

Domestic interest in Malaysian property picking up: Analysts

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DOMESTIC interest in Malaysian property is now higher compared to that from overseas in contrast to a year ago, an analysis by thinkproperty.my showed.

The property website had analysed its visitor traffic data over the last three months and compared it with the status last year. The data is pertinent because in 2008, 82.7 per cent of visitors were from Malaysia, while in 2009, that proportion rose to 85.2 per cent.

Over 80 per cent of the visitors were interested in buying or renting property in Malaysia, Thinkproperty.my said in a statement.

While there was increased interest from Malaysian property buyers, it was less among those from countries such as Singapore, the UK, India, Australia, Japan, the United Arab Emirates and Pakistan, it said.

Asim Qureshi, the chief executive officer of Think Media Sdn Bhd, the company that owns thinkproperty.my, commented that the data provided mixed signals. "On one hand, it indicates the confidence of Malaysians in investing in property has increased in contrast to those from overseas. "This is to be expected because Malaysia's property market has been stable. The Malaysian experience of seeing property as an investment has also been more positive compared to those of most other countries," he added. "However, the negative is that we are not seeing as many foreigners interested in Malaysian property," he said. According to Qureshi, Malaysia is doing a good job of getting the Malaysian story across overseas in marketing itself as the gateway to Asia because of the lack of a property gains tax, liberal ownership rules as well as a strong banking sector.

"These are all strong pull factors for the country. "However, the weak global economy must be the prime culprit for the lower level of foreign interest this year. There is not much Malaysia can do about it, except wait," he said.

On a positive note, he said there was some increased interest from China, Vietnam and Thailand, though Hong Kong's level was unchanged. "In my view, this should be a hint for both the government which is trying to promote Malaysia's real estate abroad as well as developers trying to do the same. "The focus should increasingly be Asia. Asia is leading the world out of recession. Asian investors will likely play an increasingly important role in Malaysia's property market in future," he said.

Eddie Chen, the head of Marketing of Think Media Sdn Bhd, pointed out that Thinkproperty.my's absolute visitor figures have risen by 409 per cent from this time last year. "This is the result of a shift from people searching for property in traditional classifieds to searching online. "The shift has been dramatic and in my view, it's merely the tip of the iceberg. We are conservatively expecting traffic to increase at least a further 300 per cent between now and 2010." - Bernama

