



Muslim burial plots gravely short in KL

Experts suggest multi-level graves, or stacking of remains and reuse of old plots as solutions.

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Din from warehouse project riles residents

Kemuning Bayu folk in Shah Alam claim works at construction site about 100m from nearest homes continue even on Sundays and extend until 3am.

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Incessant noise and strong vibrations from the work site are driving residents up the wall.
 — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

Malaysia, Uzbekistan upbeat on joint venture

Initiative to bring together best practices and expertise in industrial park development and operations, say top leaders of both countries.

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Breast cancer screening participation rates critically low

Misinformation, misconceptions and stigma around reproductive health as well as accessibility issues key reasons many avoid early detection tests.

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Kedah Sultan presides over Conference of Rulers

KUALA LUMPUR: The Sultan of Kedah Al-Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin Sultan Badlishah presided over the 268th Meeting of the Conference of Rulers at Istana Negara yesterday.

Present at the meeting were the Sultan of Terengganu Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, Raja of Perlis Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Jamalullail, Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Shah and the Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negeri Sembilan Tuanku Muhriz Tuanku Munawir.

The Regent of Johor Tunku Mahkota Ismail was also in attendance.

The rulers of Pahang and Kelantan were represented by their crown princes Tengku Hassan Ibrahim Alam Shah and Tengku Muhammad Fakhry Petra respectively.

Also present were governors Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak (Penang), Tun Dr Mohd Ali Rustam (Malacca), Tun Musa Aman (Sabah) and Tun Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar (Sarawak).

On Tuesday, His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim attended the pre-council meeting of the Conference of Rulers, also at Istana Negara.

The last meeting of the Conference of Rulers was held in October, presided by Sultan Nazrin, who is also the Deputy Yang di-Pertuan Agong. — Bernama



Sultan Sharafuddin and Sultan Nazrin at the Conference of Rulers in Istana Negara yesterday. — BERNAMAPIC

M'sia, Uzbekistan keen to set up joint industrial zone

► Collaboration to pave way for sharing of best practices, expertise in developing manufacturing parks

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia and Uzbekistan see promising prospects to jointly establish an industrial zone in Uzbekistan.

In a joint statement, both countries said this would pave the way for the introduction of best practices and sharing of expertise in the development and operation of industrial parks.

"In addition, this will also foster collaboration in attracting management companies, park managers and other investors for participation in the planning and development of industrial zones in Uzbekistan."

The move follows bilateral talks yesterday between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who is on a two-day official visit to Malaysia, that began on Tuesday.

They also emphasised the importance of enhancing economic cooperation in key sectors such as renewable energy, the *halal*

industry, digitalisation, artificial intelligence, smart city development and startup development to yield mutual benefits for both countries.

"Both leaders also expressed interest to explore partnerships in the palm oil industry," added the statement.

Uzbekistan has also reaffirmed its keen interest in collaborating with Petronas, particularly in the petrochemicals sector and clean green energy solutions.

"Petronas is pleased to support this endeavour by establishing cooperation in terms of technical support, exchange of information and consultation for the related area of interest, while also exploring opportunities for the joint implementation of mutually beneficial investment projects."

During Anwar's official visit to Uzbekistan in May last year, the country expressed interest in collaborating with Petronas, particularly through the

methanol-to-olefins and derivatives project, as well as in the green hydrogen and associated derivatives production, including green ammonia.

It also welcomed Petronas' potential contribution to the training of Uzbekistan personnel in the oil and gas sector, Bernama reported.

Both leaders also agreed to strengthen cooperation by taking advantage of the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign and explore opportunities in Islamic and *halal* tourism.

It includes the Umrah+ programme to promote Malaysia and Uzbekistan as pre or post-pilgrimage tourism destinations for visitors from both countries.

"Both leaders also agreed to utilise the direct Kuala Lumpur-Tashkent flights of Uzbekistan Airways and Batik Air Malaysia to enhance transport accessibility."

In 2024, Malaysia's total trade with Uzbekistan was RM369.8 million, a slight decline of 13.2% from the RM426.1 million recorded in 2023. The trade balance is in Malaysia's favour at RM360.3 million.

Last year, Uzbekistan was Malaysia's second largest trading partner among Central Asian countries.

RM13b allocated for cash aid to ease living costs

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has allocated nearly RM13 billion for the Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah and Sumbangan Asas Rahmah cash aid initiatives aimed at helping Malaysians cope with rising living costs, said Economy Deputy Minister Datuk Hanifah Hajar Taib.

She said an additional RM300 million has been set aside for the Payung Rahmah initiative, while RM700 million has been allocated for price control programmes through partnerships with various stakeholders.

"For the Price Standardisation Programme in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan, RM40 million has been allocated," she said in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

She was responding to a question from Wong Chen (PH-Subang) regarding recommendations by the Statistics Department to combat rising living costs as outlined in the Cost of Living Indicator Report.

Hanifah added that the report, released last year, includes the Basic Expenditure of Decent Living and Cost of Living Index to better assess living costs.

She said the government has introduced a calculator aid to help families plan their expenses, Bernama reported.

The MyPAKW app, accessible via mypakw.dosm.gov.my, serves as a financial management guide.

She added that the National Action Council on Cost of Living is working to address the issue of rising living costs, focusing on seven priority areas, namely housing, education, transportation, utilities, healthcare, food and income.

Hanifah said the Central Database Hub, which contains profiles of 30.1 million Malaysian citizens and permanent residents, allows for effective monitoring to support those struggling with the cost of living.

Troops in Congo safe, says ministry

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysian peacekeepers serving under the United Nations organisation stabilisation mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are safe, said the Foreign Ministry.

It said in a statement yesterday it is closely monitoring the security situation in the DRC and that it is collaborating with the Malaysian High Commission in Namibia, which is also accredited to the DRC.

"Malaysians intending to travel to the DRC are strongly advised to defer their plans until the security situation stabilises."

For consular assistance, Malaysians may contact the Malaysian High Commission in Windhoek, Namibia, via telephone at (+264-61) 259 342 / (+264-61) 259 344 or email to mwwindhoek@kln.gov.my.

According to international media, the takeover by Rwanda-backed M23 rebels has exacerbated an ongoing humanitarian crisis, with reports of over 2,000 bodies requiring burial and at least 900 people killed. — Bernama

Reforms in five key areas for Public Service Dept

PUTRAJAYA: Five key focus areas have been outlined in the Public Service Reform Agenda for a more transparent, integrity driven and trusted public service, said Public Service Department Director-General Tan Sri Wan Ahmad Dahlan Abdul Aziz.

He said developing high quality human capital, embracing noble values, building dynamic organisations, strengthening public-private synergies and making service delivery more people-centric are the key reform areas.

"It is hoped that 2025 will mark a more

meaningful turning point for the public service to continue strengthening the delivery system, in line with the expectations of the people.

"Take every task as an act of devotion, which not only brings blessings but also creates joy in the workplace," he said yesterday in his 2025 message.

On developing high quality human capital, Wan Ahmad said the emphasis is on enhancing the knowledge, skills and capabilities of civil servants, particularly in seven niche areas.

"For that, a total of 15 in-service training

programmes with 3,843 slots have been provided this year.

"For the seven new niche areas, 140 slots have been allocated for the Government Expertise Development and Consultancy Programme, involving RM56 million."

Wan Ahmad said RM50 million would also be allocated to 28 ministries to conduct short term courses and training aimed at improving the functional competencies of officers across all grades and service schemes.

"Therefore, I urge all heads of departments

to take full advantage of the opportunities to develop human capital under their supervision."

He said in the area of embracing noble values, several efforts such as promoting values through the singing of the national anthem *Negaraku* and the recitation of the *Rukun Negara* would be continued.

"I would also like to propose that personal financial management be made one of the modules in the Mind Transformation Programme." — Bernama

Lower EPF rate for migrants benefits employers

KUALA LUMPUR: The government decision to set the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) contribution rate for foreign workers at 2%, lower than the initially proposed 12%, helps employers reduce overall wage expenditure.

Jeffrey Cheah Institute on Southeast Asia Economic Studies Programme senior fellow and director Prof Dr Yeah Kim Leng at Sunway University said the move makes hiring foreign workers more attractive for industries as their take home pay increases and employers can reduce overall wage expenditure," he told Bernama.

On Monday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim gave an assurance that the mandatory EPF contribution for foreign workers will remain at 2%.

Although there were proposals for 12%, the Cabinet has decided to go with a lower rate, he said.

However, while the higher take-home pay could boost domestic private consumption if spent locally, it may also add to remittance outflow when funds are sent home, he cautioned.

Yeah, who is also Malaysian Economic Association president, said the disparity in EPF contributions will give rise to wage differentials between local and foreign workers in the low skilled segment, despite levies, recruitment charges and other fees partially offsetting the advantage.

He added that reliance on low skilled foreign workers might discourage industries from adopting labour saving technologies, thereby affecting long term productivity.

Yeah stressed that as Malaysia aspires to move towards a more advanced and industrialised economy, industries will need to reduce their reliance on unskilled labour by embracing automation and shifting to higher value activities.

"For the country to attract high quality foreign investments and build a competitive workforce, it is crucial that we focus on upskilling the local workforce and attracting skilled foreign talents," he said.

He suggested a phased approach to harmonising EPF contribution rates could mitigate disruptions on industries and help achieve wage parity between local and foreign workers.

He also called for stricter enforcement of foreign worker rights and adequate employer-provided amenities such as proper housing and safe working conditions. — Bernama

Residents cry foul over warehouse construction din

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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SHAH ALAM: Residents of Kemuning Bayu in Shah Alam, Selangor, are up in arms over the ongoing construction of a huge warehouse, claiming it has severely disrupted their daily lives with excessive noise and strong vibrations that have damaged their properties.

House owner Prabhakaran Sivasubramaniam, 55, said the houses are separated from the construction site by Jalan Bukit Meru. The warehouse is being built just across the road, about 100m away.

"The construction continues almost every day, including on Sundays and does not stop until 2am or 3am. The noise is bad enough during the day but gets amplified in the quiet of the night, affecting our mental health. This is ridiculous."

Apart from the noise, Prabhakaran said the piling work caused strong tremors, resulting in cracks in the walls of his and his neighbour's houses.

He also questioned how such a

► Questions raised by Kemuning Bayu folk on project approval as structure being built too close to housing area

large project could be approved so close to a residential area.

He said he has lodged complaints with the authorities, including through the Public Complaint Management System, but received no response.

"I was told by a Shah Alam City Council representative that due to project delays, the developer was granted permission to work until 9pm, on condition that only 'light work' is carried out.

"But the loud noises and disruptive activities continue well past that time. I also reached out to Kota Kemuning assemblyman Preakas Sampunathan, whose constituency includes Kemuning Bayu.

"He raised the issue with the council but has not been effective in putting a stop to the after-hours construction work. I even urged him to push for a stop-work order

or permit suspension until the developers strictly comply with regulations, but nothing has been done."

Another resident, who requested to be known only as Krishan, said he has been awakened by the construction noise more times than he can count.

"Many elderly residents live here, and the noise is a nuisance as they need proper rest.

"Imagine hoping to get some rest on a weekend, only to be faced with constant loud banging.

"The noise is driving us mad and nobody seems to be able to put a stop to it. We are taxpayers and voters too, so the authorities should take us seriously."

Krishan also expressed concern about the long term impact of the warehouse, particularly the safety issues

involving trailers coming in and out of the area.

"My house shakes whenever a trailer passes by, and I expect matters to get worse once the warehouse is completed when more of them come to load goods."

Checks by *theSun* showed that the warehouse is being developed by Japanese logistics giant Daiwa House Group, with Daiwa House Malaysia Logistic Sdn Bhd serving as the operator and management company.

A Daiwa House Group press release dated Sept 20, 2022, said the warehouse, DPL Malaysia III, is a large scale, multi-tenant logistics facility covering approximately 60,740sqm.

It is reportedly the largest overseas logistics facility ever constructed by the company.

The project was initially expected to be completed by Jan 31, but residents claim it is far from completion.

theSun reached out to the council, Preakas, and Daiwa House Group on Jan 28 but has not received any response as of press time.



COLOURFUL ATTRACTIONS ...

Visitors to a stall in Leboh Ampang, Kuala Lumpur browsing decorative items ahead of Thai Pusam on Feb 11. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH / THE SUN

Over 66,000 work accidents in 2024

KUALA LUMPUR: The Social Security Organisation (Socso) confirmed there were 66,574 work accident cases nationwide throughout 2024, a decrease of 2.4% compared with 68,220 cases in 2023.

Deputy Minister of Human Resources Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Mohamad said of the total, accidents during commuting slightly increased to 33,638 cases in 2024, compared with 33,181 the previous year.

"However, the accident rate per 1,000 insured persons showed a decrease of 8.9% for industrial accidents, and 1.8% for commuting accident cases during the same period," he said in a Socso statement.

Socso said it will intensify accident prevention efforts involving 7,000 employers identified as recording the highest number of work-related accidents last year.

It added that this is an increase of 25.4% compared with the 5,582 employers involved in Ops Cegah 2024, which aimed to ensure that the "Vision Zero" or "Zero Accident" approach can be implemented at all workplaces and during commuting to work.

"Socso supports the Occupational Safety and Health programme and Ops Cegah by focusing on employers that record the highest accident rates to ensure effectiveness of prevention aspects in the workplace," said Abdul Rahman. — Bernama

Govt hospitals urged to reduce wait times for patients

KUALA LUMPUR: The success in reducing wait times at public health clinics from three hours to 30 minutes should be replicated at government hospitals to extend improvements in the quality of public healthcare services.

Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca) president Datuk Dr N. Marimuthu said the positive development would have a major impact on patient experience at health clinics, and should be expanded to government hospitals so that more people could benefit from the initiative.

"Fomca welcomes the Health Ministry's initiative, but we would like to (state) that government hospitals face similar challenges, especially in

major urban and rural areas.

"The need to reduce wait times at hospitals is equally critical so that patients do not have to wait too long for treatment.

"We hope this initiative will be sustained and not just be a short-lived effort," he said.

He also stressed that the government should allocate sufficient resources, including increasing the number of staff and improving facilities, to ensure that the initiative can be further enhanced and not limited to clinics.

Marimuthu also proposed the healthcare sector be prioritised in the next Budget by increasing allocations to hire more staff and improve healthcare infrastructure,

particularly to address the issue of overcrowding at government hospitals and clinics.

"Additional staff and new facilities are needed to meet the growing demand, especially with the country's increasing population.

"This would not only reduce wait times but also ensure that every patient receives quality treatment," he said.

Meanwhile, Public Health Specialist Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said while the digital system currently widely used in many health clinics helps shorten wait times, patients must still adhere to their appointment time and make necessary preparations before and during their visit.

He said previously, the lack of an efficient appointment system forced some patients to endure long waiting periods to see a doctor.

"The digital system streamlines appointment scheduling and reduces work process time from registration to patient queue management and medication collection.

"Therefore, patients must comply with the scheduled appointment times," he said.

Consumers' Association of Penang education officer N.V. Subbarow expressed full support for the government's efforts to improve the national healthcare sector, seeing it as a positive step that should be continued for the well-being of the people. — Bernama



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Breast cancer screening rate remains critically low

➤ Misinformation, accessibility issues and cultural barriers hinder early detection: Experts

■ BY DEEPAKASHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: Breast cancer screening rates in Malaysia remain critically low, not due to a decline in case but because women have been avoiding them, said Breast Cancer Welfare Association Malaysia (BCWA) public relations and partnerships manager Sumitra Selvaraj.

She said a recent Hologic Global Women's Health Index report, a multiyear global survey of women's health, revealed a worrying decline in cancer testing worldwide.

