

'Green building' trend in Asean

MORE OFFICE AND RESIDENTIAL PROJECTS ARE APPLYING FOR LEED CERTIFICATION

SOMLUCK SRIMALEE
THE NATION
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

"GREEN BUILDING" is the trend among residential and commercial property development in Asean, according to experts.

"When we decided to build our first head-office building, Pearl Bangkok, in Soi Ari two years ago, we designed the project under green concepts by applying to be [recognised for] an energy-saving-building concept with a Leadership in Energy and Environment Design or LEED certificate," Pruksa Real Estate co-chief executive officer Thongma Vjithphongpun said in an interview with *The Nation*.

Meanwhile, Sansiri's latest luxury condominium, 98 Wireless, is the first condo project in Thailand to apply for a Silver LEED certificate. Sansiri president Srettha Thavisin said the project was designed to comply with global energy-saving standards.

Currently, Thailand has 42 LEED-certified projects. They include the SCG 100th Year Building, Park Venture Ecoplex, Sathorn Square, HSBC Green Library, and KBank Training Centre.

The green architecture concept includes energy saving, water saving, low waste in the construction process along with a system to manage waste in the building after the project is complete, and low pollution.

Meanwhile, other Asean countries are also concerned about the environment and designing their buildings under the green concept.

Viet Nam News reported that Do

Duc Duy, Vietnam's deputy minister of construction, said developers of low- and middle-income housing projects should pay attention to green designs, intelligent technologies and energy saving solutions.

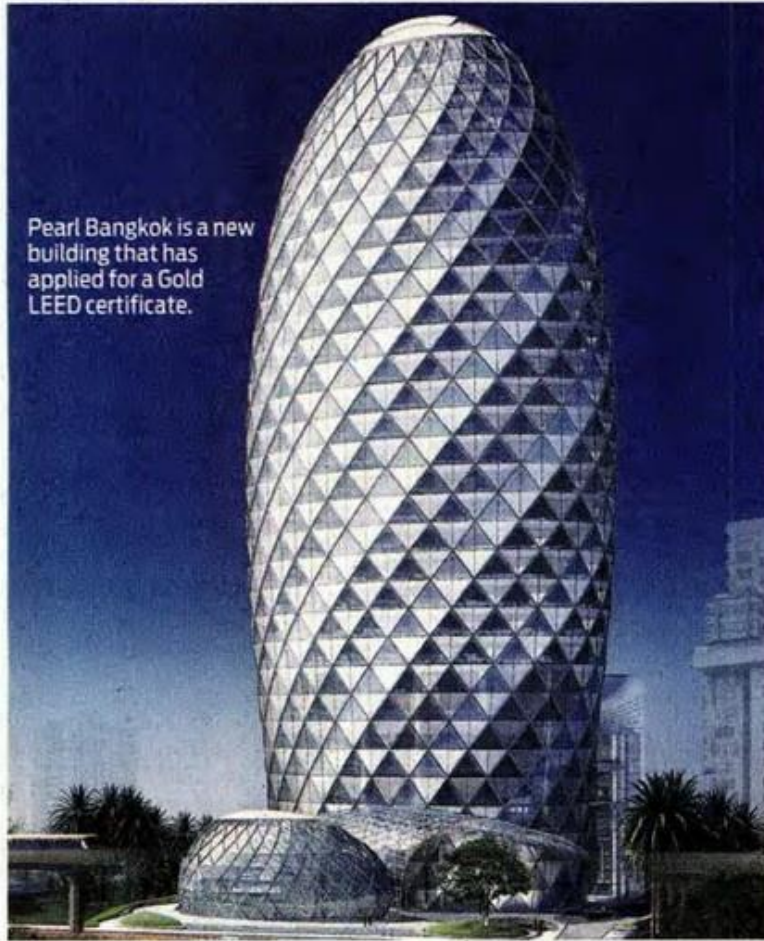
"Vietnam's housing policies are under pressure from an increasing population, especially in urban areas. It is forecast that the urban population could reach 46 million by 2020, accounting for 45 per cent of the country's total number," he said.

He told a conference on green construction for low- and middle-income housing held in Hanoi last month that demand for new housing in that segment could go up to 5.1 million apartments in 10 years.

This is the reason that green construction will contribute to sustainable development and environment protection. This has also been the ministry's development trend for the segment in Vietnam, he added.

Vu Thi Kim Thoa, senior adviser of the Vietnam Clean Energy Programme funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), said green construction could reduce energy by half as compared with older designs without increasing costs. In addition, it could reduce operational costs, which often account for more than 80 per cent of investment spending. "This could help increase the asset value, [result in] quicker returns on capital, and attract home buyers," Thoa said.

Meanwhile, *The Straits Times* reported that in Singapore, the Building and Construction Authority (BCA) said green buildings presented a huge opportunity for tackling climate change, espe-



Pearl Bangkok is a new building that has applied for a Gold LEED certificate.

cially by improving energy efficiency in design and reducing energy consumption once operating.

The United Nations Environment Programme says current technology can cut energy consumption in buildings by up to 80 per cent.

Research and development may reduce this further, and the BCA has a suite of initiatives to promote R&D, including the BCA SkyLab, a rotatable laboratory for testing and developing energy-efficient technology.

Experts such as Dr Herbert Dreiseitl, director of the Germany-based Liveable Cities Lab, have also suggested that to protect Singapore against the effects of climate change – such as heavier rain and prolonged dry spells – more green features can be incorporated in buildings from an earlier stage of the design process.

As of January, almost 2,600 buildings in Singapore and more than 76 million square metres of gross floor area had been certified green by the BCA. This is more than

30 per cent of the republic's total gross floor area. The government's goal is to green at least 80 per cent of total gross floor area of buildings in the city-state by 2030.

The BCA believes Singapore is on track to achieving this through initiatives such as cash incentives to get building owners that retrofit their premises to make them more energy-efficient.

The Jakarta Post also reported early this month that the Indonesian capital would see more green buildings.

I Putu Ngurah Indiana, head of the Jakarta Building Supervision and Regulation Agency, said recently that the environmentally friendly code, which is basically a 2012 gubernatorial regulation on green buildings, would be incorporated in the building-permit application process and would be mandatory for office buildings, shopping malls and apartments with more than 50,000sqm in total area.

The regulation will also be applied to hotels and health facilities that are bigger than 20,000sqm and educational facilities that are bigger than 10,000sqm.

"Commercial buildings of certain sizes will have to comply with the criteria stipulated in the regulation," he said in a discussion jointly organised by the International Financial Corporation (IFC), the World Bank's commercial financing arm, and the Jakarta city administration.

He said the regulation also stipulated energy- and water-efficiency requirements for buildings to reduce emissions and waste, which would help reduce climate-change impacts. Farida Lasida Adji, IFC programme coordinator on investment-climate advice, said the corporation was eyeing opportunities to help developers with green building projects.