

Top News for the Week

- [Private home prices expected to rise this year after 2.5% gain in 2019](#)
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- [Brighter economic prospects for 2020 after muted growth last year](#)
- [DPM Heng to deliver 2020 Budget Statement on Feb 18](#)

Residential

Private home prices expected to rise this year after 2.5% gain in 2019

Prices of private homes in Singapore are expected to rise by between 1 and 5 per cent this year, analysts say, after clocking a 2.5 per cent gain in 2019.

For the fourth quarter of 2019, the overall price index for private homes was up 0.3 per cent - led by the landed segment - over the prior quarter, compared to 1.3 per cent in Q3 2019. This marks the third consecutive quarter in 2019 where private home prices went up.

Huttons Asia research director Lee Sze Teck reckons there could be nearly 50 launches this year, with 11,000 units released to the market for sale. Of these, about half are in the CCR. He said: "The sales momentum in 2019 is likely to carry forward in 2020. We could see sales volume maintain at a similar level of between 9,000 and 10,000 units in 2020."

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/private-home-prices-expected-to-rise-this-year-after-25-gain-in-2019>
<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/private-home-prices-up-last-year-but-fall-short-of-2018-pace>

HDB resale prices rise 0.4% in Q4 but unchanged for 2019

The prices of Housing Board resale flats rose by 0.4 per cent in the final three months of 2019 compared with the third quarter, in what was the largest quarter-on-quarter increase last year, the latest public housing figures show.

Based on flash estimates, there was no change in resale flat prices for the whole of last year, according to HDB, which released the data.

This means that prices were stable compared with the full-year price drop of 0.9 per cent in 2018 over 2017.

Links to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/housing/hdb-resale-prices-rise-04-in-q4-but-unchanged-for-2019>
<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/prices-of-hdb-resale-flats-sold-in-q4-2019-rise-04>

Ultra-luxury River Valley condo opens for previews

Previews start for the ultra-luxury Avenir condominium in the prime River Valley area at 6pm 3 Jan 2020.

The freehold complex will have 376 units across two 36-storey towers, with two levels of basement parking, a 50m lap pool, a hydrotherapy pool and a bicycle park, among other facilities.

Apartment sizes range from around 527 sq ft for a one-bedroom flat to 2,411 sq ft for a four-bedroom unit.

Early-bird prices start at \$2,930 per sq ft for one-to three-bedroom apartments and \$3,030 per sq ft for four-bedders.

It is scheduled to obtain its Temporary Occupation Permit on Aug 1, 2025, said Hong Leong Holdings, which is developing the site in conjunction with GuocoLand and Hong Realty (Private).

Link to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/property/ultra-luxury-river-valley-condo-opens-for-previews>

Look Ahead 2020: Property — Few policy changes ahead but Sers, co-living to offer excitement

Analysts told TODAY that they expect 2020 to be a “quiet year” with few to no policy changes, especially with a General Election around the corner — it has to be called by April 2021.

But even as it may be quiet on the policy front, the property market will continue to be a source of much excitement this year, analysts said.

Since 2012, there has been one Selective En bloc Redevelopment Scheme (Sers) announcement every two years, which means analysts are anticipating another this year.

This time round, analysts speculate that homeowners in the older parts of Holland Village or Queenstown might be told that their flats will undergo Sers. Affected homeowners get the opportunity to move to a new home with a fresh 99-year lease and are given a package comprising compensation and rehousing benefits.

Holland Village is a strong contender as it was earmarked under the URA’s 2014 master plan to serve as a “signature community node for formal and informal events”, and was again featured in the 2019 draft master plan as a “familiar place” to rejuvenate, analysts noted.

Mr Lee Sze Teck, the head of research at Huttons Asia, pointed out that there are some empty plots of land nearby at Ghim Moh, which could be used as sites for new homes for the displaced households.

Queenstown is also a strong contender for Sers, analysts said, as HDB’s tender document for a traffic impact assessment there in October revealed that the agency is considering building about 7,000 new flats in the area. The new flats could be launched as early as 2021 or 2022 if plans go through, according to the tender documents.