"For the first time since 2020, when the index began, only 10% of women surveyed worldwide reported being tested for any type of cancer in the past year, marking a two-percentage-point decrease from the previous two years. A woman who has never examined her breasts from the age of 20 or undergone an annual clinical breast examination is not going to be the easiest person to convince to have a mammogram once she turns 40. This is the truth," she said.

Despite these challenges, BCWA's outreach efforts are yielding results.

In 2024, the organisation conducted 7,652 free clinical breast examinations, detecting 338 abnormal findings.

"Our focus is on early detection. Screening numbers will only rise when early detection is normalised as self-care."

She said BCWA actively takes mobile clinics to underserved areas and collaborates with local leaders to address cultural sensitivities.

Another major hurdle is misinformation, with many women believing they are not at risk if they do not have a family history of breast cancer, but Sumitra debunked this.

"A staggering majority of breast cancer cases occur sporadically, with only 10% to 20% linked to family history."

National Cancer Society Malaysia (NCSM) assistant director (medical) Dr Ruthresh Rao Subramanyam said other cancer screenings among women face similar challenges.

"The NCSM is working with the Health Ministry to develop a national database to



Sumitra said a staggering majority of breast cancer cases occur sporadically, with only 10% to 20% linked to family history. – PIC COURTESY OF BCWA

track screenings across NGO, private hospitals and public healthcare facilities.

"In rural areas where healthcare facilities and trained personnel are scarce, accessibility remains a major barrier. Long waiting times and travel costs further discourage women from getting tested," he said, adding that many are unaware of free or subsidised screenings, leading to missed opportunities for early detection.

Ruthresh also highlighted misconceptions and stigma around reproductive health that prevent many women from seeking screenings.

"In some households, patriarchal norms place men as the decision-makers regarding healthcare. There have been cases where women do not seek screenings because of their husband's disapproval."

He said NCSM's national screening efforts indicate that participation is lowest in the east coast states and Sabah and Sarawak.

To address this, several initiatives have been launched to improve accessibility and awareness.

The "Leaving No One Behind" campaign, supported by corporate sponsors, offers free human papillomavirus vaccines to help eliminate cervical cancer. It has benefited about 300,000 Malaysians.

In October 2024, the *Pink Etiqa* campaign provided free mammograms to over 6,000 women through mobile clinics nationwide.

In 2023, NCSM conducted over 120,000 screenings and reached more than a million people with awareness campaigns.

"We have also partnered with Gene Solutions for multi-cancer early detection tests and worked with AstraZeneca on post-pandemic awareness campaigns. Government-backed mobile clinics help bring screenings to rural communities," he said.

Ruthresh emphasised the importance of early detection and shared a story of a woman from rural Pahang who was diagnosed with Stage 2 breast cancer during a community screening. With immediate treatment, she has remained cancer-free for five years.

"This is why screenings matter. When detected early, cancer is treatable," he said.

He urged women to prioritise regular screenings as an essential part of self-care from the age of 20 and undergo an annual clinical breast examination. Those interested can reach out for support and guidance.

theSun reached out to the Health Ministry several times between Jan 30 and yesterday for the latest statistics on cancer cases among women, but has yet to receive a response as of press time.

Holistic framework needed for gold industry management

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia must strengthen and optimise its gold resource management by establishing a holistic and comprehensive National Gold Industry Management Framework.

Highlighting data from the World Bureau of Metal Statistics – London Stock Exchange Group, Paya Besar MP Datuk Mohd Shahar Abdullah said Malaysia currently accounts for just 0.06% of the 3,000-tonne global gold production, with annual output ranging between 1.8 and 4.6 metric tonnes.

However, Mohd Shahar said gold resource management remains fragmented as it falls under state jurisdiction through their respective state mineral enactments.

"Does the coordination mechanism between the federal government, state governments and concession companies ensure that royalties, which are typically 5 to 10%, and tax revenues reflect the true value of exported gold?"

"The 2019 National Audit Report highlighted inconsistencies in royalty rates across states, potentially leading to revenue leakage. Does the government plan to standardise mining contracts at the national level?" he asked while debating the motion of thanks on the Royal Address in the Dewan Rakyat on Tuesday.

Highlighting a 2021 study by the Department of Minerals and Geoscience, Mohd Shahar said the country's metallic minerals, including gold, are estimated to be worth RM1.03 trillion.

"High-value minerals are concentrated in four main gold belts: the Central Belt (Pahang and Terengganu), the Eastern Belt (Kelantan), the Borneo Belt (Sabah and Sarawak) and the Bentong-Raub Belt," he said.

He added that adopting modern mining technologies such as bio-leaching and satellite surveying could enhance gold production potential. – Bernama

'170km of drainage needs maintenance'

KOTA KINABALU: Regular maintenance of drainage systems covering a total of 170.5km is essential to mitigate flooding in the Kota Kinabalu, Penampang and Putatan districts.

Deputy Chief Minister I Datuk Seri Dr Jeffrey Kitingan said conducting maintenance only three times a year, with an allocation of RM40 million, remains insufficient to ensure the drainage system functions effectively, especially as rapid development and climate change contribute to flash floods.

"Furthermore, the flood mitigation projects currently being implemented cannot completely resolve flooding, particularly in the Penampang and Putatan districts," he said in a statement.

Jeffrey said the Sungai Moyog Integrated River Basin Development Project, covering Donggongan and Putatan towns, is being implemented at a cost of RM297.96 million to address flooding.

However, he noted that proposed projects for the central part of Sungai Moyog in Penampang and Sungai Petagas in Putatan have yet to be approved.

"If we want to increase the frequency of drainage cleaning, we would need additional funding," he said, adding that community cooperation is also essential to prevent littering. – Bernama

ECRL progress surpasses 78%, on track for 2027 launch

KUANTAN: The overall progress of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project, spanning four states – Pahang, Kelantan, Terengganu and Selangor – has reached 78.5% as of last month, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan.

He noted that this promising progress aligns with the scheduled completion of the first phase of the ECRL, running from Kota Bharu, Kelantan, to the Gombak Integrated Terminal, Selangor, by December 2026, with operations expected to begin in January 2027.

Amir Hamzah added that the second phase, connecting Gombak to Port Klang, is set to be completed by December 2027 and fully operational by January 2028, based on the project's current developments.

"Alhamdulillah, this is no small project – it is a major endeavour involving many stakeholders working together. I congratulate MRL (Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd) and (China Communications Construction-ECRL) for their collaboration in achieving the current progress."

"This project will boost the economy of the east coast, acting as a catalyst to attract more investments to the region while creating numerous job opportunities in Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang," he said.

He was speaking at a press conference after launching the SDG Sukuk Impact Reporting for the ECRL project at the Section 10 ECRL project site on Tuesday.

Also present was MRL CEO Datuk Seri Darwis

Abdul Razak.

Darwis said the ECRL project is on track for completion as scheduled, with construction progressing smoothly across 361 active work sites involving over 18,000 personnel along the ECRL route.

"With this highly encouraging construction momentum, MRL is optimistic about commencing ECRL operations in two years, aligning with the aspirations of the public and the business community in providing seamless transport for passengers and cargo."

"As such, east coast residents living in the Klang Valley will only need to wait for two more *Syawals* before they can take the ECRL home to celebrate Hari Raya Aidilfitri in 2027." – Bernama

Kuala Lumpur faces Muslim burial plot shortage

➤ Experts suggest multi-level graves and the reuse of existing plots as solutions, with family consent

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PETALING JAYA: Muslim burial plots are in short supply across Kuala Lumpur, with only 9,957 or 16.26%, available out of 61,235 as of July 2024, said the Federal Territory Islamic Religious Department.

The Selangor Standing Committee on Islamic Religious Affairs, Consumer Affairs and Halal Industry also said there are only 324 burial sites in the state, according to its latest 2020 data.

Malaysian Corpse Management Squad Organisation executive chairman Ustaz Muhammad Rafieudin Zainal Rasid said an existing *fatwa* allows Muslim remains to be stacked one on top of another, also called multi-level graves or double-depth burials.

"This can address the urgent need for burial plots, but public awareness, proper guidelines and regulatory measures must be established to ensure compliance with Islamic burial principles and community acceptance," he said.

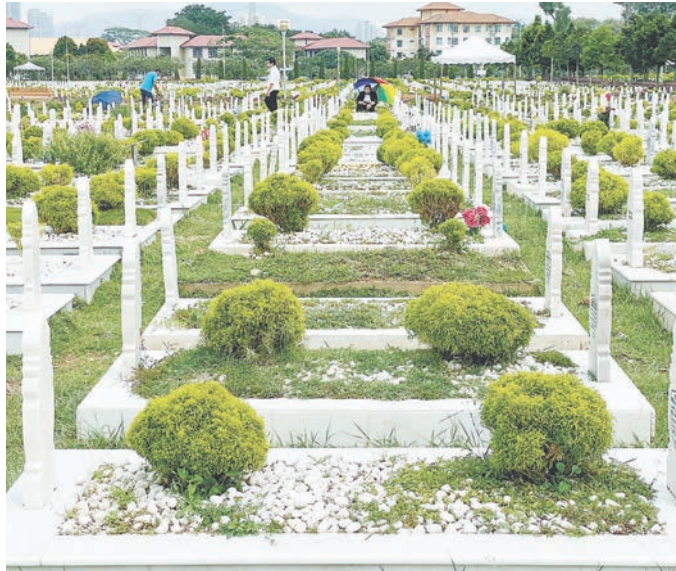
A second *fatwa* issued by the Selangor Mufti Department and gazetted in October 2004 states that cemeteries that are full and without available land for expansion can reuse old burial plots.

New remains can be included after adding 1.2m of soil over existing ones, a method particularly suitable for low-lying cemeteries.

However, Muhammad Rafieudin said educating the public is crucial for acceptance and laws should be passed to set a maximum burial period of 15 years to help people adjust to the shortage of burial space.

The issue of multi-level graves first arose when Lembah Jaya assemblyman Syed Ahmad Syed Abdul Rahman proposed a pilot project as Muslim cemeteries in Ampang were approaching full capacity, with an average of five to seven burials daily.

Muhammad Rafieudin said the increasing number of burials made it necessary to consider alternatives such as stacking remains as a solution, adding that similar practices have been implemented in several places, including Medina and Mecca.



Muhammad Rafieudin said the increasing number of burials made it necessary to consider alternatives such as stacking remains as a solution, adding that similar practices have been implemented in several places, including Medina and Mecca. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

"If we look at their burial practices, they have been using the same burial grounds for thousands of years. Their method involves relocating old remains to place new ones in the same plot," he said.

However, he acknowledged that the primary challenges lie in identifying the surviving heirs to inform them of a relocation, while the exhumation process must be conducted with care as some bodies may remain intact long after burial.

"The authorities must monitor the process of exhuming old graves and inform the deceased's heirs to prevent issues in the future."

International Islamic University Malaysia, Department of Quran and Sunnah Studies assistant professor Dr Abu Hafiz Salleh Hudin said *syariah* and scholarly consensus support reusing old burial plots (after full decomposition) as a more widely accepted solution.

"It has historically been practised in Muslim societies and maintains the simplicity and dignity of burials while being more sustainable for long-term cemetery

management.

"However, in urban areas with extreme land shortages, graves could be stacked, provided it is done with proper partitions and in compliance with *syariah* guidelines."

Abu Hafiz said the *muzakarah* (discussion or deliberation) had agreed that stacking remains may be implemented if there is an urgent need to address the shortage of Muslim burial grounds.

He emphasised that a comprehensive study on implementation models should be conducted, drawing from the experience of other countries that have adopted similar practices.

"Many practices that are perceived as new or unfamiliar to the Muslim community may raise concerns, misunderstandings or even disputes.

"A comprehensive awareness campaign must be conducted before we consider stacking human remains. Most importantly, the practice must be deemed necessary and approved by a recognised religious authority," he said.

Customs seize RM1.3m worth of contraband

TAWAU: The Customs Department arrested five men, and seized cigarettes and liquor worth RM1.3 million in three separate raids in Tawau, Semporna and Sepanggar Port last month.

Sabah Customs assistant director-general Siti Mang said the department also seized alcoholic beverages worth RM1.23 million, including taxes, during a separate operation at Sepanggar Port on Jan 18.

"Three containers that arrived at Sepanggar Port were detained and inspected. The inspection found 8,100 cartons of alcoholic beverages from various brands imported without permits.

"The value of the seized alcoholic beverages is RM243,136.08, while the unpaid tax amount is RM994,612.62," she said in a statement.

The department also seized cigarettes worth RM73,346.20, including taxes, during raids in Tawau and Semporna on Jan 17.

"The enforcement team carried out two raids in Kampung Jagung, Merotai Besar in Tawau and seized 1,600 sticks of cigarettes worth RM1,087.04, including taxes, at a convenience store, as well as 3,076 sticks of cigarettes worth RM2,083.16, including taxes, stored in a room of a house," she added.

The *modus operandi* in both cases involved making false declarations, hiding contraband items in enclosed locations and using unregistered vehicles to avoid detection by authorities. — Bernama

Director loses RM2.1m in crypto scam

SHAH ALAM: A company director lost RM2.1 million after falling victim to a non-existent investment scheme on a registered cryptocurrency exchange platform.

Selangor police chief Datuk Hussein Omar Khan said the 77-year-old man was drawn to the cryptocurrency investment offer after seeing an advertisement on Facebook last August.

"The victim contacted the suspect via WhatsApp to join the scheme and registered through a link provided," he said in a statement.

"He then made 26 cash transactions totalling RM2,118,810 into 11 different accounts after being promised lucrative returns."

Hussein said despite making the transactions, the victim did not receive any of the promised returns and was later told by the suspect to pay RM1.2 million in taxes to withdraw the profits from the platform.

"The victim realised he had been scammed and lodged a police report in Kajang," he said, adding that the case is being investigated under Section 420 of the Penal Code. — Bernama

Six held for alleged bribery in govt projects

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has detained six individuals, including a civil engineer and three company owners, on suspicion of bribery for monopolising all projects awarded by two government departments across two districts in Sarawak.

According to sources, the male suspects, aged between 40 and 70, were detained between 7am and noon at various locations in Sarawak during a special operation on Tuesday.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the monopoly has been active since 2006, with contractors allegedly allowing the use of their licences in exchange for commissions of up to 10% of the project value.

Meanwhile, the civil engineer is suspected of receiving payment for assisting in securing projects from the departments involved, said the source.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya confirmed the detentions and said the case is being investigated under Section 17(a) of the MACC Act 2009. — Bernama

Police curb 90% of cross-border crimes since December

KOTA BHARU: About 90% of cross-border crimes and activities involving illegal bases along Sungai Golok have been successfully controlled since enforcement was tightened on Dec 1 last year, said Kelantan police chief Datuk Mohd Yusoff Mamat.

He described this as a significant achievement in curbing illegal activities while also preventing locals from frequenting entertainment venues in Golok, Thailand, which could expose them to drug abuse.

"We are concerned that those going there for entertainment may be at risk of drug consumption, which could lead to addiction.

"With these restrictions in place, we have observed a sharp decline in demand for hotel accommodation and entertainment centres in Golok. Strict monitoring will continue along the 106km stretch of Sungai Golok, from Tumpat to Rantau Panjang," he said after the Kelantan

police contingent's monthly assembly yesterday.

He also noted that the closure of illegal crossings along the Malaysia-Thailand border, enforced since Dec 1, has yielded positive outcomes, including increased tax revenue and stricter control over drug smuggling.

"Although this measure has sparked debate among the public, it is a necessary step to curb cross-border crime and strengthen national security."

