

Rehda: Demand for green buildings needs to be market driven

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PETALING JAYA: The development of green buildings continues to gain momentum in Malaysia every year but the demand for it needs to be market-driven.

Real Estate and Housing Developers Association (Rehda) president Datuk Michael Yam said local property players should not develop green buildings or incorporate energy-saving elements into their projects just because it was the "in thing" to do.

"Malaysia can pass laws (on green build-

ings) and developers can go into it voluntarily. But at the end of the day, if the market is not demanding it, than it's not practical.

"It needs to be market driven," he said at a press conference prior to the Rehda Youth Green Tour yesterday.

Yam said while developing and living in green buildings made financial sense in the long term, not everyone might be ready to embrace this concept just yet.

"It costs more to go green and not everyone can afford it (purchasing green properties). Developers need to evaluate what the market wants."

"You need to do it (offer green buildings) gradually and slowly induce the public on the benefits of going green. This will trigger off a green revolution among developers."

Yam said awareness of the benefits of going green (other than the property sector) was growing in Malaysia, adding that media cover-

age of green-related issues was also becoming more common.

Yam said the awareness on the benefits of going green was still at its infancy stage in Malaysia and that the public needs to be educated about its advantages.

"If everyone is willing to subscribe to this higher cost, then (the prices of green buildings) will become more affordable because of the economies of scale," he said.

Meanwhile, the Green Tour, which was hosted by Rehda Youth, yesterday organised tours to four environmental friendly developments in the Klang Valley.

The developments were 1First Avenue, Challis Damansara, GTower and Ken Bangsar. Held for the first time, the tour aims to educate the public on green buildings.

The tour was officiated by Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Wira Chor Chee Heung.