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# When homes go nuclear

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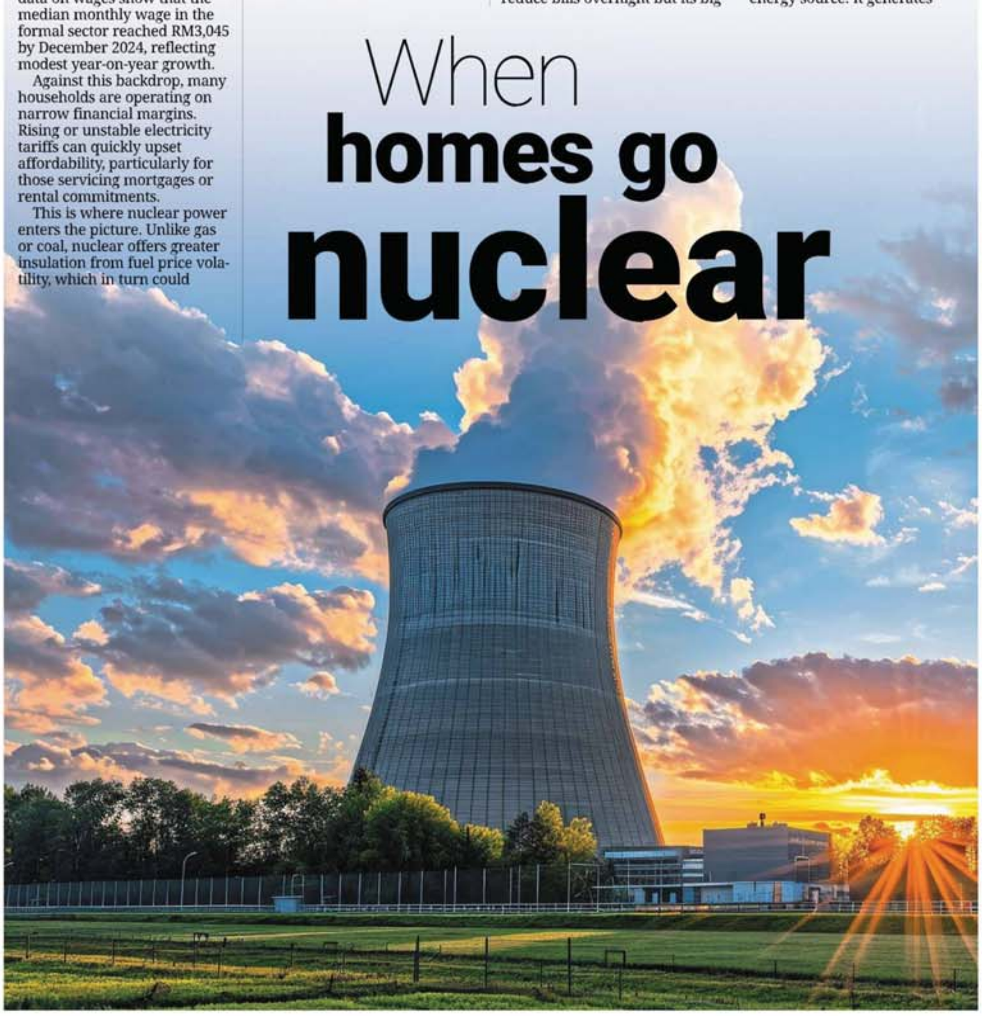

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IN Malaysia's property market, discussions often revolve around land prices, demand cycles or township design. Yet, beneath every brick and roof tile lies an invisible foundation that shapes affordability, liveability and long-term value: energy.

As Malaysia reopens the debate on nuclear power, the question is not only whether it can keep the lights on but also how it might fundamentally change the economics of housing and urban development.

## Household budgets

For homeowners and tenants alike, utility bills are a steady monthly expense.

According to the Statistics Department, households in 2023 required an averaged figure of RM4,729 per month to maintain a basic decent living standard, as represented by the Basic Expenditure of Decent Living Index developed just last year. In urban areas, the figure rose to about RM5,040 while rural households averaged RM3,631.

At the same time, the Statistics Department's latest data on wages show that the median monthly wage in the formal sector reached RM3,045 by December 2024, reflecting modest year-on-year growth.