Meanwhile, police will intensify efforts to combat crime by focusing on five key areas, including tackling drug-related issues, which remain the primary cause of criminal activities in the state.

Mohd Yusoff said that in his first 100 days leading the state police force since Oct 29, he has emphasised the importance of a comprehensive approach to crime prevention, in line with the *Jihad Dadah* initiative.

"Our main focus is to combat drug smuggling, prevent cross-border crimes, crack down on commercial crimes, particularly unlicensed moneylending, curb human trafficking and eliminate illegal gambling and vice activities."

He also stressed that the responsibility of fighting crime lies with the entire Kelantan police force and should not fall on the shoulders of a few individuals alone.

Between Jan 1 and Jan 31, overall crime rates in Kelantan recorded a 12.08% decrease compared with the same period last year.

"Property crimes saw a 19.7% decline, dropping from 147 cases in 2024 to 118 cases this year.

"However, violent crimes increased by 18.8%, with cases of rape, armed robbery and assault also showing an upward trend," he added. — Bernama



Air services **lifeline** for remote areas

► Subsidised govt initiative cuts land travel time of six hours to less than 60 minutes

KUCHING: Rural air services (RAS) remain a vital lifeline for East Malaysia's remote communities, where rugged terrain and limited road infrastructure make air travel the most practical means of connection.

For decades, RAS has bridged these isolated areas, providing services to remote and sparsely populated areas such as Lahad Datu in Sabah and Ulu Baram in Sarawak, ensuring residents are able to access essential services and connect with major towns within hours rather than days.

Initially set to end in December last year the federal government decision to extend RAS subsidies until the end of this year underscores its commitment to maintaining connectivity in rural communities.

To sustain the service, the government allocates RM209 million annually for operating costs and aircraft leasing. Regional airline MASwings operates 40 routes in Sarawak and Sabah, using ATR72 and Twin Otter Viking aircraft.

Telang Usan assemblyman Datuk Dennis Ngau lauded the subsidies,

describing RAS as a community service crucial for the people of Ulu Baram, Bernama reported.

"The service, provided through the Long Akah airport in Long San village, Ulu Baram, caters to several surrounding villages. It significantly reduces travel time between Ulu Baram, Miri and Marudi.

"Travelling by air cuts the six-hour journey (to Miri and Marudi) by land to less than an hour. In medical emergencies, this can save lives," he said, urging the government to maintain the subsidised low fares.

In Ba'kelalan, where RAS has operated since the 1960s, air services remain indispensable for transporting goods, responding to emergencies and connecting isolated villages.

"It is amazing that many of our people transport building materials such as cement and zinc roofing sheets through these RAS flights. Tourists visiting Ba'kelalan also rely on these flights," its assemblyman Baru Bian said.

He also emphasised the importance of the Miri-Lawas-Miri route, adding that it remains essential

despite the availability of alternative logging road access.

"This route is still needed because the alternative way is via Brunei, which is very inconvenient and requires a passport. I believe this sector will remain essential and should continue to be served by RAS."

Academy of Sciences Malaysia

Fellow Prof Datuk Dr Jayum Jawan lauded the government's stance, calling it a moral duty to connect rural areas.

"RAS is inherently (a non-profit undertaking) due to its low passenger volume. Government

subsidies are critical to sustain it," he said, adding that private airlines should also consider contributing to the service as part of their corporate social responsibility.

He also said the RAS subsidies should continue even after the Sarawak government acquisition of MASwings is finalised.

"RAS should not be viewed with the mindset of making money or profit, but must be balanced by social responsibility considerations to the people. Some routes may incur losses due to low demand, but it is the government's moral obligation to provide

connectivity to all its people," he said.

The recent completion of negotiations between the Sarawak government and the Malaysia Aviation Group on the takeover of MASwings marks a new chapter in the evolution of RAS. The transition brings opportunities and challenges as the state takes charge of managing the essential air links independently.

Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Abang Openg recently said the state had finalised the takeover of MASwings, paving the way for the state to have its own airline.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said a longer-term deal for the service would be renegotiated after the takeover.



MASwings operates 40 RAS routes in Sarawak and Sabah. — BERNAMAPIC

Couple 'imports' help for Java-themed wedding

BATU PAHAT: Dedicated to preserving the essence of Javanese wedding customs, a *mak andam* (bridal make-up artist) from Indonesia embarked on a journey of over 1,500km from Ponorogo in East Java to Malaysia to introduce traditional elements to a wedding ceremony.

Fadila Rahmatika, 40, said she felt a calling to revive the authenticity of Javanese wedding customs as many ceremonies in Malaysia had veered from tradition.

She said most Javanese-themed

weddings held here often focus solely on the bridal attire, adding that a true Javanese wedding is incomplete if only the bride and groom embrace the theme, while others such as family members and *rewang* (wedding helpers) do not.

Traditionally, women wear *kebaya*, and men wear *batik* shirts, creating a cohesive and authentic atmosphere.

She was speaking on her involvement in the wedding of local couple Nik Nur Elly Ezlieana Salikhin and Muhammad Iqbal Sairi recently.

Fadila, who runs a bridal make-up business with her two children, said meticulous planning is crucial for an authentic Javanese-themed wedding, as every detail must adhere to the customs and original traditions practised in Java.

"For this wedding, we had to prepare everything within three weeks. This included the dishes, traditional performances and many other essential elements."

She also said guests were treated to authentic Javanese cuisine,

including *rawon*, *kulit lembu*, *asam pedas urat lembu*, *sambal goreng bakso*, and entertained by a *Barongan* performance.

In addition to the bridal attire, the *pelamin* (wedding dais) was adorned with floral and coconut frond decorations, that played a role in highlighting the distinctiveness of Javanese wedding traditions.

"In Javanese wedding customs, the bride and groom also wear several outfits representing different regional traditions, such as Solo Javanese,

Jogja Javanese and Sundanese customs, adapted to Muslimah attire."

The bride, Nik Nur Elly Ezlieana said the choice of a Javanese theme was her way to honour the heritage of her ancestors from East Java.

"Most Javanese style weddings in this country are blended with modern concepts, which has diluted their authenticity," she said.

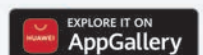
Elly had reached out to Fadila, who has more than 20 years of experience, through social media to bring her traditional vision to life. — Bernama

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11 killed in Swedish adult school mass shooting

➤ Police rule out terrorism, say suspect acted alone

OREBRO: Eleven people were killed in a shooting at an adult education centre on Tuesday, Swedish police said, marking the country's deadliest gun attack in what the prime minister called a "painful day".

Police said the gunman is believed to be among those killed and a search for other possible victims was continuing at the school, located in the city of Orebro. The gunman's motive was not immediately known.

"We know that 10 or so people have been killed here today. The reason that we can't be more exact is that the extent of the incident is so large," local police chief Roberto Eid Forest told a news conference.

Later in the evening, the police website said: "At this time, there are 11 deaths due to the incident. The number of injured is unclear. We have no information on the condition of those who have been injured."

Forest told the press conference police believe the gunman had acted alone and that terrorism was not suspected as a motive, although he cautioned that much remained unknown. He said the suspected gunman had not previously been known to police.

"We have a big crime scene, we have to complete the searches we are conducting in the school.

"There are a number of investigative steps we are taking, a profile of the perpetrator and witness interviews," Forest said.

The shooting took place some 200km west of Stockholm, at the



Emergency personnel and police officers at the school in Orebro on Tuesday. — REUTERSPIC

Risbergska school for adults who did not complete their formal education or failed to get the grades to continue to higher education. It is located on a campus that also houses schools for children.

Ali Elmokad was outside the Orebro University Hospital, looking for his relative, not yet knowing if he was among the injured or the dead.

"We've been trying to get hold of him all day, we haven't been successful," he said, adding that he had a friend who also attended the school.

"What she saw was so terrible. She only saw people lying on the floor, injured and blood everywhere."

Police said they were still going through the crime scene and had searched several addresses in Orebro after the attack.

On Tuesday, police vans and personnel were still outside an

apartment building in central Orebro that had been raided earlier.

"We saw a lot of police with drawn weapons. We were at home and heard a commotion outside," said Lingam Tuohimäki, 42, who lives in the same building.

Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson said it was the worst mass shooting in Swedish history.

"It is hard to take in the full extent of what has happened today," he told a news conference.

King Carl XVI Gustaf conveyed condolences.

"It is with deep sadness and dismay that my family and I received the news about the terrible atrocity in Orebro," he said.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen expressed sympathy on X, saying: "In this dark hour, we stand with the people of Sweden."

Maria Pegado, 54, a teacher at the school, said someone threw open the door to her classroom just after lunch break and shouted to everyone to get out.

"I took all my 15 students out into the hallway and we started running. Then I heard two shots but we made it out," she said by phone.

"I saw people dragging injured out. I realised it was very serious."

Many students in Sweden's adult school system are immigrants seeking to improve basic education and gain degrees to help them find jobs in the Nordic country while also learning Swedish.

Sweden has been struggling with a wave of shootings and bombings caused by an endemic gang crime problem that has seen the country of 10 million people record by far the highest per capita rate of gun violence in the EU. — Reuters

Bid to sell Suu Kyi mansion flops for third time

YANGON: Authorities failed to auction Aung San Suu Kyi's lakeside mansion yesterday, with no bids submitted for the former democracy leader's home — the third time the sale has flopped.

The two-storey Yangon house, with about 0.8ha of land, was put up for sale with a minimum price of US\$140 million (RM620 million) following a decades-long dispute over the property between the Nobel laureate and her brother.

Suu Kyi, who spent years under house arrest at the mansion under a former government, has been detained since the military seized power in February 2021.

Around a dozen journalists, watched over by security personnel in plain clothes, attended the kerbside sale outside the colonial-era house on leafy University Avenue, a few doors from the US embassy.

After calling for bids starting from 297 billion kyats (RM620 million) and getting no response, the auctioneer called off the sale.

"I announce the auction is not successful after calling for bids three times," the auctioneer said.

Similar auctions failed in March and August last year.

With Myanmar's economy shattered by the civil war triggered by the military coup, it is unclear who in the country would be in a position to spend US\$140 million on a single, increasingly dilapidated property.

Real estate agents say similar-sized properties in upmarket Yangon areas might fetch US\$1 million to US\$2 million.

The house holds a special place in Myanmar history — Suu Kyi was confined within its crumbling walls for around 15 years after shooting to fame during demonstrations against the then-junta in 1988.

Cut off from her husband and children in England, Suu Kyi spent time playing the piano, reading detective novels and meditating as her status as a democracy leader grew.

Hundreds of people would regularly gather on the pavement outside to hear her talk about democracy and fighting military rule through non-violence.

After her release in 2010 she lived in the villa, receiving foreign leaders, including then US president Barack Obama, journalists and diplomats.

Suu Kyi, 79, is serving a 27-year prison sentence on charges ranging from corruption to not respecting public health restrictions — charges rights groups say are a sham designed to eliminate her politically. — AFP

Thailand cuts power to border areas to fight scam centres

BANGKOK: Thailand cut cross-border electricity supplies to five sites in Myanmar yesterday, in an effort to stamp out online scam centres blamed for scaring away Chinese tourists.

Scam compounds have mushroomed in Myanmar's lawless border areas, run by criminal gangs and staffed by foreigners trafficked and forced to work swindling their

compatriots in an industry analysts say is worth billions of dollars.

Beijing has grown increasingly concerned about the centres as many of those involved — both victims and perpetrators — are Chinese.

"Thailand has stopped electricity supply to Myanmar in five locations based on the decision of the National Security Council," said Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul.

Transmission was cut at two points in Mae Sai in the north, two in Mae Sot in the west and one at Three Pagodas Pass, also in the west.

Anutin said electricity sales to Myanmar at the five locations earned Thailand around 50 million baht (RM6.6 million) a month.

"The electricity supply is not being stopped because the companies violated the contract, but because

the electricity is being misused for scams, drugs and call centres," Anutin said.

"No one can accuse Thailand now of being part of supporting illegal businesses."

The move came as Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra travelled to Beijing for talks with President Xi Jinping, with the scam centres likely to be on the agenda. — AFP

Singapore passes Racial Harmony Bill to safeguard clans

SINGAPORE: The city-state has passed a law designed to protect against foreign interference in its race-based clans and business associations, as the government looks to limit outsiders from undermining racial harmony.

Under the Maintenance of Racial Harmony Bill, which was passed on Tuesday, if an organisation is designated as a race-based entity, it will have to disclose foreign and anonymous donations, foreign

affiliations and its leadership.

The government can also impose a restraining order to stop an entity from accepting donations from a foreign principal, prohibit anonymous donations or require the entity to return or dispose of donations.

The new law also empowers the home affairs minister to issue restraining orders against individuals involved in "content that prejudices the maintenance of racial harmony".

Law and Home Affairs Minister

K. Shanmugam told parliament the Bill was not a panacea for all racial issues and could not prevent insensitivity or racial slights in everyday dealings.

"We acknowledge that it may be difficult to enforce offences outside of Singapore, but it signals our commitment to protect our racial harmony, even when the threat originates outside of Singapore."

The law was supported by the opposition party, although some lawmakers urged caution.

Opposition lawmaker Gerald Giam said the broad definition of "foreign affiliation" might unintentionally create barriers for local associations with deep historical ties to overseas groups which had helped preserve Singapore's cultural heritage.

Singapore's population is 74% Chinese, 13.6% Malay and 9% Indian, while 3.3% is classified as "others".

Last year, Singapore designated businessman Chan Man Ping Philip as a "politically significant person" for

activities that advanced the interests of an unspecified foreign country.

A naturalised citizen, Chan had attended an annual session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Beijing and told local media the overseas Chinese community should form an "alliance" and "tell the China story well".

Hong Kong-born Chan was the president of the Hong Kong Singapore Business Association. — Reuters



Philippine House votes to impeach VP Sara Duterte

➤ Motion moves to Senate

MANILA: Philippine lawmakers yesterday voted to send articles of impeachment against Vice-President Sara Duterte to the Senate, a day before the congressional session is set to end.

While specifics of the impeachment were not divulged, the vote follows the filing of a trio of complaints last month accusing Duterte of crimes ranging from the "brazen misuse" of millions of dollars in public funds to plotting President Ferdinand Marcos' assassination.

"Having been filed by more than one-third of the membership of the House of Representatives, or a total of 215 members ... the motion is approved," House Speaker Martin Romualdez told lawmakers.

Duterte's fate now lies in the hands of the Philippines' 24 senators, two-thirds of whom must vote for her impeachment to make it a reality. A trial date has yet to be set.

Yesterday's filing comes days before

campaigning officially begins for mid-term elections, widely expected to set the table for the 2028 presidential race.

The relationship between Duterte and Marcos is at a nadir, their former alliance giving way to a months-long public battle that has seen the trading of wild accusations, including an alleged death threat that remains under investigation.

But Marcos had previously urged Congress not to pursue Duterte's impeachment, calling it a "storm in a teacup" that would distract the legislature from its primary responsibilities.

Marcos' executive secretary Lucas Bersamin, however, said on Monday that the Office of the President would "not interfere" with the impeachment complaints.

House of Representatives member Percival Cendana, who had backed one of the three impeachment complaints, urged his colleagues to take quick action at a rally on Friday that drew thousands calling for Duterte's impeachment.

Every day of inaction "condones the impunity, the abuse of power and the harassment that Duterte is doing to our

country's leaders", he told reporters.

But that rally was dwarfed by one a conservative sect organised that drew hundreds of thousands to the street on Jan 13 opposing the impeachment.