However, analysts are doubtful there will be any major changes to the way Sers exercises are conducted while the Government is still working out the details of Vers, which will only take effect in about 20 years as that’s when the first HDB flats reach 70 years old.

Said Mr Lee: “If they reduce the benefits for Sers, does it mean that Vers benefactors can expect to benefit less when their turn comes?”, adding that this is an “awkward” issue. So it is unlikely that the Government will make any changes to Sers until Vers is ironed out, he said.

Link to the story:

<https://www.todayonline.com/singapore/look-ahead-2020-property-few-policy-changes-ahead-sers-co-living-offer-excitement>

HDB releases EC sites in Sengkang, Tampines

The Housing and Development Board (HDB) on Monday released two executive condominium (EC) sites, one along Fernvale Lane in Sengkang and the other on Tampines Street 62.

Both 99-year leasehold land parcels can yield up to a total of 1,100 residential units, HDB said.

The Fernvale site was launched for sale by public tender, under the confirmed list of the H2 2019 government land sales (GLS) programme.

It spans 17,130 sq m in land area, with a permissible gross floor area (GFA) of up to 47,964 sq m and a maximum building height of 56 metres above mean sea level. Its estimated number of units is 480.

Analysts expect the top bid to be between \$500 and \$570 psf ppr. The Sengkang tender closes at noon on March 3, 2020. The tender closing will be batched with those of two other residential sites at Canberra Drive which URA launched in November.

Meanwhile, the Tampines land parcel was released for application under the reserve list of the H2 2019 GLS programme. The Tampines Street 62 site takes up 23,799 sq m in land area, with a maximum GFA of 59,498 sq m and a maximum building height of 63-64 metres above mean sea level. The estimated number of units is 595. Analysts do not expect it to be triggered.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/hdb-releases-ec-sites-in-sengkang-tampines>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/housing/hdb-launches-two-ec-sites-in-sengkang-tampines>

Commercial

CBD Grade A office rentals likely to be flat this year

Property consultants are generally expecting Grade A office rentals in the Central Business District (CBD) to be flattish this year, after this segment posted slower growth in 2019 than in 2018.

Industry observers note that office demand for the past couple of years has been driven primarily by flexible workspace (co-working facilities and serviced office) operators, and technology companies.

For this year, however, they are less bullish about demand from flexible-space operators, given that they have already built up significant inventories on the island over the past few years, and the sector could be heading for a period of consolidation.

Based on the Urban Redevelopment Authority's data, the island-wide net office demand, measured by the change in occupied space, in the first nine months of 2019 amounted to about 1.34 million sq ft. The figure for the whole of 2018 was 1.85 million sq ft. URA's island-wide office vacancy eased to 10.6 per cent at end-Q3 2019 from 12.1 per cent at end-2018 and the recent high of 13.3 per cent at end-Q3 2017.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/cbd-grade-a-office-rentals-likely-to-be-flat-this-year>

Commercial en bloc in focus as cooling moves crimp home deals

Following the cooling measures in 2018, commercial collective sales surpassed residential en bloc sales by value this year, a trend which is expected to continue into 2020.

Five sites totalling some S\$461 million were sold, of which only one is a wholly residential site - apartment block Sophia View which sold for S\$9.28 million in June. A row of apartments and shophouses along Phoenix Road was scooped up for S\$42.6 million in July by a subsidiary of Qingjian Realty (South Pacific) Group.

The remaining three sites were Min Yuan Apartments - which is being developed into a hotel by Fragrance Group - as well as two commercial sites.

Meanwhile, investments in the hotel sector have also risen year-to-date amid buoyant visitor arrivals and a tightening supply pipeline.

One expert pointed out that despite the higher proportion of commercial collective sale sites sold, this is by no means an indication of the rise of commercial collective sales. Overall, we have not seen much success in commercial collective sales either, with the main activity being in shophouses and office/mixed use building transactions.

Going into 2020, analysts expect that the residential collective sales segment will remain somewhat muted as developers remain cautious.

