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Turning grit into gold when times are dark

By **SARBAN SINGH**
sarbans@thestar.com.my

SEREMBAN: Despite the soft economic situation caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, a developer here has managed to buck the trend by registering good sales.

Negri Sembilan-based developer Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd (MCHB) has locked in sales worth some RM703mil from March 18 to June 17 – a big jump from the RM450mil in sales for three months before the government announced the movement control order (MCO).

MCHB group executive deputy chairman Datuk Lee Tian Hock put it down to grit and a “can do!” spirit.

“Our bookings have increased by 40% after I told my employees not to despair, but to find ways to turn this crisis into an opportunity.

“I am very happy that my employees heeded my advice,” said Lee, who learnt valuable lessons and emerged stronger each time after the 1984, 1997 and 2008 economic crises.

Lee advised his employees not to panic after construction and property sites had to be closed due to the MCO, saying they could still market products using other avenues.

Lee said MCHB did face some financial pressure during the period as it could not make claims for work done due to the closure of construction sites.

“Due to this work stoppage, we could not immediately claim up to



A positive contribution: Lee (second from left) chatting with M. Devaraj, who was donating blood for the 78th time. Also present was Matrix Concept Foundation adviser Datin Yong Chou Lian (left), who is also Buddha's Light International Association (Seremban) president.

RM200mil and this did give us some cash flow problems,” he said to reporters during a blood donation campaign at the Mawar Medical Centre.

Lee said since MCHB was not highly geared and had healthy reserves, it could still pay employees in full and even the allowance for the state basketball team.

Before construction sites were allowed to reopen, he also ordered all site employees to undergo Reverse Transcription Polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests to ensure they were free of Covid-19.

“This is important because we do

not want any of our workers to carry the virus to our project sites.

“We do not want any more delays,” Lee said, adding that the cost of the tests was borne by MCHB.

MCHB has 800 employees and another 2,200 workers at its construction sites.

Lee was also happy to note that none of his employees had been infected by the coronavirus.

This, he said, was made possible as the company provided free food to its construction workers so that they could minimise having to go out to buy food.

The two-day blood donation cam-

paign was jointly carried out between MCHB, Mawar Medical Centre – of which he is chairman – and Buddha's Light International Association.

“We hope to get at least 300 pints from this campaign and help replenish supply at the relevant health facilities.

“We also carried out two exercises prior to this and managed to collect 150 pints after being told that the supply at the Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital had fallen dangerously low as people could not come out to donate blood due to the MCO,” he said.