Duterte was widely tipped to succeed her father Rodrigo as president in 2022 elections but stepped aside to back Marcos and later ran for vice-president on his ticket.

But the alliance has since imploded. In November, she delivered an expletive-laden speech saying she had ordered someone to kill Marcos if she herself was assassinated.

She later denied that her comments constituted a death threat, saying she had only been expressing "consternation" with the administration's failures.

The alleged assassination threat was among the allegations included in the last of the three complaints filed against Duterte, lodged on Dec 19 by seven Manila-based Catholic priests.

It said: "Impeachment is the necessary, ultimate line of defence against corruption at the highest rungs of officialdom. She cannot be vice-president a minute longer." - AFP

Avoid AI tools, India ministry staff told

NEW DELHI: India's Finance Ministry has asked its employees to avoid using AI tools including ChatGPT and DeepSeek for official purposes, citing risks posed to confidentiality of government documents and data, an internal department advisory showed.

Reports of the advisory surfaced on social media on Tuesday, ahead of a scheduled visit to India by OpenAI chief Sam Altman, when he is also due to meet the IT minister.

"It has been determined that AI tools and AI apps (such as ChatGPT, DeepSeek etc) in the office computers and devices pose risks for confidentiality of (government) data and documents," said the advisory by the Indian Finance Ministry dated Jan 29.

Finance Ministry spokespersons, ChatGPT-parent OpenAI and DeepSeek did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Three Finance Ministry officials said the note was genuine and the note was issued internally this week.

Reuters could not immediately confirm whether similar directives have been issued for other ministries.

OpenAI is facing heat in India due to a high-profile copyright infringement battle with the country's top media houses, and has said in court filings that it does not have its servers in the country and Indian courts should not hear the matter. - Reuters

BRIEFS

CIA OFFERS BUYOUTS TO WORKFORCE

WASHINGTON: The Central Intelligence Agency offered buyouts to its entire workforce on Tuesday, citing an aim to bring the agency in line with President Donald Trump's priorities. A CIA spokesperson said in a statement the moves were meant to align the agency with the goals of new CIA Director John Ratcliffe. The agency does not disclose its budget or the number of people it employs. It did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Earlier on Tuesday, unions representing US government employees filed a lawsuit to block the Trump administration's plan to offer buyouts to federal workers. - Reuters

MODI TAKES RITUAL DIP AT MEGA-FESTIVAL

PRAYAGRAJ: Prime Minister Narendra Modi took a ritual river dip yesterday at the world's largest religious festival. Many millions of people have already bathed in the confluence of rivers at the Kumbh Mela, a six-week-long Hindu celebration of prayer and bathing held every 12 years. Modi, dressed in a saffron-coloured top and counting prayer beads in his hands, waded out thigh-deep to the holiest site of the Sangam, the meeting point of the Ganges, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati rivers. He then dunked his head under the waters several times. Modi said he was "blessed" to take part, calling it a "moment of divine connection". - AFP



AIR EXERCISES ... A pair of Philippine Air Force FA-50 fighter aircraft (bottom) in formation flight with a pair of US Air Force B-1B bombers during training over the South China Sea on Tuesday. - AFP/PIC

Australia bans DeepSeek on govt devices

SYDNEY: Australia has banned DeepSeek from all government devices on the advice of security agencies, a top official said yesterday, citing privacy and malware risks.

The DeepSeek chatbot has astounded industry insiders and upended financial markets since it was released last month.

But a growing list of countries including South Korea, Italy and France have voiced concerns about the application's security and data practices.

Australia upped the ante overnight banning DeepSeek from all government devices, one of the

toughest moves against the Chinese chatbot yet.

"This is an action the government has taken on the advice of security agencies. It's not a symbolic move," said government cyber security envoy Andrew Charlton.

"We don't want to expose government systems to these applications."

Risks included that uploaded information "might not be kept private", Charlton told national broadcaster ABC, and that applications such as DeepSeek "may expose you to malware".

Australia's Home Affairs

Department issued a directive to government employees overnight.

"After considering threat and risk analysis, I have determined that the use of DeepSeek products, applications and web services poses an unacceptable level of security risk to the Australian government," Home Affairs Department Secretary Stephanie Foster said in the directive.

As of yesterday all non-corporate Commonwealth entities must "identify and remove all existing instances of DeepSeek products, applications and web services on all Australian government systems and mobile devices," she said.

The directive also required that "access, use or installation of DeepSeek products" be prevented across government systems and mobile devices.

It has garnered bipartisan support among Australian politicians.

In 2018 Australia banned Huawei from its national 5G network, citing national security concerns.

TikTok was banned from government devices in 2023 on the advice of Australian intelligence agencies.

Cyber security researcher Dana McKay said DeepSeek posed a genuine risk.

"All Chinese companies are required to store their data in China. And all of that data is subject to inspection by the Chinese government," she said.

"The other thing DeepSeek says explicitly in its privacy policy is that it collects keystroke data on typing patterns," said McKay, from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology.

"You can identify an individual through that."

"If you know some work is coming from a government machine, and they go home and search for something unsavoury, then you have leverage over them." - AFP

Trump vows to take over Gaza, create 'Riviera'

► Palestinians fear another 'Nakba' in the making

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump said the US would take over war-ravaged Gaza and create a "Riviera of the Middle East" after resettling Palestinians elsewhere, shattering decades of US policy on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and drawing regional condemnation.

The shock move drew swift condemnation from regional heavyweight Saudi Arabia which Trump hopes will establish ties with Israel.

An official from Hamas, which ruled the Gaza Strip before fighting Israel in a brutal war, said Trump's statement about taking over the enclave were "absurd".

"Trump's remarks about his desire to control Gaza are ridiculous and absurd, and any ideas of this kind are capable of igniting the region," Sami Abu Zuhri said.

Trump unveiled his surprise plan without providing specifics, at a joint press conference on Tuesday with visiting Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

"The US will take over the Gaza Strip and we will do a job with it too ... we're going to develop it, create thousands and thousands of jobs, and it'll be something that the entire Middle East can be very proud of," Trump told reporters, sounding like the real estate developer he once was.

The announcement followed Trump's shock proposal earlier on Tuesday for the permanent resettlement of the more than two million Palestinians from Gaza to neighbouring countries, calling the enclave – where the first phase of a fragile Israel-Hamas ceasefire and hostage release deal is in effect – a "demolition site".

The US taking a direct stake in Gaza would run counter to longtime policy in Washington and for much of the international community, which has held that Gaza would be part of a future Palestinian state that includes the occupied West Bank.

Trump can expect allies and foes alike to strongly oppose any US takeover of Gaza, and his proposal raises questions whether Middle East power Saudi Arabia would be willing to join a renewed US-brokered push for a historic normalisation of relations with US ally Israel.

Saudi Arabia, also a key US ally, rejects any attempts to displace the Palestinians from their land, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Saudi Arabia said it would not establish ties with Israel without the creation of a

Palestinian state, contradicting US President Donald Trump's claim that Riyadh was not demanding a Palestinian homeland when he said the US wants to take over the Gaza Strip.

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has affirmed the kingdom's position in "a clear and explicit manner" that does not allow for any interpretation under any circumstances, the statement said.

Trump said that he plans to visit Gaza, Israel and Saudi Arabia. Trump did not say when he plans to go on such a trip.

Netanyahu would not be drawn into discussing the proposal in depth other than to praise Trump for trying a new approach.

The Israeli leader, whose military had engaged in more than a year of fierce fighting with Hamas in Gaza, said Trump was "thinking outside the box with fresh ideas" and was "showing willingness to puncture conventional thinking".

Displacement is a highly sensitive issue among both Palestinians and Arab countries.

As fighting raged in the Gaza war, Palestinians feared they would suffer from another "Nakba", or catastrophe, the time when hundreds of thousands were dispossessed of their homes in the war at the birth of the state of Israel.

When it comes to Saudi policy in the Middle East, the stakes are high for both Trump and Israel.

The United States had led months of diplomacy to get Saudi Arabia, one of the most powerful and influential Arab states, to

normalise ties with Israel and recognise the country. But the Gaza war, which began in October 2023, led Riyadh to shelve the matter.

Trump would like Saudi Arabia to follow in the footsteps of the United Arab Emirates, a Middle East trade and business hub, and Bahrain which signed the Abraham Accords in 2020 and normalised ties with Israel.

In doing so, they became the first Arab states in a quarter century to break a longstanding taboo.

Establishing ties with Saudi Arabia would be a grand prize for Israel because the kingdom has vast influence in the Muslim world and is the world's biggest oil exporter.

Trump on Tuesday urged Jordan, Egypt and other Arab states to take in Gazans, saying Palestinians had no alternative but to abandon the coastal strip, which must be rebuilt after nearly 16 months of a devastating war between Israel and Hamas.

A UN damage assessment released in January showed that clearing over 50 million tonnes of rubble left in Gaza in the aftermath of Israel's bombardment could take 21 years and cost up to US\$1.2 billion (RM5.3 billion).

The United Nations and the United States, until Trump's announcement, have long endorsed a vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side within secure and recognised borders.

Palestinians want a state in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza Strip, all territories captured by Israel in the 1967 war with neighbouring Arab states. – Reuters



Palestinians walk past the rubble of buildings destroyed by the Israeli offensive in Rafah. – REUTERS/SPIC

BRIEFS

ABBAS 'STRONGLY REJECTS' PROPOSAL

RAMALLAH: Palestinian president Mahmud Abbas "strongly rejected" President Donald Trump's proposal to "take over" and "own" the Gaza Strip. "The Palestinian leadership expressed its strong rejection of calls to seize the Gaza Strip and displace Palestinians outside their homeland," Abbas' office said, adding that "legitimate Palestinian rights are not negotiable". His spokesman Nabil Abu Rudeina said the Gaza Strip "is an integral part of the State of Palestine". The Palestine Liberation Organisation also condemned Trump's proposal to relocate Gazans to Egypt or Jordan. It rejected "all calls for the displacement of Palestinians from their homeland", said its secretary general, Hussein al-Sheikh. – AFP

FRANCE OPPOSES FORCED DISPLACEMENT

PARIS: France rejected comments suggesting the United States could take control of Gaza and Palestinians could be displaced saying it would violate international law and destabilise the region. "France reiterates its opposition to any displacement, which would constitute a serious violation of international law, an attack on the legitimate aspirations of the Palestinians, but also a major obstacle to the two-state solution and a major destabilising factor for the region," Foreign Ministry spokesman Christophe Lemoine said. He said the future of Gaza should be in the context of a Palestinian state and not controlled by a third country. – Reuters

CHINA AGAINST PLAN TO TAKE OVER ENCLAVE

ISTANBUL: China rebuffed plans to "take over" Gaza, saying it opposes forced displacement of Palestinians. Beijing "has always believed that 'the Palestinians governing Palestine' is the fundamental principle for postwar governance in Gaza," said Foreign Ministry spokesman. "We oppose the forced displacement and relocation of the population in Gaza." The ministry said it hopes "all relevant parties will take the ceasefire and post-war governance as an opportunity to push the Palestinian issue back onto the correct track of political resolution based on the 'two-state solution', to achieve lasting peace." – Bernama

RUSSIA BACKS TWO-STATE SOLUTION

MOSCOW: Russia believes a settlement in the Middle East is only possible on the basis of a two-state solution, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said yesterday after President Donald Trump said he would like the United States to take over the Gaza Strip. "This is enshrined in the relevant UN Security Council resolution, this is the thesis that is shared by the majority of countries involved in this problem. We support it and believe that this is the only possible option," Peskov said Trump's resettlement idea had been rejected by major Arab capitals. – Reuters

UNACCEPTABLE, SAYS TURKIYE MINISTER

ISTANBUL: Turkey's top diplomat lashed out at the proposal to take over the Gaza Strip and resettle Palestinians. "This is unacceptable," Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan said. He said relocating Palestinians was something "neither we nor the region can accept". "It is wrong to even bring it up for discussion," US President Donald Trump had said on Tuesday he would redevelop the war-battered territory. – AFP

Author Neil Gaiman and wife sued for sexual assault

WILMINGTON: The best-selling author Neil Gaiman and his estranged wife were sued by a New Zealand woman who is seeking millions of dollars for alleged sexual abuse and human trafficking while she worked for them as a nanny and babysitter.

Scarlett Pavlovich said Gaiman, author of *The Sandman* comic book series and the novel *American Gods*, repeatedly raped her while she worked for him and Amanda Palmer in 2022, causing physical, mental and emotional harm.

Palmer was accused of knowing that Pavlovich was vulnerable, and failing to warn that Gaiman had a history of predatory behaviour, according to court papers.

The couple were named as defendants in Pavlovich's lawsuit filed in the federal court in Madison, Wisconsin. Palmer is the sole

defendant in Pavlovich's federal lawsuits filed in Manhattan and Boston.

Gaiman owns a property in Wisconsin and Palmer is a resident of either New York or Massachusetts, according to the lawsuits.

Gaiman denied allegations of inappropriate sexual relations in a January blog post, following media reports on the allegations.

"I have never engaged in non-consensual sexual activity with anyone. Ever," he wrote. Gaiman has not been criminally charged.

Palmer's representative did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Tuesday.

The lawsuits seek unspecified damages that are "reasonably believed" to exceed US\$1 million (RM4.4 million) on multiple claims.

According to court papers, Palmer met Pavlovich in Auckland, New Zealand in 2020,

when Pavlovich was 22 and homeless, and was aware Pavlovich suffered from mental health problems.

Then in 2022, when Palmer and Gaiman were living separately on Waiheke Island near Auckland, Palmer allegedly asked Pavlovich to begin babysitting the couple's child.

Desperate for money and housing, Pavlovich agreed, but soon Gaiman began sexually abusing her, including by raping her, choking her and assaulting her in the presence of his child, according to court papers.

The abuse allegedly lasted several weeks, until Gaiman and his child left for Europe.

According to court papers, Pavlovich filed a police report accusing Gaiman of sexual assault, but the police did nothing because Palmer refused to talk with them. – Reuters



COMMENT by Muhammad Najib

Combatting scams and disinformation

WE all know that one person in our WhatsApp group – the self-appointed “news anchor” – who eagerly shares the latest headlines, only to later realise they have spread false information.

One day, it is a “miracle cure” for every disease under the sun. Next, it is a viral warning about a non-existent crime wave. And let us not forget those get-rich-quick schemes that promise you financial freedom, but only end in regret.

Misinformation is like wildfire – one spark can quickly spread, fuelled by fear, curiosity or plain old excitement.

While we may shrug it off when it does not directly affect us, the truth is, misinformation is not just annoying – it is dangerous. It can stir up hatred between communities, erode trust in institutions and, in worst cases, lead to real-world harm.

Meanwhile, scams continue to drain life savings, leaving victims devastated. However, what if we had a fire extinguisher to put out these viral flames before they spread?

Can AI help tackle misinformation?

The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) recently launched Aifa – the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Fact-checking Agent – to help counter disinformation.

Aifa pulls verified information from official government sources, such as Sebenarnya.my, and answers user queries based on this data.

Designed to support Malaysia's diverse linguistic landscape, Aifa can process information in Malay, English, Chinese and Tamil (with some limitations for Kadazan-Dusun and Iban). Users can ask Aifa a

question, and if it does not have the answer, it will suggest credible sources.

Aifa is accessible through Sebenarnya.my and via WhatsApp. To use it, users can add Aifa's WhatsApp number: +60 3-8688 7997. The aim is to encourage people to fact-check information before sharing it, making them more discerning about the messages they send and receive.

Since Aifa is integrated with WhatsApp, users can quickly forward verified responses to their groups or directly share Aifa's number, helping the community verify information.