While more commercial, or non-residential sites, could be launched for tender in 2020, the first step to a potentially successful sale would be to convince developers that what collective sales owners are asking for is "economically viable."

Other factors that might come into play include whether the site has broader development options, or whether it is limited to its existing use, pointed out Lee Sze Teck, director (research) at Huttons Asia.

Another factor might be the plans that the government has for the area.

"For example, if the government does not allow topping up of lease for commercial buildings, it becomes one of the deciding factor for developers looking for strata sales," Huttons' Mr Lee added.

"Besides developers, end-users may be looking to buy a commercial building and develop it into their flagship building."

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/commercial-en-bloc-in-focus-as-cooling-moves-crimp-home-deals>

ARA buys Robinson Centre via private real estate fund

ARA Asset Management has purchased Robinson Centre for an undisclosed sum via one of its private real estate funds, the real estate asset manager revealed in a press release.

Robinson Centre has a net lettable area of about 132,300 sq ft, and sits on a site with about 76 years left on its leasehold tenure.

The company plans to embark on asset enhancement initiatives, which may include refurbishment and upgrading of the existing building façade and interiors.

It may also reposition the property through active leasing, given its short weighted average lease expiry (WALE) of 1.5 years.

Robinson Centre is ARA's 12th asset acquisition this year, via its real estate investment trusts (Reits) and private real estate funds. Others include 51 Bras Basah Road in Singapore, Seoul Square in Korea and 21 Harris Street in Australia.

Excluding Robinson Centre, ARA's portfolio in Singapore exceeded S\$12 billion as at end-September.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/ara-buys-robinson-centre-via-private-real-estate-fund>

Despite WeWork's woes, co-working is here to stay

The dramatic collapse of WeWork may have raised questions about the sustainability of co-working operators, but many analysts believe the business is here to stay.

They cite demand from not just entrepreneurs and start-ups, but also multinational corporations. Singapore has the second-highest number of co-working centres in Asia behind Tokyo, with flexible workspace tripling to 3.7 million sq ft of net lettable area from 1.2 million sq ft in 2015.

But that is still a fraction of the total office inventory here, which comes to 87 million sq ft.

Despite WeWork's woes, industry experts believe co-working will continue to expand, given the still low penetration rate in Singapore. They see growth in this sector as a sign of resilience amid economic uncertainty and headcount predictability.

Link to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/despite-weworks-woes-co-working-is-here-to-stay>

Retail

Average traffic at Funan 70% higher after redevelopment: CapitaLand

Six months after reopening its doors following a major renovation, the Funan mall marked its official opening with a ceremony graced by Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat.

After the ceremony that was witnessed by about 200 guests including tenants and partners, Mr Heng went on a guided tour of the mall's retail, office and co-living components.

He was shown some of the smart technologies in use such as facial profiling smart directories, shopper traffic video analytics and mobile room keys.

In a news release, CapitaLand said Funan's retail and office occupancy levels are currently "close to full".

The mall houses more than 200 brands, of which over 30 per cent are new-to-market brands, concepts or flagship stores. Six in 10 are homegrown brands.

CapitaLand added that Funan's average monthly shopper traffic is more than 70 per cent higher than before its S\$560 million redevelopment. The mall closed in the middle of 2016.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/companies-markets/average-traffic-at-funan-70-higher-after-redevelopment-capitaland>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/buy-now-collect-later-its-possible-with-funans-robotic-arm>

Government

PM Lee: Singapore must stay open, connected

Singapore must resist anti-globalisation sentiments, and instead stay open and connected to the world, said Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in his New Year Message on Tuesday, as he promised support for various groups in the upcoming Budget 2020.

In contrast to societies elsewhere that "are under stress", with their citizens worried about basic needs and angry about inequality, Singapore is making steady progress, he said, citing improvements in education, housing, healthcare, and transport.

"In the upcoming Budget, we will support businesses to raise their productivity and build new capabilities. We will help workers, especially mid-career PMETs (professionals, managers, engineers, and technicians), to retrain, acquire new skills, find new jobs and stay employable."

