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AP Land, HELP form education JV in China

The 250 million yuan education centre in Changshu will start operations by October

Max Koh

KUALA LUMPUR: Property player Asia Pacific Land Bhd (AP Land), and one of the country's top education groups, HELP International Corp Bhd, have joined forces to set up a 250 million yuan (RM119.6 million) educational facility in Changshu, China on a 50:50 joint-venture basis.

As a start, AP Land will provide some 20,000 sq feet of land and commercial properties in Changshu as consideration to build a campus providing vocational training for the automotive industry, and other courses. On its part, HELP would provide the resources and its know-how in the joint venture, said the education group's president Datuk Dr Paul Chan.

"We feel that with our strong presence locally and abroad in education, teaming up with AP Land with its infrastructure and network in Asia and Australia would drive the growth of both companies," Chan said in media briefing yesterday.

AP Land joint managing director Low Gee Teong added that the proposed education centre is strategically located in the vicinity of an upcoming automotive research facility and other related plants.

"The location is strategic as Toyota's research and development facility located nearby is set to come into

operation by year-end. Nearby, there is also China's custom and quarantine department and plants owned by multi-national companies already in operations," said Low.

He said that the development of the education centre is expected to be completed by August and would commence operations by October. An enrolment of 500 for its pioneer batch is expected with future intakes likely to be stronger.

"There are two million people residing in Changshu alone and the city is strategically located between Shanghai and Suzhou. Changshu is also classified as a second-tier city

by the Chinese government which would see fast growth," Low said.

The proposed education centre is part of AP Land's 1.68 billion yuan Platinum Galaxy Boulevard development in Changshu City. The college is part of the first phase of development.

The joint venture would also oversee operations of AP Land's Victoria International College in Kuala Lumpur and Bandar Tasik Puteri Rawang, Selangor.

AP Land acquired Victoria International College, which offers courses ranging from hotel management to accounting, in 2008.

Apart from these two projects, other forays the two companies are mulling include a joint venture in setting up and managing retirement homes in Bandar Tasik Puteri in Rawang and development of a two million square feet campus, offering courses in health sciences, recreational sports management, added Low.