Will it work?

Public skepticism is high, and the loudest voices tend to be the most critical.

Governments, under constant scrutiny, are often cautious in adopting new technologies as any misstep invites ridicule.

There is little reward for being early and bold – sometimes, waiting can seem like the safest strategy.

Critics will question whether Aifa is necessary and whether it can keep up with the sheer volume and speed of disinformation.

How will its success be measured? Can an AI fact-checker evolve quickly enough to stay relevant? Perhaps, most fundamentally, should the government be the ultimate arbiter of truth? What checks and balances are in place?

These are fair concerns. Without a clear framework to measure the spread of disinformation and scams, assessing Aifa's effectiveness will be challenging.

At best, the government can track adoption metrics, such as the number of users, queries and

successfully verified information.

As for response quality, the real test will be in its credibility. Any bias favouring the government will likely go viral, drawing public scrutiny.

Step in the right direction

Despite the uncertainties, the government's decision to explore AI-driven fact-checking is bold. The fact that MCMC, the country's communications regulator, is leading the charge may inspire other government agencies to follow suit, learning from its successes and missteps.

Malaysia is positioning itself as a hub for AI-driven industries, from data centres and semiconductor design to the newly launched National AI Office under the Digital Ministry.

To lead in AI, the government must move beyond policy discussions and start experimenting with practical applications. By deploying AI tools like Aifa, it can better understand AI's strengths and limitations, and how to maximise its impact.

For now, Aifa is a first step, a toe in the water. It will take time before the government fully immerses itself in AI adoption, let alone masters it.

However, with the right approach, Malaysia has the potential to lead AI deployment in the region. The challenge now is to learn fast and to ensure that AI tools serve the public interest while maintaining trust and transparency.

Muhammad Najib is a DAP member and was in the working committee for the write-up of the Tawaran Harapan manifesto from Pakatan Harapan during the 15th General Election. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com



Addiction to sugary drinks is real. It is no surprise that over 53% of Malaysians screened were found to be overweight or obese, according to the National Health Screening Initiative 2023. – **ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN**

Fizzing out the sweet trap

THIS Chinese New Year, amidst the endless flow of drinks and cookies, I decided to treat myself and indulge in these luxuries.

I usually don't drink carbonated beverages but I thought I would reward myself with a can or two on the first day of the celebration.

With few days into the festivities, I found myself unconsciously heading to the fridge for a carbonated drink. Thoughts like “It's okay” and “A can or two won't hurt” kept running through my mind as I continued.

Then, I realised I even craved it whenever I was watching a movie. I did not notice this until my partner pointed it out. That is when I realised I had developed an unconscious craving for sugary drinks, and this is dangerous.

Addiction to sugary drinks is real. It is no surprise that over 53% of Malaysians screened were found to be overweight or obese, according to the National Health Screening Initiative 2023.

According to a report from the World Obesity Federation, 41% of Malaysian adults will be obese by 2035. This is alarming. Imagine those who have been drinking carbonated drinks since they were young.

I constantly have to remind myself not to fall into this trap. To ensure that I do not constantly reach for carbonated drinks, I

make sure to have water nearby at all times.

Imagine the struggle for tobacco users trying to quit, especially heavy smokers. What about gambling addiction, where the craving for the thrill of winning can lead people to unconsciously spend a fortune?

While I have found my own way to reduce my intake of carbonated drinks, what about those battling tobacco and gambling addictions?

It is important to find alternatives that can help curb these addictions. A slow and steady approach tends to be more effective. Asking someone to quit cold turkey is often unreasonable and can intensify cravings.

For heavy tobacco users, perhaps an alternative for something less harmful, like nicotine pouches, vape or heated tobacco may help. These options can offer similar satisfaction without inflicting much harm on the body.

For gambling addicts, channeling the craving for excitement into board or card games like Uno or Monopoly could be a healthier option. These games offer the thrill of competition and strategy without the financial risks associated with gambling.

Vanessa May

EDUCATION

FOCUS 2025

Education matters remain an important component of Malaysian society. Today the landscape is fast paced with new exciting developments in technology such as AI, coding, virtual reality, and cybersecurity, leading the way for changes in curriculum development. To showcase the latest and most updated content, we invite you join us in 2025, and be part of our Education Focus!



Economics and politics of DeepSeek

ON Jan 20, a day when the tech titans of the West were in prominent attendance at Trump's presidential inauguration, a little known China artificial intelligence (AI) company DeepSeek released an open source version of its R1 model, a technical report as well as licensing for unrestricted commercial use.

This was no ordinary AI app. It matched and surpassed the leading AI app, OpenAI's ChatGPT, on several key benchmarks. Perhaps most important to ordinary as well as business users of AI apps, it was free and locally deployable.

"Free open source" refers to software that is available for anyone to use, modify and distribute without cost, meaning the source code is publicly accessible and can be changed by anyone, typically under a licence that allows for such modifications and sharing; essentially, it is software where the code is openly available and can be used freely by anyone.

Sputnik moment impact

The response was as if a thunderbolt had been unleashed on the AI tech world in which the US is the dominant player and the world's leader.

The app immediately became the most downloaded free app in the US and other countries.

According to Bloomberg, DeepSeek's AI assistant topped the list of most downloaded mobile apps across 140 markets, with India accounting for the largest percentage of new users at the end of January.

It rose to the No.1 spot on Apple Inc's App Store on Jan 26, and has held that position globally since. The app has also held the top spot on Alphabet Inc's Android Play Store in the US since Jan 28.

With 16 million downloads over its first 18 days, the app almost doubled the nine million notched by OpenAI's ChatGPT when it was first released.

The positive response of AI consumers – researchers, small and big time businesses, professionals and netizens all over the world – stands in contrast to global stock markets where the Chinese low budget AI is causing investors to question everything that they know about AI and related stocks and their valuation.

On Jan 27, the US stock market recomputed the valuation on AI and chip stocks that have been a key player in the US bull market run. The Nasdaq 100 sank 3% while the S&P 500 dropped 1.5%. A closely watched gauge of chipmakers plunged the most since March 2020.

Nvidia, the poster child of America's AI frenzy, sank 17%. This was the biggest market-cap loss for a single stock ever as investors chewed over the revelation that DeepSeek was

developed and operates at a fraction of the billions of dollars that US AI companies such as Meta, Alphabet and others have spent on Nvidia and other chips to upgrade their hardware.

Fast facts

- 77% of devices being used have some form of AI.
- Nine out of 10 organisations support AI for a competitive advantage.
- AI is projected to contribute US\$15.7 trillion (RM70.15 trillion) to the global economy by 2030.
- By 2025, AI might eliminate 85 million jobs but create 97 million new ones, resulting in a net gain of 12 million jobs.
- 63% of organisations intend to adopt AI globally within the next three years.
- AI market size is expected to grow by at least 120% year-over-year.
- In 2024, the global AI market was projected to grow 33% year-over-year.
- Only a third of consumers think they are using AI platform while actual usage is 77%.



ANOTHER TAKE
BY LIM TECK GHEE

"The most formidable of the criticisms DeepSeek has to deal with is that it is a threat to US national security and world leadership."

Another China game changer?

What comes next for DeepSeek may not be up to consumers or the market for AI based in the US and ally countries to decide. Instead, it may be the latest battlefield that the US sees a need to fight to stymie the rise of China as a world power.

It is significant that a day after his inauguration and before the US market meltdown, President Donald Trump announced a joint venture between OpenAI, SoftBank and Oracle to create up to US\$500 billion in computing infrastructure to power AI.

The venture, called Stargate, was to invest in US data centres and servers throughout the country. According to Trump, this was "the largest AI infrastructure project by far in history" and would keep "the future of technology" in the US.

Following the rout in Wall Street, Trump told a Republican congressional retreat in Miami that he thought the Chinese AI could act as a spur for the US companies to innovate.

"Hopefully, the release of DeepSeek AI from a Chinese company should be a wake-up call for our industries that we need to be laser-focused on competing to win."

"I would say that could be a positive. So, instead of spending billions and billions, you will spend less, and you will come up with, hopefully, the same solution."

Despite this initial positive response, Trump may change his mind on welcoming DeepSeek. This is if the anti-China lobby and bandwagon of business interests get their way.

The opening shots of a likely sustained



According to Bloomberg, DeepSeek's AI assistant topped the list of most downloaded mobile apps across 140 markets, with India accounting for the largest percentage of new users at the end of January. – REUTERS/SPIC

battle that DeepSeek has to fight has already been launched. A widely circulated social media video describes an 83-hour digital war fought by DeepSeek staff and associates during the Chinese New Year period to deal with a large-scale cyber attack emanating from an unknown but highly sophisticated adversary based in the US using

- phishing emails sent to employees to steal credentials;
 - brute-force attempts to crack passwords and breach firewalls; and
 - injection of malicious data, including ransomware and spyware.
- This first threat to DeepSeek was repulsed. What will be more difficult is the emerging alignment of ideological and financial interests that have emerged to ensure that DeepSeek is not only pushed back but brought down. This can be seen in the numerous Western media reports accusing DeepSeek of
- misleading about its true development cost;
 - intellectual property infringement or theft;
 - operating on restricted AI and smuggled chips; and
 - political bias and control by China.

Defenders of DeepSeek point out that the allegations have little or no substance. They also contend that the main charge levelled by current AI market leader, OpenAI – claiming that DeepSeek has engaged in intellectual property infringement or theft through distillation of data – smacks of hypocrisy and worse, especially since OpenAI is facing more than a dozen copyright lawsuits alleging use of copyright-protected works to train the large-language models used by its ChatGPT.

The most formidable of the criticisms DeepSeek has to deal with is that it is a threat to US national security and world leadership. Among those beating the drums of war against

DeepSeek are congressional leaders, entrepreneurs heavily invested in the current AI technology and media "experts" who use loaded questions about Xinjiang, Tibet and other topics to claim that DeepSeek is "incredibly dangerous for free speech" by permitting China to control political narratives and others in the anti-China camp.

Defenders

On DeepSeek's side, we have seen unexpected support from some key tech leaders. Nvidia's CEO, Jensen Huang, described DeepSeek's R1 as "an excellent AI advancement", although his company and his personal worth were the biggest losers from the Silicon Valley tech rout.

Microsoft's Satya Nadella praised it for its "real innovations"; OpenAI's Sam Altman described it as "clearly a great model"; whilst Apple CEO Tim Cook said, "innovation that drives efficiency is a good thing".

The most important benefit that DeepSeek and other new AI apps, such as Alibaba's Qwen2.5-VL, are providing is the democratisation of AI beyond the control of any single country or company.

Providing free open-source AI will be key to levelling the playing field in access to information and skills for everyone with a handphone. This potential is much more than the politics, economics or military implications that US critics of China's AI are focusing on.

By restricting or banning DeepSeek or in dealing with it as another new cold war front as with Huawei and TikTok previously, the US and its allies want the rest of the world to end as the losers.

Lim Teck Ghee's Another Take is aimed at demystifying social orthodoxy.
Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Academic voices matter in selection of university VCs



THE government should consider allowing academic staff in universities to elect their vice chancellors (VC) or rectors through a democratic process.

This would require amendments to the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and other regulations governing the appointment of top university positions.

The public is advocating a more democratic

and transparent method of selecting VC to ensure that only qualified and suitable candidates are chosen. This could strengthen the role of universities in society and enhance the quality of education.

The vice chancellor plays a key role as the principal academic and administrative officer, responsible for managing the university's finances, representing the institution internally and externally, and overseeing its mission and objectives.

The higher education minister currently oversees VC appointments, which typically involve interviews and selection based on

specific criteria set by the ministry and universities.

Introducing an election process would allow academics to participate directly in their university's leadership, giving them a voice in the selection of their top administrator.

Similar to a general election, qualified candidates could campaign, participate in debates and present their vision for the university.

Academics would then have the opportunity to question candidates and vote for their preferred choice.

An elected VC would likely have greater

respect and trust from the academic community as they would be chosen by their peers.

This democratic approach could enhance public trust in higher education institutions and the education system as a whole.

The process should also be extended to the appointment of deputy VC. The government should form a special committee to explore the feasibility of implementing this proposal.

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Sultan of Selangor graces launch of Elmina Lakeside Mall & Elmina Outdoor Sculpture Museum

SHAH ALAM: Sime Darby Property started off the year on a high note with the launch of the Elmina Lakeside Mall and Elmina Outdoor Sculpture Museum, officiated by Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah.

Also present at the launch event were Tengku Permaisuri Selangor, Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin; and Menti Besar Selangor Datuk Seri

Amirudin Shari, among other dignitaries and state agency officials.

The mall, which has been operational since August 2024, serves as a vibrant retail and leisure hub for the City of Elmina and beyond. Anchored by key tenants such as Jaya Grocer, Harvey Norman, Kenny Hills Bakers, Nak Nak, and Ediya Coffee — a popular Korean coffee chain making its Malaysian debut — ELM caters to a

diverse and growing community.

Spanning over 200,000 sq ft of net lettable area across 17.2 acres, it is strategically located within a 20-minute drive for a catchment population of 870,000 residents, making it a key driver of connectivity and convenience.

Sime Darby Property group managing director and CEO Datuk Seri Azmir Merican said Elmina Lakeside

Mall has exceeded their expectations from the outset, achieving an impressive 99% occupancy rate and attracting significant footfall, with over 180,000 visitors during the opening week and a sustained monthly average of 640,000.

"The Elmina Outdoor Sculpture Museum celebrates the significance of art and creative expression while providing a platform to promote

Malaysia's finest contemporary artists to regional and international prominence. We believe that this initiative will elevate the City of Elmina beyond a residential and commercial centre into a destination for arts and culture," said Azmir.

The City of Elmina spans across 6,500 acres and integrates residential, commercial, and industrial developments.

M'sian market entering upcycle, says Knight Frank

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's property market is entering an upcycle on the back of stable government as well as the Asean chairmanship, according to Knight Frank.

Knight Frank executive director of research and consultancy Amy Wong said 2025 is expected to be a 'good year' for the property sector.

"Malaysia currently has all its chess pieces in place. We have a stable government, a prime minister people recognise, and a group of ministers driving foreign investments. Our strategic location in Southeast Asia remains a key advantage, and with the Asean chairmanship, we are showcasing Malaysia as ready and open for business," she told the media at the 18th Bursa-HLIB Stratum focus series titled "Property sector: Entering a new cycle" recently.

Wong said Malaysia is positioned as one of the most attractive markets in the region outside Singapore.

"Singapore is often compared to global financial hubs such as Hong Kong and Tokyo. But within the rest of Southeast Asia, Malaysia is very well-placed," Wong said.

She emphasized the country's strategic advantages, including its relative safety from natural disasters as it lies outside the Pacific Ring of Fire.

"We have everything going for us, and we're actively sharing this story with the world," she added.

"With these factors in place, I believe 2025 will be a positive year for the property market," Wong remarked.

She identified industrial property as a sector likely to see continued growth on the back of government policies encouraging foreign direct investments (FDI).

"FDIs drive the economy through manufacturing plants and multinational corporations setting up operations here.

"Key areas benefiting from this include the Klang Valley, Johor with its strong port connectivity to Singapore, and the electronics hub in Penang and Kedah," she said.

Wong also addressed the impact of US restrictions on AI chips that could slightly temper the rapid growth of data centres but not derail their upward trajectory.

"The demand for data centres stems from increasing cloud computing needs, daily internet usage, and essential services like banking and e-commerce. While Trump tariffs may slow the spike, the overall trend remains positive," she said.