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/pm-lee-singapore-must-stay-open-connected-0>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/spore-must-stay-open-to-world-learn-from-history-pm-lee>

DPM Heng to deliver 2020 Budget Statement on Feb 18

Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat will deliver Singapore's 2020 Budget Statement in Parliament on Feb 18, the Ministry of Finance (MOF) said in a statement.

There will be live television and radio coverage of the Budget Statement.

Currently, the public can provide views and suggestions to the ministry through means such as Reach's Budget 2020 microsite and its social media channels. The feedback exercise will conclude on Jan 10.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/dpm-heng-to-deliver-2020-budget-statement-on-feb-18>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/dpm-heng-to-deliver-budget-speech-on-feb-18>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/politics/govt-tackling-slowdown-even-as-it-builds-for-future-heng>

Two oldest MRT lines get S\$2.5b upgrade

A multi-year programme to renew the North-South, East-West MRT lines - Singapore's oldest and most heavily used - will cost more than S\$2.5 billion.

This involves replacing the power supply system, track circuits and first-generation trains. The first phase replaced the rail sleepers, third rail and signalling system of the two lines, which opened more than 30 years ago in 1987.

The renewal programme first began in 2013 and is expected to be completed by 2024.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/two-oldest-mrt-lines-get-s25b-upgrade>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/transport/renewing-oldest-mrt-lines-to-cost-over-25b-khaw>

MOM to update Fair Consideration Framework: minister

The government rules that ensure employers do not discriminate against Singaporean workers by hiring foreigners will be updated this year.

Minister for Manpower Josephine Teo announced plans to update the Fair Consideration Framework in a Facebook post.

More information on the review will be disclosed in two weeks, a Ministry of Manpower (MOM) spokesman told The Straits Times.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/mom-to-update-fair-consideration-framework-minister>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/update-to-rules-that-deter-discrimination-against-sporeans-in-hiring-practices>

Election Budget = goodies galore? Don't hold your breath

With Singapore's next General Election expected just round the corner, Budget 2020 has been widely tagged as an "Election Budget".

Technically, the government has up to April 2021 to call for a GE, but all indications point to it being held next year after the Budget.

Traditionally, election budgets are generous affairs. And the government's accumulated surpluses in the last three financial years provide the means for it to roll out a generous budget.

But analysts are divided on what exactly generosity constitutes, and whether this still comes in the form of cash handouts.

Last month, the Ministry of Finance said - in a response to the Estimates Committee's fourth report presented to Parliament - that special transfers are "not mechanically determined" by budget surpluses. Rather, they are based on the government's long-term plans, the needs of the economy and society as well as the government's fiscal position.

As 2019 comes to an end, the general mood among economists, politicians and market watchers has turned more hopeful than at the start of the year, even though the official full-year growth forecast lingers between 0.5 and 1 per cent.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/election-budget-goodies-galore-dont-hold-your-breath>

Upgraded Singapore-NZ trade agreement enters into force on Jan 1

The upgraded Agreement between New Zealand and Singapore on a Closer Economic Partnership (ANZSCEP) has been ratified by the two nations and will enter into force on Jan 1, 2020.

The upgraded pact adds e-commerce and regulatory cooperation chapters to the ANZSCEP that came into effect on Jan 1, 2001, the Ministry for Trade and Industry said on Monday.

The agreement addresses modern trade issues and improves trade rules and provisions that are in line with newer free trade agreements (FTAs) to which Singapore and New Zealand are parties to.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/upgraded-singapore-nz-trade-agreement-enters-into-force-on-jan-1>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/economy/nz-spore-ratify-upgraded-economic-agreement>

Three themes to drive masterplan for Somerset Belt

A finalised masterplan for transforming Somerset into a youth-oriented area will be revealed in the next three months, The Straits Times has learnt.

The masterplan will be guided by three key themes - "urban culture", "adaptable architecture" and "future ready" - distilled from ideas from thousands of young people, said a spokesman for the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth in response to ST queries.

