

Gamuda eyes Mideast

It's upbeat on more overseas projects

Star S/O.

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GAMUDA Bhd is actively sourcing for more projects in the Middle East now that it has invested over RM500mil in new plants and machinery in the region over the past two years.

Managing director Datuk Lin Yun Ling told *StarBiz* that the group was in a "very strong position" to bid for new projects not only in the Middle East but also worldwide.

The estimated value of Gamuda's ongoing bids in the Middle East is around RM3bil to RM4bil, he said.

"There is a shortage of construction plants in China, India, Eastern Europe and the Middle East. We have timed our new projects with our existing plants' needs so that they can be freed to take on more projects," he said.

The construction group currently has some RM5bill worth of overseas projects with almost all of them in the Middle East.

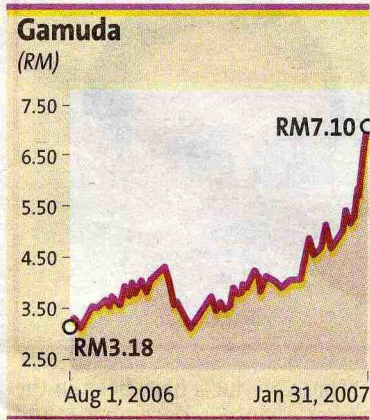
They include three huge projects: the RM2.5bil New Doha International Airport (to be completed end of this year) and RM800mil Dukhan Highway projects in Qatar (completing third quarter of 2007) and the RM640mil Sitra Causeway Bridge project in Bahrain.

The first two were awarded in July 2005 while the Sitra project, secured last August has boosted order book and strengthened Gamuda's good reputation in the Gulf States market for heavy civil engineering works.

Lin said overseas orders should pick up and "should be better than

»Group is in a strong position to bid for new projects«

LIN YUN LING



last year."

Meanwhile, he said the Mass Rapid Transit project in Kaohsiung in Taiwan was nearing completion. The RM800 mil project involves the construction of an underground railway and two underground stations that had been handed over in stages.

On the home front, Lin is proud of the RM1.9bil Stormwater Management and Road Tunnel (SMART) project that took four years to build and is scheduled for completion in June. However, rising

costs of construction materials have eaten into the profit margin.

He described the SMART project as the "most challenging" as there were lots of risks involved.

"It's very tough. We have to be very careful to ensure that the tunnelling work will not affect other high-rise buildings. The limestone foundation is also very unpredictable. It rained very heavily last year and we have to act fast to plug any leaks."

On property development, Lin said the 1,200-acre Horizon Hills in Bandar Nusajaya, Johor and the 366-acre Jade Hills in Kajang would be launched in March and September this year respectively.

Horizon Hills with a total sales value of RM2.3bil is a joint-venture project with UEM Land. Work on the clubhouse and signature Ross Watson designed golf course has started.

It is targeted at Malaysians working in Singapore but who prefer to stay in Johor. "This project is very near to the Second Crossing. There are also many people from Johor who will be working in the two casinos in Singapore," he added.

The group is also eyeing two mixed developments in Vietnam where it planned to enter into joint ventures with some local parties. One of them as reported recently is the Yenso Park in Hanoi. It is an 800-acre integrated commercial development valued at US\$1bil and would comprise of a convention centre, office towers, international five-star hotels and luxury properties.



Datuk Lin Yun Ling