DWSB hopes to wrap up sales of TuJu Residences by year-end

BY JOHN GILBERT
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KUALA LUMPUR: Distinctive World Sdn Bhd (DWSB), the property developer behind the TuJu Residences project, aims to achieve a sales rate of approximately 75% to 80% by the first half of 2025.

Executive director and CEO Lim Ech Chan said looking further ahead, the company anticipates wrapping up its sales activities for the development by the end of 2025.

"Our goal is to complete sales by the close of that year," he told *SunBiz*.

Commenting on pricing strategies, Lim said, "As we continue selling, we periodically adjust prices upwards. Buyers who come in later may face higher prices."

Lim also shared its ambition to move the majority of remaining units by the end of the current year, reflecting a confident outlook on market demand for TuJu Residences.

With prices from RM440,000 and above, TuJu Residences offers strategic connectivity near Mont Kiara and Mitec, tapping into strong rental demand from business professionals and event attendees.

Aligned with the PTKL 2040 vision for Segambut, it combines affordability, sustainability, and

Developer of RM750 million GDV project in Kuala Lumpur targets 75-80% take-up of units by first six months of 2025

access to highways and MRT, promising good rental yields and long-term growth potential.

With a GDV of RM750 million, TuJu Residences reflects a significant investment for many Malaysians.

TuJu Residences offers 10 distinct layouts ranging from 710 sq ft to 1,442 sq ft, catering to single professionals and multi-generational families alike.

Its low-density design includes separate lift lobbies for each tower and a wellness-centric theme with over 50 recreational amenities.

The development stands out for its sustainable design, practical layouts, and exclusive facilities, making it a compelling choice for both buyers and investors.

Executive director Monica Lai said with the success of TuJu Residences, DWSB is exploring future projects aligned with the Pelan Pembangunan Kuala Lumpur (PTKL) 2040, which envisions Segambut as a wellness-centric,

sustainable urban district.

"Our commitment remains focused on innovative, community-oriented developments that drive this transformation.

"Building on TuJu Residences' achievements, our plans include Parcel 2, a proposed project at the current sales gallery site, designed to complement TuJu's modern, sustainable living concept.

"While Segambut remains a key growth area, we are also evaluating opportunities in other strategic locations across Greater Kuala Lumpur to expand our impact," she said.

Lai said TuJu Residences appeals to a diverse demographic, driven by demand for flexible, modern housing solutions.

She said local buyers, particularly young professionals and families, are drawn to its affordable pricing, versatile layouts, and wellness-focused amenities.

Multi-generational households

appreciate the range of unit sizes, from 710 sq ft to 1,442 sq ft, designed to meet evolving family needs.

"Foreign interest primarily comes from Singapore, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, Indonesia, and Myanmar, attracted by its strategic location, competitive pricing, and capital appreciation potential.

"Young families and professionals dominate demand, valuing its blend of affordability, accessibility, and community-centric design, making it a standout in Kuala Lumpur's dynamic property market," Lai said.

She said TuJu Residences embraces a wellness-centric concept, addressing the growing demand for homes that prioritise health, sustainability, and well-being.

"With green living features, thoughtfully designed recreational spaces, and layouts suited for multi-generational living, it offers a seamless blend of comfort and functionality.

"Positioned at the forefront of Segambut's transformation into the envisioned North Kiara township, the development reflects the area's rejuvenation under the Kuala Lumpur Structure Plan 2040, driven by key players such as Tan Chong and Genting Bhd," she said.

Rahim & Co believes sector will see steady growth in 2025

KUALA LUMPUR: The local property market is poised for steady growth in 2025, driven by sustained momentum in owner-occupier residential developments and the rise of emerging industries such as data centres and renewable energy.

Rahim & Co executive chairman Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Abdul Rahman said the convergence of digitalisation, sustainability, environmental, social, and governance awareness, and rising demand for integrated urban living will shape Malaysia's property market.

"With continued government support, such as through incentives for affordable housing, investor-friendly policies, as well as green building and tech-driven initiatives, the property market is expected to continue regenerating steadily," he said at the preview of the company's Property Market Review

2024/2025 report.

While challenges persist, the outlook remains positive for developers who can adapt to the market's evolving needs.

Its research director Sulaiman Akhmady Mohd Saheh said strategic infrastructure investments including the East Coast Rail Link, Pan Borneo Highway and Rapid Transit System, will create new investment opportunities.

"The refined Malaysia My Second Home programme and the upcoming Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone are also expected to generate significant interest.

"In the commercial sector, despite supply pressure, 'flight-to-green' and 'flight-to-quality' trends will redefine the office and retail markets, creating a new narrative within the segment," he said, adding that the tone for 2025 is likely to be influenced by factors



Digitalisation, sustainability, and urban living trends will define Malaysia's property market. — **BERNAMAPIX**

such as fuel subsidy and electricity tariff adjustments and global uncertainties.

"The retail sector is poised for gradual revitalisation, with new malls and stores thriving. The occupancy rate of shopping centres is expected

to improve as operators embrace innovation and mall instructiveness to boost visitors' experience," he said.

In the office market, the shift towards remote and hybrid work models is transforming office space demand. — **Bernama**



Guidelines on ethical use of general AI out by end of this month

■ BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is set to introduce guidelines on ethical use of general artificial intelligence (AI) by the end of this month, as part of the government's broader efforts to regulate AI adoption while ensuring responsible and secure practices.

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo emphasised the need for a structured framework to address concerns such as bias, misinformation and responsible AI deployment.

"The new guidelines are expected to provide clarity on AI usage within general usage, ensuring that AI tools are used ethically and transparently," he said at the "AI at Work" joint press briefing held by the Digital Ministry and Google Cloud yesterday.

Gobind said the government has been engaging with multiple stakeholders, including technology companies such as Google, Microsoft and Intel, to develop training programmes and AI initiatives that align with Malaysia's digital economy strategy. "The upcoming guidelines will help define best practices for AI implementation while mitigating risks associated with emerging technologies."

They will also address concerns over AI-generated misinformation and bias in decision-making, Gobind said.

"As AI models are trained on vast data sets, there is growing concern that they may unintentionally favour certain perspectives or reinforce existing biases. The government aims to establish mechanisms to ensure that AI tools used in the public sector remain neutral, reliable, and aligned with national interests," he added.

Gobind said one of the key aspects of Malaysia's AI strategy is its large-scale training initiative, which will see 445,000 public officers upskilled at no cost in the collaboration with Google Cloud.

Apart from the ethical guidelines, Gobind said, the government is also targeting to establish a Data Safety and Trust Commission by the end of the year.

Malaysia on track to meet GDP growth target for 2025

■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is on track to meet its 2025 gross domestic product (GDP) growth target despite the US-China trade war on the back of drivers that include chip demand supporting medium to long-term prospects, said Economy Minister Datuk Seri Rafizi Ramli.

He noted that key hypotheses that have driven interest in the Malaysian economy over the past year remain unchanged.

"The projection that the world is going to be more digital and AI is going to be mainstream has not changed. That means the demand for chips will go up, which will bolster Malaysia's trade. Malaysia's long-term plan to ensure that

➤ Key drivers of economic prospects remain unchanged despite US-China trade war: Rafizi

Malaysia plays a pivotal role in the global supply chain has not changed either," he told reporters after the launch of the joint report by the World Bank and the Ministry of Economy titled "A Fresh Take on Reducing Inequality and Enhancing Mobility in Malaysia" yesterday.

Rafizi said the stronger ringgit over the last week indicates that investors and market participants have a positive outlook on Malaysia's economy. "It's (the strengthening ringgit) very much the function of the market because of the evolving and developing

nature of the trade war that is happening now," he said.

He explained that market expectations, speculation and projections will inevitably impact the ringgit's movement.

"So, I think we have to navigate some changes and volatility. I hope it is not going to be extreme," Rafizi said, adding that the government is monitoring the situation closely, with the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) tasked with evaluating the trade war's potential impact.

"We will take guidance from MITI on our official stance. As of now,

there is no discussion on revising Malaysia's economic growth outlook. Typically, the government's growth forecast is finalised and shared closer to the budget unless there are drastic developments," Rafizi said.

He opined that adjustments and volatility will be a permanent feature of the global economy as more economies become influential in the overall global supply chain.

"We will have to go through some adjustments and volatility. The question is whether it will be short or medium term. Eventually, the market will price in everything, provided that our fundamental growth narrative remains strong. And at the moment, I believe we still have a very strong value proposition for the world," he said.

Meanwhile, Rafizi said the Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage Bill is expected to be tabled in Parliament by early March, pending final drafting and stakeholder consultations.

"The target is to be tabled in this Parliament sitting. We are going through some final drafting. We're going through some improvements based on feedback from stakeholders. The target is to finalise and bring the Bill to Parliament in this session."

The joint report highlights the importance of building on progress to ensure that everyone benefits. Strengthening access to quality education, healthcare and employment opportunities will be key to ensuring that economic prosperity is shared by all.

"To address inequality, we have to adopt a holistic assessment, early intervention on opportunity gaps, and commit to creating a dynamic labour market," said Rafizi.



From left: World Bank senior economist Dr Laura Rodriguez, country manager for Malaysia Judith Green, poverty and equity global director Dr Luis Felipe Lopez-Calva, country director for Philippines, Malaysia & Brunei Dr Zafer Mustafaoglu, Rafizi, Economy Ministry deputy secretary-general (policy) Datuk Dr Zunika Mohamed, World Bank executive director for Southeast Asia Wempi Saputra, Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin, World Bank senior economist Ririn Salwa Purnamasari and practice manager Benu Bidani at the launch of the World Bank and Ministry of Economy joint report. — **BERNAMA PIC**

Economic resilience drives investor confidence in M'sia: Khazanah MD

■ BY JOHN GILBERT
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's economy has demonstrated strong growth and impressive returns for 2024, supported by robust exports, increasing tourist arrivals, steady stock market performance, and a strengthening ringgit, which has further solidified the country's standing. Khazanah Nasional Bhd managing director Datuk Amirul Feisal Wan Zahir said.

He said this resilience has played a crucial role in restoring investor confidence, as both local and foreign investors recognise Malaysia's economic potential.

"The positive outlook has not only reassured existing investors but has also encouraged new participants to

explore opportunities in the market. As a result, Malaysia has witnessed an uptick in foreign direct investments, with international businesses viewing the country as a reliable and profitable destination.

"The improving business environment and favourable economic indicators have contributed to sustained interest from global investors. With investor confidence steadily returning, Malaysia is poised for continued economic expansion, reinforcing its role as a key player in the regional and global markets," he told reporters at the Khazanah Annual Review 2024 yesterday.

The sovereign wealth fund achieved RM5.1 billion in profit from operations in 2024, driven by monetisation strategies, steady divi-

dend income and fair value gains from global public equities. The balance sheet remains healthy with a regulatory asset value over debt ratio at 3.2 times.

Khazanah's net asset value (NAV) surged by RM18.8 billion to reach RM103.6 billion. This growth was accompanied by a strong NAV time-weighted rate of return of 24.6%, a significant jump from 5.7% in 2023.

From the perspective of the Khazanah portfolio, NAV increased from RM33 billion in 2004 to RM104 billion in 2024, achieving a compounded annual growth rate of 5.9%. This growth aligns with Khazanah's mandate to generate sustainable returns for the nation while enhancing Malaysia's long-term wealth.

The fund's positive performance

underscores its ability to generate sustainable long-term returns, which benefit its stakeholders and the broader Malaysian economy.

Khazanah has declared a dividend of RM1 billion for 2024 to the government, contributing to a cumulative total of RM19.1 billion in dividends paid since 2004.

"We achieved significant growth in our portfolio in 2024, driven by the strong performance of our Malaysian investments, particularly our holdings in the major constituents outperforming the FBM KLCI, on the back of strong domestic market performance, the continued growth of public equities in developed markets and the recovery in emerging markets," Amirul Feisal said.

For this year, Khazanah will remain

steadfast in navigating the complex interplay of medium- to long-term global megatrends and immediate macroeconomic dynamics, he said.

With an ageing global workforce, ever-evolving technological advances, particularly in artificial intelligence, ongoing geopolitical tensions, rising protectionism and the mounting imperative of combating climate change, Khazanah's focus is on harnessing these transformative forces to build a sustainable and resilient future.

"We are confident that Malaysia will continue to be resilient, bolstered by political stability and clear policy direction. The significant influx of investments from foreign and domestic sources reflects the confidence in our nation's potential for sustained growth," Amirul Feisal said.

Maybank IB raises 2025 auto TIV forecast to 790,000 units

KUALA LUMPUR: Maybank Investment Bank (Maybank IB) has raised its automotive industry total industry volume (TIV) forecast for this year by 5% to 790,000 units, up from its previous estimate of 750,000 units.

In a research note, the investment bank said its revised forecast reflects sustained mass-market growth, offset by weakness in the premium/luxury segment, with a positive catalyst from another operating margin variance deferment.

It said mass-market sales particularly from Perodua and some Proton models, are expected to benefit from higher consumer spending, driven by the minimum wage increase this month and the civil servant wage hike in December 2024.

"The mass-premium market segment (vehicles priced RM100,000-RM200,000) will face margin pressure from intensified competition but should still contribute to overall TIV growth."

"Meanwhile, the premium/luxury segment is likely to struggle due to competition from affordable and attractive new models, including electric vehicles (EV), as well as potential petrol subsidy cuts and the high-value goods tax, which could offset growth in other segments," it said.

Maybank IB also projected that battery electric vehicle/hybrid electric vehicle adoption will reach 3% and 5%, respectively, in 2025, compared to 2% and 4% last year. This growth will be driven by new model launches and aggressive pricing, especially from completely built-up (CBU) brands rushing to sell before the EV CBU incentives expire.

However, as of October 2024, only 3,354 EV chargers had been installed, far below the 10,000-unit target for 2025, it noted. — Bernama

Fajarbaru unit and partner win RM131.6m job

PETALING JAYA: Turnkey contractor and property developer Fajarbaru Builder Group Bhd's wholly owned subsidiary FBG Builder Sdn Bhd, along with Avionics Pty Ltd (APL), has been awarded a contract by Australia's Department of Defence for the delivery phase of the design and construction of an infrastructure project at the Royal Malaysian Air Force base in Butterworth, Penang.

The contract sum for the delivery phase is RM131.6 million, with FBG Builder securing RM75.9 million, while APL's portion stands at RM55.7 million.

With the latest contract worth RM75.9 million, the total value of Fajarbaru group's work for the project has now reached RM115 million as of Tuesday. The works involve upgrades of facilities at the base, including operational and recreational enhancements to airfield pavements, ground lighting infrastructure, drainage, rugby pitch, futsal court and other infrastructure.

Govt-owned KMP invests in Swift Bridge Technologies

► Tech-focused venture capital firm in show of support for Malaysian innovator in advanced connectivity solutions

PETALING JAYA: Kumpulan Modal Perdana (KMP), a technology-focused venture capital firm fully owned by Minister of Finance (Incorporated) and under the purview of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, is making a strategic investment in Swift Bridge Technologies, a Malaysian innovator in connectivity solutions for the commercial test and measurement market capable of operating in the extremely high

frequency band.

Since its founding in 2012, Swift Bridge Technologies has provided solutions to a diverse array of sectors, including semiconductor, biomedical, electronics and electrical manufacturing, telecommunications, industrial automation, and automotive, and research institutions. Providing solutions from low-frequency applications up to 110 GigaHertz (GHz), its products are integral to

applications such as spectrum analysers, network analysers, automation testers and 5G systems, making the company a critical enabler of innovation across multiple fields.

