

LIFE&TIMES **GREEN**

# From old structure to green lung

Panasonic Malaysia's Econation Centre is a space to learn about energy and how to use it responsibly, writes **Aneeta Sundararaj**

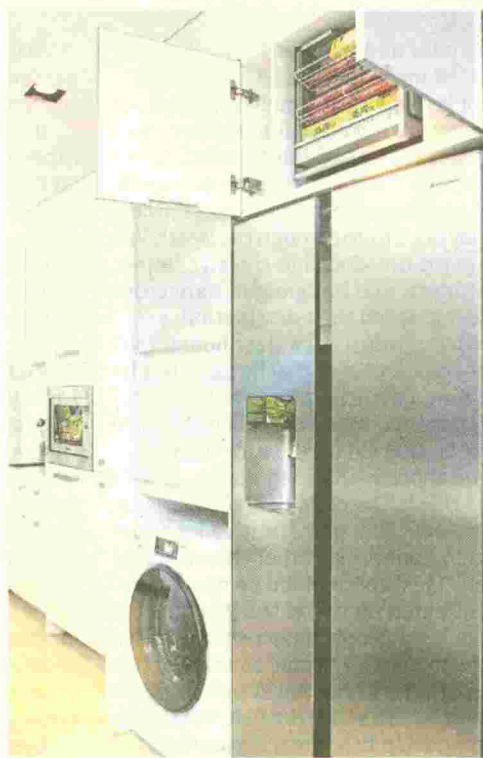
**S**AY you've acquired a plot of land that has a very old structure on it. No doubt, you'll have to re-do everything, from the wiring to the plumbing.

You wonder if it's wiser to start from scratch. Still, the building is structurally sound and you do not have the heart to tear it down just because it's old. Before you begin refurbishing it, though, there's a place where you can go and be inspired to create a structure that has the potential to generate renewable energy.

Panasonic Malaysia recently opened its Econation Center in Petaling Jaya. The aim of this state-of-the-art centre is to show how you can take an old building and transform it to suit the needs of the modern era and still be green.

Panasonic Malaysia managing director Jeff Lee says: "This centre acts as a platform to showcase, conceptually and physically the idea of sustainable living and the latest green technologies."

The motivation to undertake such a project has its roots in the desire of the company's leadership to move the focus of its business to a green platform. The aim was to reduce drastically both the amount of carbon dioxide emissions and operating costs of commercial or res-



Range of **energy-saving** products



A **bold** look

idential structures by saving energy and power consumption through technology and innovation.

The new structure should also go beyond displaying products that have environmentally friendly features and characteristics. It would also educate Malaysians about energy and to use it responsibly. "Panasonic Malaysia believes it is essential to provide customers with relevant advice and innovative yet reliable references," Lee adds. "Our teams are committed to working very closely with our customers."

With the concepts and principles in place, the next step was to find a suitable site to realise this project. Eventually, Panasonic Malaysia chose to invest in a piece of land with an old, approximately 557-square-

metre house on it at one end of Jalan Datuk Abu Bakar in Petaling Jaya. There were no plans to demolish the existing building. Instead, the 40-year-old structure would be "retrofitted" (completely refurbished) to have a bold new look and design of "eco ideas" that interacted with the natural elements such as sunlight, water, air and earth. At the heart of all these was the company's four-pronged approach called Total Energy Solution which consisted of creating, storing, saving and managing energy.

Today, Econation Center uses a solar system and fuel cell technology to create energy. Part of the solar system consists of solar panels designed and placed in such a way as to form an overarching arch that

practically envelops the house. This double roof layer also helps to reduce the heat inside the house.

Remember when you needed to store petrol for the generator in case the electricity supply was interrupted? Well, in Econation Center, Li-ion and EV Storage Batteries are storage cells that utilise Lithium-ion batteries with high capacity to allow energy to be stored, managed and transferred to various electrical items in the house, including an electric-vehicle.

In Econation Centre, you don't need to switch off lights or pull plugs

from their wall sockets to save energy. Instead, Panasonic has a range of energy saving products that reduce power consumption by significant percentage from refrigerators and washing machines to air conditioners and air purifiers. These products are part of the company's reputable EcoNavi line that uses the Inverter technology.

There's no point creating, storing and saving all this energy if you cannot manage it. To imitate what's in Econation Centre, invest in Home Automation & Control Systems, Eco Meters and Smart Energy Gateway Systems. Your habits and patterns will be monitored and controlled to enhance your energy consumption and reduce carbon dioxide.

Econation Centre started out as a building that was not green at all. Panasonic Malaysia then worked

towards making it sustainable, before going one step further — in fact, it has become a Renewable Energy Generative Building. This means that, theoretically, Econation Centre will generate a surplus energy thereby reducing approximately 12 tonnes of carbon dioxide emission a year. This is equivalent to saving 600 trees a year from destruction. "In short REG Building... can act as a conceptual Mechanical Green Lung to the township of Petaling Jaya," says Petaling Jaya major Datuk Mohamad Roslan Saki man.

As a final incentive to consider creating a building that generates renewable energy, Lee adds: "Being green is no longer a choice, but a necessity."

**What:** Panasonic Econation Centre  
**Where:** No. 70, Jalan 16/1 (Datuk Abu Bakar), Petaling Jaya  
**Opening Times:** Monday to Thursday (10am - 5pm), open to members of the trade; Friday and Saturday (10am - 5pm), open to the public  
**Website:** <http://econation.com.my/>