Feedback on the themes from youth - defined by the Government as those aged 15 to 35 - was also gathered through roadshows and an online poll held over the past two months, and will be considered in refining the Somerset Belt masterplan, the spokesman added.

The Somerset Belt refers to the area surrounding Somerset MRT station, from *Scape and Cathay Cineleisure Orchard to the junction of Somerset and Killiney roads. It also includes The Red Box, TripleOne Somerset and Somerset Skate Park.

Link to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/three-themes-to-drive-masterplan-for-somerset-belt>

Economy

Brighter picture for 2020 after muted growth last year

Singapore's economic growth was muted last year, with modest expansion recorded in the fourth quarter, but the growth picture looks to be brighter this year.

The manufacturing sector is likely to see slow recovery in the year ahead, and the service sector is likely to be a stable pillar of growth for Singapore, said economists.

The economy grew 0.7 per cent last year, the slowest in a decade and down from 2018's 3.1 per cent, according to flash estimates released by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI).

Economists are more optimistic for this year, and MTI has forecast 0.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent growth.

Links to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/economy/brighter-picture-for-2020-after-muted-growth-last-year>

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/decade-low-growth-in-2019-clouds-2020-forecasts-for-singapore-gdp>

Asian boom drives Singapore R&D in consumer goods

Slammed by a slump in global electronics, the manufacturing sector has spent the year in the red - but the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) segment continues to show promise.

Yet, with food and beverage (F&B) and tobacco just 5.4 per cent of Singapore's weighted factory output, it is industry research and development (R&D), not FMCG output, that could drive crucial economic contributions.

With Singapore's combined F&B and tobacco industry in the black in the first nine months of the year, the Ministry for Trade and Industry noted in mid-2019 that F&B manufacturing is "expected to continue to do well given firm demand conditions".

General manufacturing's share of business expenditure on R&D grew to S\$136.9 million in 2017, up from S\$41.6 million in 2002, government figures showed. The bulk of that spending hailed from the F&B and tobacco industry, as well as the "other manufacturing" segment, which includes items such as jewellery, sports equipment, toys, and even umbrellas.

Given resilient consumer demand within the region, FMCG multinationals are making Singapore a home base for manufacturing, research, or both.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/consumer/asian-boom-drives-singapore-rd-in-consumer-goods>

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/government-economy/production-lines-mark-the-new-frontier-for-singapore-innovation>

Shophouse

8M Real Estate paying S\$70.4m in latest shophouse purchase

A slew of commercial property deals have been sealed recently, including four adjoining conservation shophouses along South Bridge Road and another three along Tanjong Pagar Road bought for a total of S\$70.35 million by 8M Real Estate.

In the Kampong Glam Historic District, 38 Sultan Gate is being sold for S\$35.5 million by an entity linked to Tan Koo Chuan, the founder of Yi Kai Development; the buyer is a Singapore-incorporated company that is fully owned by Huang Zhichao, a citizen of Cyprus.

In the industrial property segment, Luxasia Group has entered a deal to sell its namesake building at 12 Tai Seng Street for S\$66.42 million.

In the Chinatown Historic District, 8M Real Estate is purchasing 265, 267, 269 and 271 South Bridge Road for S\$54 million from Eu Realty (Singapore), a subsidiary of Eu Yan Sang International.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/8m-real-estate-paying-s704m-in-latest-shophouse-purchase>

Hospitality

Super view from new Supertree observatory

A new observation deck at Gardens by the Bay that gives unobstructed views of the Marina Bay area opened to the public.

The 50m-high observatory at the top of the tallest of the 18 Supertrees has two storeys - a lower air-conditioned deck and an upper open-air circular rooftop. Visitors ascend to the observatory via a lift within the Supertree's trunk.

The lower deck has an indoor area with full-height glass windows, an outdoor walkway and a cafe. Four video panels highlighting the effects of climate change are alongside the windows.

The observatory opens from 9am to 9pm, with the last entry at 8.30pm.