"High-frequency electronics and communications are important in the development of current and future technology. Swift Bridge Technologies is able to complement these new developments by providing connectivity solutions in the high frequencies segment and at the same time, expand our solutions for low frequencies applications. There are very few players in the high-frequency market segment, mainly from the US and Europe, and we are proud to say that a Malaysian

company is able to compete in this segment," said managing director Datuk Chong Soon Kheng.

Meanwhile, Kumpulan Modal Perdana CEO Yarham Yunus said its investment will enable Swift Bridge Technologies to meet the increasing global demand for high-performance connectivity solutions which is highly important for current and future technology development.

"The partnership between KMP and Swift Bridge Technologies is not just a funding exercise – it's an investment in innovation, a commitment to global competitiveness, and a shared belief in the transformative power of advanced connectivity."

The funding will allow Swift Bridge Technologies to acquire advanced testing equipment for developing radio frequency (RF) cables exceeding 110GHz, paving the way for next-generation technologies; expand product offerings to include high-frequency RF cables up to 145GHz and enhanced low-frequency cable solutions; redeploy and optimise its 110GHz cables, maintaining its market leadership in high-performance connectivity and expand its R&D production from the US to Malaysia, reinforcing Malaysia's position as a global hub for advanced manufacturing.

"We are not just pushing technological boundaries, we are enabling our customers to overcome their most pressing challenges in connectivity," Chong said, adding that working with visionaries such as KMP empowers the company to deepen its research and development capabilities through its network and expertise.

The investment aligns with Swift Bridge Technologies' vision of becoming a world-class leader in connectivity technology. For KMP, the partnership underscores a strategic move to support enterprises driving innovation in connectivity technology, a critical enabler for global advancements in automation, communication and digital transformation.



KMP chairman Mohd Azhar Yahaya (left) and Chong marking the strategic investment deal.

Ge-Shen proposes disposal of Johor assets for RM35m

PETALING JAYA: Ge-Shen Corporation Bhd, a provider of precision engineering and manufacturing solutions specialising in high-quality plastic and metal components for diverse industries, has proposed to dispose of five freehold industrial properties located in Mukim Tebrau, Johor Bahru, for a total cash consideration of RM35 million.

The proposed disposal is part of the group's strategic initiative to optimise asset utilisation, consolidate manufacturing operations and enhance financial flexibility for future expansion.

The properties, currently used as office, warehouse and factory spaces,

are part of a proposed disposal, with Ge-Shen having entered into a binding term sheet with Plastico Sdn Bhd. The transaction is expected to be completed in the third quarter of 2025, subject to the execution of a definitive sale and purchase agreement.

The proposed disposal aligns with Ge-Shen's broader strategy of streamlining its asset portfolio to enhance operational efficiency. The proceeds from the transaction will be utilised to repay bank borrowings and support working capital requirements, thereby strengthening the group's financial position.

The proposed disposal is anti-

ipated to generate a proforma gain of about RM14.3 million, reinforcing the group's commitment to delivering sustainable value for shareholders.

Ge-Shen CEO Dr Adrian Foong Hong Nian said, "This strategic disposal is part of our ongoing efforts to optimise our asset base and focus on our core competencies. By divesting non-core assets, we are improving our financial flexibility, reducing debt, and positioning Ge-Shen for sustainable growth. This move will also allow us to streamline operations and consolidate our manufacturing facilities, enhancing efficiency and resource allocation.

The proceeds from this transaction will enable us to reinvest in high-value areas that drive innovation and efficiency, further solidifying our market position."

He added that Ge-Shen remains committed to its growth trajectory, focusing on expanding its capabilities in precision manufacturing while leveraging Industry 4.0 advancements. By enhancing production efficiency and strengthening its financial standing, he said the group aims to reinforce its competitiveness in high-growth industries such as electronics, medical devices, and industrial components manufacturing.



RichTech Digital IPO shares oversubscribed 245.4 times

KUALA LUMPUR: RichTech Digital Bhd, a company involved in the distribution of electronic reloads and provision of bill payment services in Malaysia, reported that the share allocation to the Malaysian public from its initial public offering (IPO) has been oversubscribed by 245.42 times.

The firm's IPO involves a public issue of 54.66 million new shares (issue shares) and an offer for sale of 25.31 million existing shares (offer shares).

The allocation of issue shares are offered: for Malaysian public via balloting (10.12 million to be equally distributed between bumiputra and non-bumiputra investors; 5% of the enlarged issued share capital); for eligible directors and employees (1.55 million; 0.77% of the enlarged issued share capital); private placement to selected investors (42.99 million; 21.23% of the enlarged issued share capital) and offer for sale via private placement to selected investors (25.31 million offer shares; 12.5% of the enlarged issued share capital).

A total of 24,237 applications for 2,494,534,300 issue shares with a value of RM623.63 million were received from the Malaysian public, representing an overall oversubscription rate of 245.42 times.

Of this, a total of 12,601 applications for 1,060,713,600 issue shares were received for the bumiputra portion, representing an oversubscription rate of 208.57 times. For the remaining Malaysian public portion, a total of 11,636 applications for 1,433,820,700 issue shares were received, representing an oversubscription rate of 282.28 times.

The 1.55 million issue shares allocated to eligible directors and employees, as well as the 42.99 million issue shares and 25.31 million offer shares offered via private placement, were fully subscribed.

IILM's US\$1.05b sukuk attracts strong demand

► Global trade tensions have pushed investors to favour safer options such as short-term Islamic bonds

KUALA LUMPUR: The International Islamic Liquidity Management Corporation (IILM), an international organisation that develops and issues short-term syariah-compliant financial instruments, has completed the reissuance of an aggregate US\$1.05 billion short-term sukuk across three different tenors of one, three, and six-month respectively.

The three series were priced competitively at 4.44% for US\$400 million for 1-month tenor; 4.45% for US\$400 million for 3-month tenor; and 4.4% for US\$250 million for 6-month tenor.

The IILM's sukuk reissuance yesterday saw a competitive tender amongst the primary dealers and investors globally, with a strong orderbook of US\$2.5 billion, representing an impressive average bid-to-cover ratio 238%.

IILM CEO Mohamad Safri Shahul Hamid said the outcome of yesterday's hugely successful auction clearly underscores the

unwavering confidence of global Islamic investors in the IILM's sukuk as high quality syariah-compliant liquidity solutions.

He added the impressive demand across all the tenors, despite all the events that are unfolding globally, clearly reaffirms the critical role their instruments play in providing stability and flexibility for Islamic financial institutions globally.

"The heightened global trade tensions have shifted investors' preference (from riskier assets) towards safer instruments such as the IILM's short-term sukuk, evidenced by the robust bid-to-cover ratio that has allowed us to price today's offerings within our expectations," said Mohamad Safri.

He added that they are extremely pleased with the success of yesterday's auction and hopeful that it will pave the way for them to continue fulfilling their mandate in delivering

tailored solutions that will help and facilitate global Islamic financial institutions to manage their liquidity positions effectively and proactively.

The issuance forms part of the IILM's "A-1" (S&P) and "F1" (Fitch Ratings) rated US\$6 billion short-term sukuk issuance programme. The total amount of IILM sukuk outstanding stands at US\$ 4.14 billion.

The IILM's short-term sukuk is distributed by a diversified and growing network of 12 primary dealers globally, namely Abu Dhabi Islamic Bank, Al Baraka Turk, Affin Islamic Bank, Boubayan Bank, CIMB Islamic Bank Bhd, Dukhan Bank, First Abu Dhabi Bank, Kuwait Finance House, Maybank Islamic Bhd, Meethaq Islamic Banking from Bank Muscat, Qatar Islamic Bank, and Standard Chartered Bank.

The IILM is a regular issuer of short-term sukuk across varying tenors and amounts to cater to the liquidity needs of institutions offering Islamic financial services. The IILM will continue to reissue its short-term liquidity instruments monthly as scheduled in its issuance calendar.

BRIEFS

AMBANK PROVIDES SUPPLY CHAIN FINANCING TO HUAWEI

KUALA LUMPUR: AmBank has approved RM120 million financing facility to Huawei to support its operations in Malaysia. The facility forms a critical part of AmBank's supply chain financing framework, designed to provide vendor financing support to Huawei. AmBank Group business banking managing director Christopher Yap said: "This new facility highlights our ongoing commitment to empowering key industry players like Huawei in driving Malaysia's technological advancement. By supporting Huawei through supply chain financing, we also aim to facilitate the successful deployment of the second 5G network, further solidifying Malaysia's position as a regional leader in connectivity and innovation." As a partner in Huawei's ecosystem, AmBank's support underscores the bank's focus on fostering strategic partnerships that create value for businesses and drive economic growth.

ITMAX WINS PONTIAN SMART PARKING DEAL

KUALA LUMPUR: ITMAX System Bhd's (an artificial intelligence-powered integrated digital infrastructure service provider) unit Southmax Sdn Bhd has been appointed by Pontian Municipal Council as the smart parking operator for outdoor parking spaces in the Pontian area. The appointment effective from Feb 1 spans a duration of 15 years under a revenue sharing model, where by Southmax will receive 70% of the revenue generated from parking collections and compounds through its application, Parkmax@JOHOR. ITMAX System managing director/CEO William Tan Wei Lun said, "We are thrilled to extend our smart parking solutions to Pontian, marking our sixth appointment as a smart parking system operator in Johor. With Johor's rapid digital transformation, we are committed to further expanding our footprint across the state."



Malaysia should expand its free trade agreements by pursuing both bilateral and multilateral deals to boost economic resilience. —UNSPASH PIX

Economist: Malaysia must act proactively to manage trade risks

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia must adopt a proactive approach to mitigate risks and capitalise on emerging opportunities as the global trade landscape shifts due to the import tariff hike by the US, said an economist.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the country should expand its free trade agreements (FTAs) by pursuing both bilateral and multilateral trade agreements to strengthen economic resilience. "Engaging with trade blocs such as the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership will ensure continued access to diverse markets," he told Bernama recently.

Mohd Afzanizam said Malaysia should

strengthen its domestic capacity through investments in human capital development, particularly in education, healthcare, and infrastructure, adding that this is crucial to improving Malaysia's competitiveness. "A well-educated workforce and robust infrastructure will attract foreign investment and enhance economic diversification," he noted.

In addition, he advised that Malaysia has to enhance its trade diversification by expanding its trade portfolio through engaging in value-added industries, digital economy initiatives, and green energy investments. "This will reduce dependency on traditional manufacturing exports and create new growth avenues in high tech and sustainable sectors," he said.

Recently, US President Donald Trump

announced the imposition of a 25% import tariff on Canada and Mexico, alongside a 10% tariff on China. However, Trump has since agreed to pause the tariff imposition towards Mexico and Canada for 30 days.

Meanwhile, Afzanizam said the US dollar-ringgit exchange is expected to fluctuate between RM4.40 and RM4.50, with immediate support at RM4.45 and resistance at RM4.36.

"A crucial event to monitor is the US Federal Reserve's response to these developments, as it will shape future monetary policy. The next Federal Open Market Committee meeting scheduled for March 18-19, will provide fresh economic forecasts and markets are likely to experience heightened volatility leading up to this meeting," he added.



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Nissan calls off merger talks with Honda: Nikkei

➤ Negotiations complicated by growing differences on both sides, say sources

TOKYO: Nissan has called off merger talks with rival Honda, the *Nikkei* newspaper said, abandoning a tie-up that would have created the world's no. 3 automaker and raising questions about how it will drive a turnaround by itself.

Shares in Nissan slid more than 4% before trade was suspended by the Tokyo Stock Exchange following the report.

Shares of Honda continued to trade and finished the day up more than 8%, in a sign of apparent investor relief that the deal had been scrapped.

Honda, Japan's second-largest car maker, and Nissan, its third-largest, last year said they were in discussions to merge and create the world's third-largest automaker by sales, bulking up in an industry that faces a vast threat from China's BYD and other electric vehicle entrants.

But the talks have been complicated by growing differences on both sides, according to two people familiar with the matter, both of whom declined to be identified because they were not authorised to speak to the media.

Reuters earlier reported Nissan could call off the talks.

As of late afternoon, its board was still meeting to decide on the course of action, a person with knowledge of the matter said.

Honda had sounded out Nissan about becoming a subsidiary, one of the people said, adding that such an arrangement was a departure from the spirit of discussions originally framed as a merger of equals.

A Nissan spokesperson said the *Nikkei* report was not based on information announced by the company and that it aimed to finalise its future direction by mid-February and would announce it at that time.

A Honda spokesperson said it had not heard anything from Nissan about a decision to withdraw from their memorandum of understanding to work on a merger.

The development raises fresh questions about how hard-hit Nissan could ride out its latest crisis without external help.

Nissan is in the middle of a turnaround plan, aiming to cut 9,000 employees and 20% of global capacity.

Honda, with a market value nearly five times bigger than Nissan, was increasingly worried about its smaller rival's progress on the turnaround plan, said the other person.

The tie-up talks have coincided with the disruption posed by potential tariffs from US President Donald Trump.

Tariffs against Mexico would be more painful for Nissan than for Honda or Toyota, according to analysts.

"Investors may get concerned about Nissan's future (and) turnaround," said Morningstar analyst Vincent Sun.

"Nissan also has a larger risk exposure to US-Mexico tariffs than Honda and Toyota."

Nissan has been hit harder than some other carmakers by the shift to EVs, having never fully recovered after years of crisis sparked by the arrest and removal of former chairman Carlos Ghosn in 2018.

"The news saying that Nissan did not want to be a Honda subsidiary appears to highlight that control was a contentious issue," said Christopher Richter, Japan autos analyst at brokerage CLSA.

"Without being able to have control, Honda appears to be walking away."

Nissan's long-term alliance partner Renault had said it would be open in principle to the merger with Honda.

The French automaker owns 36% of Nissan, including 18.7% through a French trust.

Nissan and Honda had initially said they planned to decide the direction of the integration by the end of January, but that was later pushed back to mid-February.

Sources said last month that Nissan's smaller alliance partner Mitsubishi Motors, which had considered joining the merger, might not do so. – Reuters

Indonesia's economy beats forecast

JAKARTA: Indonesia's economy grew more than expected last year, the government said yesterday, as a pick-up in trade, mining and agriculture helped offset ongoing global headwinds.

The 5.03% expansion in Southeast Asia's largest economy topped estimates in a survey of economists by Bloomberg, while the 5.02% growth enjoyed in the final three months of the year was also better than expected.

"All sectors grew positively in 2024. The sectors that gave the biggest contribution to the economy were processing, trade, agriculture, construction and mining," Statistics Indonesia head Amalia Adininggar Widayanti said in a news conference.

However, the annual figure marked a slight slowdown from the 5.05% seen in 2023 and was well short of the government's 5.2% target.

Indonesia was badly affected by the coronavirus pandemic, with its key export and tourism sectors taking a massive hit in 2020 – suffering its first recession since the 1997 Asian financial crisis.

While the economy has slowly recovered, it is well short of the government's target of 8% growth by the end of President Prabowo Subianto's term.

Still, the president said last month he remained confident that figure could be reached through cost-cutting and efficiency.

But economists and other government agencies did not share the same optimism.

Bank Indonesia, the central bank, has projected growth will slow further this year owing to lower domestic demand and slowing exports.

Monetary policymakers have steadily raised interest rates to defend the rupiah amid growing global economic uncertainty and rising inflation.

"Looking ahead, the official data will probably continue to show growth of close to 5%," Capital Economics analyst Gareth Leather said.

"However, we expect growth to slow on our measure of activity as the impact of lower commodity prices and subdued global demand offsets the boost from lower interest rates." – AFP

Thailand to import more US ethane to reduce trade surplus

BANGKOK: Thailand will increase US ethane imports by at least one million tonnes starting from the second quarter of this year to try to reduce its trade surplus with the United States, a Thai official said.

