new-technology>

iGEM set to attract 60,000 visitors

12 MARCH 2015 @ 4:47 PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The four-day International Greentech and Eco Products Exhibition and Conference (iGEM) 2015, starting September 12 is expected to attract over 60,000 visitors. Deputy Minister of Energy, Green Technology and Water Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid said 400 local companies have

signed up to participate in the iGEM 2015 versus 350 last year. "This year, we anticipate around 600 exhibitors from more than 20 countries. We hope all Asean member countries can participate in iGEM 2015 as Malaysia will also host the Asean Summit. So far, five countries have confirmed their participation," Mahdzir told reporters here yesterday.

"To further promote iGEM 2015, we will also hold exhibitions and conduct working visits to several countries in Asia including Australia and China," he added. The iGEM 2015 is set to be more interesting as it will feature two sub-events, namely; the E-Mobilia World in collaboration with Koelnmesse Ptd Ltd and the Green Financing Conference in collaboration with Islamic Banking and Finance Institute of Malaysia. The E-Mobilia World will highlight key issues in the areas of sustainable mobility development, business strategy, implementation and adoption throughout the ecosystem. The Green Financing Conference will encourage dialogue on challenges and opportunities in financing low carbon and climate resilient projects.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/igem-set-attract-60000-visitors>

TNB committed to environment protection

4 MARCH 2015 @ 5:23 PM

I REFER to the online letter by Mary Hasnah ("TNB strives to make consumers better-educated on electricity", NST, March 2). As a consumer advocate, I am happy to note that our electricity provider Tenaga Nasional (TNB) has been a keen promoter of green energy, testimony to the several ongoing projects at Hulu Terengganu and Hulu Jelai. TNB's biomass projects at Jengka, Johor, and Pahang shows its keen interest in renewable energy projects. It has invested heavily here and has a clear stand. It knows where it must commit to ensure its sustainability programmes. It is interesting that TNB has gone halon-free in all operations of the Generation, Transmission and Distribution divisions. This must some kind of a record.

This electric giant is a responsible corporate citizen, being committed to protecting the environment and minimizing its carbon footprint. Its environmental initiatives are guided by an environmental police which advocate: * The protection, conservation and improvement of the environment in all of its operations and decision making. * The implementation of an environmental management system that will ensure oil impacts on the environment from its operators are eliminated or minimised. * The promotion of environmental awareness among its contractors, the public and other stakeholders. Today, TNB's programmes also focus on air and water quality monitoring, as well as boundary noise levels monitoring. In such ways, I see this company is truly committed to the environment.

Bulbir Singh, Seremban, Negri Sembilan

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/tnb-committed-environment-protection>

Beautiful North Kuching to become eco-friendly city

9 FEBRUARY 2015 @ 7:29 PM Sim Bak Heng news@nst.com.my

JOHOR BARU: North Kuching's quest to become an eco-friendly city which facilitates sustainable development by the year 2020 has earned itself glowing comments from the government. Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government deputy minister Datuk Halimah Mohd Sadique said the city aimed to be beautiful, green, healthy, economically and culturally vibrant with the people's participation.

North Kuching, one of the Asean Environmentally Sustainable Cities (ESC) Model Year 1, has the Asean ESC Model Cities programme to thank for to undergo capacity building on both centralised and household level composting. Halimah said this at the opening of the 6th High Level Seminar on ESC, which was co-organised by Malaysia, Japan, Cambodia, the ASEAN Working Group on ESC and the Asean Secretariat.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/beautiful-north-kuching-become-eco-friendly-city>

Going green key to "FutureCity" Initiative's success

BY CHUAH BEE KIM - 8 FEBRUARY 2015 @ 2:44 PM

JOHOR BARU: Making a policy is easier than the efficient and consistent implementation of it, says Iskandar Regional Development Authority (IRDA). Its director of economics and investment Engku Ahmad Kamel Engku Taib, said a lack of awareness on sustainable green living is one of the main challenges of making the "FutureCity" Initiative (FCI) a success here. "Malaysia does not have natural disasters like tsunami and earthquakes so its people do not take recycling seriously," said Engku Ahmad Kamel. Citing an example, he said there have been ongoing programmes to instil awareness on the green initiatives among school children and youths, but once the participants go home, they forget all that they have learnt.