Visiting the observatory costs between \$5 and \$14. Ticket prices depend on whether visitors are Singapore residents, and also vary with age and whether they have a Gardens by the Bay membership.

Link to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/super-view-from-new-supertree-observatory>

Musical, circus among countdown festivities at Marina Bay

A musical from Japan involving fireworks and 500 drones will make its debut on New Year's Eve at The Float @ Marina Bay, a 90-minute-long show that will also include unicyclists and ballet dancers.

The Star Island Singapore Countdown Edition fireworks musical is one of many performances at the 15th edition of Singapore's biggest countdown event - the Marina Bay Singapore Countdown 2020.

Doors to the musical will open at 5pm, and the event will also feature a family-friendly entertainment zone and a food village. Tickets to enter the musical area are priced from \$88.

Another highlight is a circus performance presented by Uncle Ringo. The Great Circus of Europe treats the audience to jaw-dropping circus acts and stunts. Entrance is priced from \$70 to \$150, with the first show starting at 4pm at Bayfront Event Space.

Those not keen to watch the circus can indulge in carnival games and rides, and check out 50 food and retail stores at the Escapade Festival Village, which is located in the same area. Admission is free.

Over at The Lawn @ Marina Bay, an array of activities, such as bouncy castles, arts and crafts booths, roving performances and magic shows, will be available tomorrow to the public from 5pm.

Link to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/get-set-for-countdown-festivities-at-marina-bay>

Changi Airport on track for record passenger numbers in 2019

Global economic headwinds and geopolitical tensions have hit the aviation industry worldwide, but Changi Airport has held its own, with strong demand for regional flights boosting overall passenger traffic.

This is despite political issues in Hong Kong and challenges in the Indian market which saw the collapse of a major carrier, Jet Airways.

Between January and November last year, Changi handled 61.9 million passengers, with more than four in 10 coming from South-east Asian countries.

The final annual tally for last year is not in yet, but based on its performance in the first 11 months of the year, Changi Airport is well on its way to busting 2018's record traffic of 65.6 million passengers.

With Singapore's aviation sector accounting for about 6 per cent of the Republic's gross domestic product and supporting more than 160,000 jobs, it is important for the air hub to continue to grow.

Link to the story:

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/transport/changi-on-track-for-record-passenger-numbers-in-2019>

Industrial

Singapore industrial land supply cut again for first half of 2020

The government has once again trimmed industrial land supply for the first half of 2020 under its Industrial Government Land Sales (IGLS) programme.

Industrial land supply fell to 7.11 ha in total site area. The number of sites in the confirmed and reserve lists were also reduced.

In the latest launch, the three confirmed list sites are zoned "B2" for heavier industrial use with a tenure of 20 years. They are located at Jalan Papan in Jurong, Tampines North Drive 3 and Gambas Avenue/Sembawang Avenue.

The Tampines site was previously in the confirmed list for the first half of 2019. Its previous tender closed in April with one bid submitted, which was not accepted as it was below the reserve price. The five reserve list sites are also zoned "B2". The Kaki Bukit Road 5 plot has a tenure of 30 years and was previously in the reserve list for the second half of 2019. The other four sites each have a tenure of 20 years. They are at Tuas South Link 3, 160 Gul Circle, Gul Avenue and Jalan Papan. The Jalan Papan site was previously in the confirmed list for H1 2019.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/singapore-industrial-land-supply-cut-again-for-first-half-of-2020>

<https://www.straitstimes.com/business/economy/singapores-industrial-land-supply-reduced-again-for-first-half-of-2020-0>

JTC launches 2 sites - at Jalan Papan, Tuas Avenue 6 - for tender

JTC has launched two sites - at Jalan Papan and Tuas Avenue 6 - for tender under the second half of the 2019 industrial government land sales (IGLS) programme.

Both sites have a 20-year tenure, and a gross plot ratio of 1.4. They are also zoned "B2" for heavier industrial use.

The site at Jalan Papan (Plot 6), which has an area of 0.66 hectares, is the last of four confirmed list sites under the second half of the 2019 IGLS programme. The tender for this site will close at 11am on Feb 25, 2020.

