

# StarSpecial

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Penang Industry



The new plant boasts a pleasurable working environment with spacious activity rooms and gym.



Thomaeus (centre) with the Penang directors of SIBS.

## Modular home builder opens new plant

### Swedish firm SIBS' RM170mil second facility to boost production, create jobs in Penang

CONSTRUCTION company Scandinavian Industrialised Building Systems (SIBS) has invested about RM170mil for its new plant at the Penang Science Park in Bukit Minyak.

It will boost the Swedish company's production of its modular construction materials by four times.

The new plant, which opens today, occupies a production area of about 550,000sq ft (46,450 sq m) on a 15-acre site on mainland Penang.

It boasts convenient and pleasurable working environment with features such as activity rooms, entertainment room, spacious office area and a gym to motivate employees to work to the best of their abilities.

SIBS chief executive officer Erik Thomaeus said the new plant, would facilitate the production of more than 5,000 units of apartments annually.

"Our expansion in Malaysia will be divided in phases and eventually will achieve approximately RM500mil of total investment.

"We will also have a total of four production lines, with two installed now and another two in mid-2023.

"With the new plant we are providing wider job opportunities for Malaysians as we are expected to grow as a family of 1,200.

"This new plant will see our Malaysian team of engineers together with Swedish engineers working on the production of a fully developed Malaysian product," he said in an interview on Monday.

The new plant, which took one and a half years to build, will make SIBS one of the largest producers of apartment modules with a yearly production of 2.5 million sq ft of residential area.

The first plant nearby on a 7.5-acre site, produces 1,000 units of apartments annually in Malaysia and exported to Europe.

Established in 2017, SIBS builds homes, also known as prefabricated buildings, in a controlled environment to be assembled in the residential and commercial area.

The SIBS concept consists of a building system for off-site production of steel frame modular family houses for the Swedish market.

It produces 1,200 to 1,600 units of modular components yearly and all of them are exported to



SIBS' second plant opens today at the Penang Science Park in Bukit Minyak.

(Below) The company's paramaterised modularisation housing works in progress in Sweden.

northern Europe.

Thomaeus said the SIBS' Malaysian venture was one of the modern modular construction facilities in the world with its production lines at the second plant operated fully by solar energy to reduce carbon footprint.

He also said SIBS was looking at launching two new brands with one already in the pipeline.

The company was holding talks with a local company and a hotel operator here for the second one on the possibility of designing and manufacturing modular construction materials for hotels.

"The IBS (industrialised building system) has gained popularity in many parts of the world including Malaysia, with the local market showing keen interest in our products.

"SIBS chose to expand here because there is simplicity in doing business in Penang.

"With its unique combination of good infrastructure, fairly easy and mature back-up system; and the huge availability of educated and skilled engineers with no language barriers, these make Malaysia a highly attractive market for international companies.

"Penang, especially has a history of producing industrial automation equipment and industrial production," he said.

Thomaeus noted that with the local market showing great interest



in the company's products, the company was looking at doing its first housing project in Malaysia in the near future.

"This is why, we have also acquired another 12.5-acre site nearby for future expansion as we are anticipating greater demand for modular constructed residential and hotel buildings in other international markets such as countries in the Nordic region like

Finland, Denmark," he said.

Thomaeus added that over time SIBS was looking at fully sourcing its materials locally.

"For now, 65% to 70% of our materials are from Malaysia, from local suppliers, while 5% to 10% are from Europe.

"Over time, we want to get all of them locally," he said.

According to Thomaeus, the advantages of the IBS are its

uniqueness in terms of its design and production and it shortens construction time as well because traditional house construction takes too long.

"We have some really nice, affordable premium designs and SIBS has a different approach as we use welded steel and concrete while others mostly use wood.

"As more and more of the housing industry grows in countries worldwide, the IBS technology and concept will be the future in meeting housing needs of the growing population.

"It reduces delays and enables a continuous improvement of production processes and also improved work environment.

"We are expecting the IBS concept to grow rapidly and attract more international IBS producers as there is a need globally to develop a more intelligent and effective construction method," he noted.

Thomaeus added that it was time to move beyond traditional construction and for changes to be brought into design, engineering and managing residential buildings.

SIBS uses 99.9% of recycled steel in its production.

"At SIBS, we strive to be an effective developer, producer and owner of residential housing while maintaining focus on environmental sustainability and design flexibility," he said.

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## SIBS

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Penang State Executive Councillor for Trade, Industry & Entrepreneur Development  
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**ERIK THOMAEUS**

CEO of SIBS Group  
on 29th September 2022

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Knauf Sdn. Bhd.  
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Lot 606, Jalan Lagoon Selatan,  
47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.  
Tel : 03-5629 2000 Fax : 03-5629 2008  
Email : contactusmy@knauf.com  
Website : www.knaufpac.com/en\_my/

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Rondo Metal Products Sdn Bhd

Lot 606, Jalan Lagoon Selatan,  
47500 Subang Jaya, Selangor, Malaysia.  
Tel : 03-5614 9888 Fax : 03-5614 9887  
Email : Rondo.Malaysia@rondo.com.my  
Website : www.rondo.asia



Address: Plot 25, Jalan PSPN 3, Penang Science Park North, Mukim 13, 14100 Seberang Perai Tengah, Penang