



# Rich people snap up properties during pandemic

*Property buyers see owning real estate as a relatively low-risk to build a financial cushion*

by S BIRRUNTHA

REAL estate technology group, Juwai IQI, said its new home sales increased by 293% year-on-date despite the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Its transaction data noted the figure was 247% higher versus the same period in 2019.

Juwai IQI group co-founder and CEO Kashif Ansari said, paradoxically, many people viewed the pandemic period as a good opportunity to buy houses.

At the same time, movement restrictions have led to reduced spending among Malaysians.

Many have built up more savings and want to invest in property as a result.

"Covid-19 has made us all aware that unexpected events can strike at any time. Property buyers see owning real estate as a relatively low-risk way to build a financial cushion. Our recent consumer survey found 70% of Malaysians have neither lost a job nor had to close a business during the pandemic.

"Most Malaysians are still earning their income but are not spending as

much as before the pandemic. Many are using the money for down payments on a property instead," Kashif said in a statement yesterday.

He also attributed the property market boom to the group's technology platform that enables client service to continue despite the Movement Control Order (MCO).

He said the group has continued investing in technology and are building a 1,000-person global technology and data team in Kuala Lumpur (KL).

In the week of May 10 this year, Kashif said the company finalised US\$88 million (RM364 million) in new residential project sales across Malaysia, about 75% higher than US\$50 million recorded in a typical week.

He said the MCO implementation did not hurt Juwai IQI's sales in Malaysia but went up during that period on the contrary.

He said observers expect economic, employment and income growth to increase more rapidly post-pandemic than the pre-Covid-19 rate.

Consequently, he said those conditions tend to coincide with rising property demand and prices.

He added low interest-rates, the reintroduction of the Home Ownership Campaign and various other property-related initia-

tives in the Budget 2021, including the short-term National Economic Recovery Plan, have fuelled property demand.

"We foresee a robust market post-pandemic, in which the best positioned and best-designed properties will sell more rapidly and at higher prices.

"Less attractive homes will also benefit to some degree from the rising demand," he added.

For Juwai IQI, Kashif said the D'Cosmos and The Fiddlewoodz projects have particularly seen strong sales this year.

He said buyers today are much more sensitive to lifestyle and amenities than in the past. He also said projects that offer resort-style living are benefitting from this new emphasis on quality of life.

"One reason The Fiddlewoodz has been selling so quickly is its resort facilities, such as its fantastic swimming pool. It is not the first building to have a rooftop pool, but it will be the first to have a 360-degree rooftop infinity pool across the entire rooftop, overlooking all KL Metropolis.

"The best-selling units all have at least two bedrooms and two bathrooms. In addition, some have study rooms," he said.

Prices start at RM854,800 at The Fiddlewoodz for a unit of two bedrooms and two baths.