Separately, the tender for the site at Tuas Avenue 6 will close at 11am on Feb 11, 2020. The site, which occupies an area of 0.55 hectares, was made available for application through the reserve list system under the second half of the 2019 IGLS programme.

JTC said it has received an application for the Tuas site to be put up for public tender, with a minimum committed bid price of S\$2.55 million. The identity of the applicant was not disclosed.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/jtc-launches-2-sites-at-jalan-papan-tuas-avenue-6-for-tender-0>

Overseas

Germany's property prices jump amid low interest rate

German property prices jumped in the third quarter as record-low borrowing costs and housing shortages continued to push up demand for apartments in urban areas.

Prices for owner-occupied dwellings in Germany's seven largest metropolises rose by 9 per cent year-on-year from July till September, the Federal Statistics Office said.

Among the factors pushing up residential property prices are the European Central Bank's ultra-low interest rates, capacity constraints and bottlenecks in the construction sector as well as an influx of people to cities, a spokesman for the Federal Statistics Office said.

Links to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/germanys-property-prices-jump-amid-low-interest-rate>

Hong Kong home prices snap 5-month decline in Nov

Hong Kong private home prices rose 1.8 per cent in November, gaining for the first time since May, supported by a jump in small flat transactions after the government relaxed mortgage rules.

The rise compares to October's revised 1 per cent drop in one of the world's least affordable property markets that has been hit by sometimes violent anti-government protests since June.

Small-sized flats of up to 69.9 sq m led the gains last month, up 1.9 per cent, government data showed on Tuesday. A flat of 60 sq m on Hong Kong Island cost an average HK\$10.85 million (\$1.9 million), according to the data.

Market observers are generally conservative about property prices into 2020.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/hong-kong-home-prices-snap-5-month-decline-in-nov>

Australian home prices end year with strongest quarter gains since 2009

Australian home prices ended 2019 with the biggest quarterly rise in a decade, a remarkable return to boom from bust that promises to support consumer wealth and, perhaps, spending.

Data from property consultant CoreLogic showed that home prices across the nation rose 1.1 per cent in December, from November when they climbed 1.7 per cent.

That brought the gains for the three months to December to 4 per cent, the steepest rise since late 2009 and a world away from the punishing declines seen earlier in the year.

The resurgence was again led by the major cities with values in Sydney up by 1.7 per cent in December and 6.2 per cent for the quarter. Melbourne likewise boasted gains of 1.4 per cent and 6.1 per cent respectively.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/australian-home-prices-end-year-with-strongest-quarter-gains-since-2009>

US home prices rise most in 5 months as markets pick up

Home prices in 20 US cities rose at the fastest pace in five months in October, posting a third straight acceleration as real estate markets showed fresh strength at the start of the fourth quarter. The S&P CoreLogic Case-Shiller index of property values advanced 2.2 per cent from October 2018, according to data released that exceeded estimates in a Bloomberg survey of economists. Prices rose 0.4 per cent from a month earlier on a seasonally adjusted basis, also topping projections.

Lower mortgage rates and a robust labour market have helped consumers remain upbeat, luring potential home buyers and helping to lift prices. Phoenix, Tampa and Charlotte led gains, according to the S&P CoreLogic report.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/us-home-prices-rise-most-in-5-months-as-markets-pick-up>

US pending home sales climb for third time in four months

Contract signings to purchase previously owned US homes increased in November for the third time in four months, consistent with steady progress in the residential real estate market.

An index of pending home sales climbed 1.2 per cent from the previous month, missing the median forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists, data from the National Association of Realtors (NAR) showed.

Underscoring the market's turnaround from last year's weakness, contract signings jumped 5.6 per cent from November 2018 on an unadjusted basis.

The gain in signings shows the housing market remains supported by low borrowing costs, improving income growth and steady job creation.

Link to the story:

<https://www.businesstimes.com.sg/real-estate/us-pending-home-sales-climb-for-third-time-in-four-months>

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