"The situation in Iskandar Malaysia may not be critical yet, but if left unabated, our traffic congestion may be even worst than Kuala Lumpur if steps are not taken now to improve our transportation system," he said. Engku Ahmad Kamel said the relevant authorities have to translate policies to action, but the public also have to play their part. The act of discarding rubbish into the sea, for instance, have to be stopped as that would clog the drains which will result in a flash flood occurrence. Engku Ahmad Kamel said the cost of getting people to embrace green technology is another factor. "It may be costly but the long-term effects of green technology will be beneficial.

We are working closely with the municipalities, and each local council has their own set of unique problems," he said. Citing an example, Engku Ahmad Kamel said Pasir Gudang has to overcome air pollution due to the booming manufacturing industries while Pontian has to protect its Ramsar site. He urged manufacturers to make an effort to reduce emission that will pollute the air. Engku Ahmad Kamel said this at a Press conference after the launch of the International Forum on the FCI, held for the first time outside Japan.

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/going-green-key-futurecity-initiative%E2%80%99s-success>

Green light for Johor Forest City

BY SIM BAK HENG - 14 JANUARY 2015 @ 8:50 PM

JOHOR BARU: After weeks of reviewing, the Department of Environment (DoE) has finally granted its approval to the detailed environmental impact assessment (DEIA) report of the controversial Forest City project. With the approval letter in hand, this means that Country Garden Pacificview (CGPV), the master developer for the project, could commence this mammoth offshore project at any time now.

Today, CGPV announced that the DoE has granted the approval for the DEIA report, which covers the measures proposed to minimise or mitigate environmental impacts through integrated and workable solutions. Speaking about the approval, Datuk Md. Othman, the executive director of CGPV, said the next step is to ensure that all compliance monitoring, in terms of air, noise, water quality and sediment, are robustly implemented and carried out.

"This is one of our immediate priorities to minimise the impact to the local communities and ensure that the surrounding ecology are well preserved. "This is a massive step forward in our goal to bring sustainable development to the state. "The project is consistent with the Government's vision as outlined in the Economic Transformation Programme (ETP). Upon completion, it is expected that new job opportunities will be created for vast numbers of citizens."

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/green-light-johor-forest-city>

First of its kind KFC green outlet opens in Nilai

BY TEOH PEI YING - 12 JUNE 2015 @ 8:23 PM

NILAI: Local companies need to implement environmental friendly development, giving priority to efficient and clean resources. Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Deputy Minister Datuk Halimah Mohd Sadique said to ensure such a move succeed, the ministry will move to strengthen the policy and law to create a supportive environment to green growth. She said the measures to be implemented include establishing a green market, increasing the percentage of renewable energy and promoting low-carbon mobility. "It's time we changed the perception that green technology is only for professionals and is prestigious, because the technology can be adapted to all types of development including houses, supermarkets and hotels.

"The efforts are necessary as current communities are more aware, and realised the importance of environmental care in raising quality of life," she said at a press conference after the opening the first eco-friendly KFC restaurant in the nation at Nilai Square here today. Also present was Johor Corporation president and chief executive Datuk Kamaruzzaman Abu Kassim. KFC Nilai Square built

at cost of RM6.6 million, is the first green restaurant in the country and received three green certifications.

The certifications are Platinum of the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design from United States Green Building Council, gold of Singapore Green Mark Certification and Malaysia Green Building Index. Halimah said efforts to create more environmental friendly buildings in the country should begin by focusing on household waste management to avoid contamination caused by oil, solid waste, chemicals and grease disposals. As such, she said, the ministry through Solid Waste And Public Cleansing Management Corporation (SWCorp), provided a comprehensive plan as a reference to ensure eco-friendly solid waste management. "This effort can make Malaysia toward developed countries in managing solid waste, thus reducing the dependency on the use of natural resources."

Read More : <http://www.nst.com.my/news/2015/09/first-its-kind-kfc-green-outlet-opens-nilai>