Against this backdrop, many households are operating on narrow financial margins. Rising or unstable electricity tariffs can quickly upset affordability, particularly for those servicing mortgages or rental commitments.

This is where nuclear power enters the picture. Unlike gas or coal, nuclear offers greater insulation from fuel price volatility, which in turn could translate into more stable household utility bills.

For the property market, predictable energy costs are not just a quality-of-life issue but a direct factor in sustaining housing affordability.

When most people think about property, they usually focus on growing land prices, competitive mortgage rates and even new housing developments.

Yet, behind every home is an element that is less visible but just as important for any household to run: electricity.

Without reliable and affordable electricity, no home will truly feel like one.

That being said, Malaysia has been reopening the conversation on nuclear power.

Could tapping into nuclear power as opposed to non-renewable energy play a role in shaping our homes? Can it potentially make homes more affordable and liveable? Well, many experts are saying yes.

- 99.7% of Malaysian households have electricity access
- 471 million tonnes in carbon dioxide emissions avoided by the United States in 2020, by using nuclear energy
- Equivalent to removing 100 million cars from roads

## Energy costs matter

With little breathing room when bills go up, anyone who has seen their electricity bill spike during a hot month knows how quickly these costs can strain a family budget.

Nuclear energy may not reduce bills overnight but its big advantage lies in its stability.

Unlike gas or coal, nuclear doesn't swing wildly with global fuel prices. For households, that means fewer anxiety-inducing surprises from Tenaga Nasional Bhd at the end of the month.

Malaysia's residential market is still expanding but growth varies by region. In the first quarter of 2025 (1Q25), Selangor recorded a 16.4% rise in newly completed homes, from 4,425 units in 1Q24 to 5,149 in 1Q25.

In contrast, Kuala Lumpur actually saw completions fall sharply with just 1,172 units delivered in 1Q25 compared with 3,366 units a year earlier.

The important takeaway from this is that every single one of these new homes will join existing homes to connect to the national grid, adding to Malaysia's overall energy demand.

Furthermore, since 99.7% of Malaysian households already have electricity access, the issue is not about getting connected. It is about whether the power supply can remain stable, sustainable and affordable as new homes continue to join the grid.

## Nuclear townships

Unlike the movies, nuclear power is a zero-emission clean energy source. It generates power through fission, which is the process of splitting uranium atoms to produce energy.

The heat released by fission is used to create steam that spins a turbine to generate electricity without the harmful byproducts emitted by fossil fuels.

It is a very useful source, highlighted by the example of how the United States avoided more than 471 million tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions in 2020.

According to the nation, that is the equivalent of removing 100 million cars from roads and more than all other clean energy sources combined.

It also keeps the air clean by removing thousands of tonnes of harmful air pollutants each year that contribute to acid rain, smog, lung cancer and cardiovascular disease.

So, with the number of new developments on the rise in Malaysia, is it a viable option?

Larger scale properties such as townships would certainly benefit. If you look at today's new townships, you will see developers offering EV-charging stations, wide roads, landscaped parks and retail hubs.

But beneath all that is something less flashy – utility planning. A township's success depends on whether its infrastructure can support growth over decades, not just years.

That is where nuclear energy could help. Its ability to provide steady baseload power means planners can design communities that rely more confidently on electricity whether for greener transport, smart home systems or fully electric amenities.

For buyers, this translates into a sense of long-term security of knowing their future bills are less likely to spiral out of control.

## Are investors confident?

For investors, energy stability is a concern as well. Any property that promises not just a good location but low volatility in running costs are able to stand out better in an already competitive market.

Imagine a township marketed as future-ready because its energy supply is less tied to fossil fuel prices. That could influence both buyer confidence and resale values.

With median household incomes at RM6,338 in 2022 and utilities already eating up a sizeable share of expenses, families are sensitive to cost changes. A stable, predictable energy future could make the difference between a property feeling affordable or financially out of reach.

## The big picture

Malaysia's property market is evolving with more homes, higher expectations and tighter household budgets. Energy sits quietly at the heart of all this.

While nuclear power is often discussed in terms of kilowatts and safety standards, its real impact could literally be felt in places closer to home.

From steady monthly bills to township master plans, nuclear energy has the potential to influence not just how we power our lives but also how we design and afford the communities we live in. In the end, it is not just about electricity. It is about shaping the future of housing.