One million tonnes of ethane are worth US\$200 million (RM885 million), said Pongsarun Assawachaisophon, a deputy secretary-general to the prime minister.

"The government has discussed with petrochemical companies to increase US ethane imports which will also help with trade

negotiations with the United States," he told Reuters.

Thailand had a trade surplus last year of US\$35.4 billion with the United States, according to the Commerce Ministry, which has cited challenges to growing Thai exports due to uncertain US trade policies.

The United States was Thailand's largest export market last year, accounting for 18.3% of total shipments, or US\$54.96 billion.

President Donald Trump last month signed a broad trade memorandum ordering federal

agencies to complete comprehensive reviews of a range of trade issues by April 1, including analyses of persistent US trade deficits.

"We'll see what we can import more from the US and is a win-win for both sides," Pongsarun added.

"The private sector already has demand for ethane imports."

Thai petrochemical firms will import at least one million tonnes more of US ethane for both selling to other countries or using as a precursor, Pongsarun said. – Reuters

Panama lawsuit requests axing Hong Kong firm's canal concession

PANAMA CITY: Two Panamanian lawyers filed a complaint to cancel the concession of a Hong Kong-based company for operating two ports on the Panama Canal, following US President Donald Trump's threats to seize the vital waterway.

A subsidiary of CK Hutchison Holdings – owned by Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-shing – manages two of the canal's five ports, an arrangement in place since 1997 via a concession from the Panama government.

But Norman Castro, one of the lawyers in the case brought before the Supreme Court, told reporters the contract "violates what the constitution says in about 10 articles".

"After a detailed analysis of the contract ... we decided that an action for unconstitutionality was the appropriate means" to challenge the concession, said Julio Macias, another lawyer behind the suit.

The complaint also accuses the Hong Kong subsidiary of not paying taxes and benefits due to a series of advantages that are allegedly against the law.

Panama Ports Company – a CK Hutchison Holdings subsidiary – currently manages the ports of Cristobal on the canal's Atlantic side and Balboa on the Pacific side.

The management arrangement was automatically renewed in 2021 for another 25 years.

The case comes after Trump threatened to take back the canal – built by the United States and handed to Panama in 1999 – as he said China was effectively "operating" it.

But temperatures have lowered since US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's recent visit to the Central American country, with Panama President Jose Raul Mulino announcing they will not renew participation in China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Following Trump's charges, Panama also announced an audit into the company.

CK Hutchison Holdings is one of Hong Kong's largest conglomerates, spanning finance, retail, infrastructure, telecoms and logistics. – AFP



A cargo ship waiting at the port of Balboa before crossing the Panama Canal. – AFP/PIIC

SAN FRANCISCO: Alphabet said on Tuesday it will spend US\$75 billion (RM332 billion) on its AI buildout this year, 29% more than Wall Street expected, and investors signalled disappointment at a missed cloud revenue target and began showing impatience over profitability.

Shares of the Google parent fell 9% in extended trading.

Alphabet has gained about 9% so far this year.

Wall Street had been expecting 2025 capital expenditures of US\$58 billion, according to LSEG data.

That would have marked a modest increase over the US\$52.5 billion spending in 2024.

CEO Sundar Pichai defended the dramatic increase on a conference call with analysts, who are raising new questions about capital spending by Google and US rivals following the emergence of China's DeepSeek, which offers cut-rate AI.

He said Google's Gemini family of AI models is comparable in efficiency to DeepSeek.

"The cost of actually using (AI) is going to keep coming down, which will make more use cases feasible."

"The opportunity space is as big as it comes, and that's why you're seeing us invest to meet that moment."

Alphabet announces US\$75b AI investment

➤ Cloud revenue growth slows, missing analyst expectations

Still, the company posted a deceleration in cloud revenue growth.

Alphabet has been spending heavily on an infrastructure development to support AI research and integration into products such as search and cloud services.

The majority of capex for 2025 would go into building servers and data centres, chief financial officer Anat Ashkenazi said on the call.

She attributed the fourth-quarter results in part to capacity constraints on cloud AI offerings.

Alphabet plans to spend US\$16

billion to US\$18 billion in the first quarter, a far bigger number than the roughly US\$6 billion DeepSeek said it spent on the final training run to develop its AI model.

To be sure, developers at leading US AI firms said the total training cost was likely magnitudes larger.

But revelations around DeepSeek's training cost in January shocked tech stocks, contributing to Nvidia's record one-day drop of US\$593 billion in market value.

"It's very hard to defend Google after the earnings report," said Dave Wagner, portfolio manager at Aptus Capital Advisors, which holds Alphabet stock.

He pointed to the cloud revenue miss and Google's poor track record on utilising cash for profitability.

"DeepSeek has started to teach the market that maybe some things can be done a little bit more efficiently."

"Maybe we're starting to see the market dislike the continued increase in capex."

Google Cloud had previously grown fast enough to offset concerns around increased spending, said Brian Mulberry, client portfolio manager at Zacks Investment Management, which holds Alphabet shares.

"When you start to see that revenue level off or at least the growth start to top off a little bit, how you're going to finance the future growth of the company becomes an issue."

Google's cloud business posted a 30% rise in revenue to US\$11.96 billion in the fourth quarter, slowing down from the 35% increase in the September quarter.

Analysts were expecting a rise of 32.3% to \$12.16 billion, according to data compiled by LSEG. – Reuters



A Google Store, where visitors can try phones and other products from the company, in New York. – REUTERS/SPIC

PepsiCo faces weakening demand for sodas, snacks

NEW YORK: PepsiCo forecast annual profit below expectations and missed quarterly revenue estimates on Tuesday, as the Doritos maker faces weakening demand for its sodas and snacks such as Lay's in the United States, its largest market.

Americans are still piling back spending on soft drinks and salty treats to save their dollars for essential purchases, forcing PepsiCo to tap promotions for volume growth after several quarters of slowdown wrought by price hikes.

The target is to offer multi-packs and mini canisters to bring back consumers leaning towards smaller pack sizes or picking up cheaper alternatives from retail aisles.

PepsiCo promised heavy investments into overhauling its existing products and introducing new items such as ethnic-inspired flavours through its Sabritas, Marias and Natu Chip brands to spur demand.

"We expect our North America performance to gradually improve as the year progresses, and our commercial activities take hold," executives said in the company's prepared remarks.

PepsiCo's North America beverages and Frito-Lay North America, its two biggest segments, reported a 3% volume decline in the fourth quarter.

The company's total organic volume slipped 1% for the quarter ended Dec 28, while average prices jumped 3%.

PepsiCo expects a low-single digit increase for fiscal 2025 core earnings per share, compared with analysts' estimates of a 4.73% rise to US\$8.53 per share.

Its quarterly net revenue fell 0.2% to US\$27.78 billion, missing estimates of US\$27.89 billion. – Reuters

US mulls adding Shein, Temu to 'forced labour' list

WASHINGTON: The US is discussing whether to add Chinese e-commerce retailers Shein and Temu to the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) "forced labour" list, Semafor news website reported on Tuesday.

Donald Trump's administration has not made a final decision on the matter and could ultimately decide not to list either, the report said, citing two sources familiar with the discussions.

Both companies denied the use of forced labour.

"We are not aware of any such consideration," Shein said in an e-mailed statement to Reuters.

The firm is in full compliance with the US UFLPA (Uyghur Forced Labour Prevention Act), it added.

"Temu strictly prohibits the use of forced labour and enforces our Third-Party Code of Conduct, which bars all forms of involuntary labour," Temu said in an e-mail.

The move comes after China imposed targeted tariffs on US imports and put several firms on notice for possible sanctions, in response to US levies. – Reuters

PayPal tops estimates as turnaround gains traction

SAN FRANCISCO: PayPal forecast full-year profit above estimates on Tuesday, fuelled by a push to revive growth in branded products, improve pricing and sharpen cost-cutting efforts.

Since taking over in late 2023, PayPal CEO Alex Chriss has focused on high-margin products and touted "profitable growth" as the company's new strategy.

PayPal has since revamped its pricing approach and shifted away from chasing revenue acceleration.

The upbeat outlook will likely

ease worries about increasing competition from big-tech giants and fintech rivals such as Block in the digital payments sector.

PayPal has worked to defend its dominant position with new products, including a "one-click" checkout feature called Fastlane, and forged lucrative partnerships with companies such as Global Payments and Fiserv.

Transaction margin dollars, a key measure of the profitability of its core business, increased 7% for the full year.

"The improvements we made to branded checkout, peer-to-peer, and Venmo, plus the progress we made on our price-to-value strategy, are beginning to show up in our results," Chriss said.

PayPal expects full-year adjusted profit to grow between US\$4.95 and US\$5.10 per share, surpassing Wall Street views of US\$4.90, according to estimates compiled by LSEG.

However, adjusted operating margins – a key source of investor anxiety – contracted 34 basis points to 18% in the fourth quarter.

Stronger margins and profitability in branded checkout products, which includes PayPal's core payment services, headlined 2024 for the payments company after years of uneven results.

Consumer spending has also remained resilient as Americans brush off concerns over high interest rates and shrinking savings, splurging on everything from travel to online shopping.

PayPal expects transaction margin dollars to grow between 4% and 5% in 2025. – Reuters

Ferrari plans electric car debut in October

➤ No plans to accelerate shipments to America to beat tariffs

MILAN: Ferrari is preparing the landmark launch of its first fully electric car in October, the luxury sports car maker said on Tuesday, while targeting an increase of at least 5% in revenues and core earnings this year.

Breaking its tradition for roaring petrol engines, Ferrari's much-awaited EV will be showcased at a capital markets day on Oct 9, at the company's Maranello base in Italy, CEO Benedetto Vigna said.

That is at the very beginning of the fourth quarter, the period Ferrari has repeatedly flagged for the launch.

Vigna declined to provide details about the model, beyond saying it would be launched

"in a unique and innovative way".

The EV will be one of six new models the company plans to roll out this year, Vigna said, adding its plans would not be affected by the policies of Donald Trump's administration in the United States or by the risk of a trade war.

Ferrari started offering its wealthy clients hybrid models in 2019. Hybrids made up 51% of its car sales last year.

The Italian company on Tuesday forecast its earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation (EBITDA) would increase to at least €2.68 billion (RM12 billion) in 2025, from €2.56 billion in 2024.

Milan-listed shares in the company were up 7.6% at 1600 GMT (12am in Malaysia).

Demand for personal touches on cars, a strong product mix and pricing power drove a 12% increase in 2024 EBITDA.

"On these solid foundations, we expect further robust growth in 2025," Vigna said, adding this would allow Ferrari to meet one year in advance the high-end of most of its

profitability targets set for 2026.

Ferrari buyers often add individual touches to their cars at extra cost, mainly relating to paint, livery and use of carbon.

They amounted to around 20% of total revenues last year, versus 19% in 2023, CFO Antonio Picca Piccon said, adding the company saw a similar level in 2025.

An increase in deliveries to US clients also supported the 2024 result.

But there are no plans to accelerate shipments there to try to get ahead of possible tariffs, Vigna said.

Ferrari, which last year delivered 13,752 cars, 89 more than in 2023, currently sets a cap of 10% on deliveries to China.

Vigna said China, where EVs are highly popular, could provide an opportunity for the new EV model, also due to lower taxes there than on petrol vehicles.

Any planned change to Ferrari's sales cap policy in China would be communicated at the capital markets day in October. — Reuters



A 1954-55 Ferrari Tipo 555 Super Squalo on display during the 'Les Grandes Marques du Monde' exhibition in Paris. — AFP/IC

BNP Paribas reports jump in net income

PARIS: France's BNP Paribas reported a forecast-beating jump in net income in the fourth quarter as its investment bankers rode a surge in trading activity, but the lender lowered a key profit target for 2025 and said it would cut costs further.

The euro zone's biggest bank by assets said group net income rose by 15.7% to €2.32 billion (RM10.6 billion) for the three months ending in December, beating the €2.24 billion average of 13 analyst estimates compiled by the company.

Revenue over the period increased by 10.8% to €12.1 billion, also above the €11.6 billion analyst average estimate.

BNP has disappointed investors in recent quarters and its shares were among the worst performing of major lenders last year, losing nearly 7% while European rivals' stock soared, so Tuesday's fourth-quarter and full-year results will be a relief for long-time CEO Jean-Laurent Naffa.

Investment banking revenue climbed 20% in the fourth quarter, driven by revenue from trading in fixed income, currencies and commodities (FICC) soaring 34% and equity prime services' sales by 30%.

BNP's performance in FICC trading beat the average growth among Wall Street banks, which Jefferies calculated at 26%.

Bonafé has bet on BNP's investment bank to fill gaps left by retreating European rivals and compete with dominant US peers.

In recent quarters, the investment bank has helped offset sluggish retail performance at BNP, as record inflows into government-regulated high-interest savings squeezed French banks' margins, while lenders elsewhere in the euro zone benefited from higher rates. — Reuters

ADM misses estimates, announces layoffs

CHICAGO: Grain merchant Archer-Daniels-Midland on Tuesday missed Wall Street expectations for fourth-quarter profit and said it would lay off about 700 employees globally.

Reuters had reported last week that the grain trader would soon start laying off employees in a global effort to cut costs, as low crop prices weighed on the company's profit.

Corn, soybean and wheat prices hit four-year lows in 2024 as global stocks ballooned to multi-year highs, whittling down margins for agribusinesses such as ADM that make money from storing, processing and trading around the world.

The firm expects to deliver about US\$500 million to US\$750 million over the next five years through improvements in manufacturing costs, reduction in purchased materials and services.

ADM forecast adjusted earnings to be in the range of US\$4 to US\$4.75 per share in 2025 due to weaker market fundamentals and ongoing biofuel and trade policy uncertainty.

Analysts on average were expecting US\$4.67 per share.

The company, however, increased its quarterly dividend to 51 cents per share from 50 cents earlier.

The Chicago-based company posted an adjusted profit of US\$1.14 per share for the three months ended Dec 31, compared with analysts' average estimate of US\$1.15 per share, according to data compiled by LSEG. — Reuters

Spotify logs first annual profit, number of users tops forecast

STOCKHOLM: Music streaming giant Spotify reported its first annual profit on Tuesday, with the number of active users growing more than expected in the fourth quarter to reach 675 million.

The company reported a net profit of €1.1 billion (RM5 billion) for 2024, compared to a net loss of €532 million in the previous year.

"I am very excited about 2025 and feel really good about where we are as both a product and as a business," Spotify CEO Daniel Ek said in a statement.

The company also had its first ever annual operating profit, which reached €1.4 billion.

Its operating profit climbed to a

record €477 million in the fourth quarter.

It was short of Spotify's guidance of €481 million for the quarter, but it drastically improved from a loss over the same period in 2023.

The number of active users grew 12% year-on-year in the fourth quarter to reach 675 million, beating

its guidance by 10 million.

The number of paying subscribers grew 11%, reaching 263 million.

Fourth-quarter revenue grew 16% to €4.2 billion.

The music streaming service also said it paid out a record US\$10 billion in royalties to the music industry in 2024.

"Looking into 2025, we view the

business as well positioned to deliver another year of continued growth and improving margins as we reinvest to support our long-term potential," Spotify said in its earnings report.

For the first quarter of 2025, Spotify expects to reach 678 million monthly active users and 265 million paying subscribers. — AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: FEBRUARY 5

Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

05 Feb 2025

Participation	
Retail (20.48%) Net (in RM mil.)	Institution (42.79%) Net (in RM mil.)
Foreign (36.73%) Net (in RM mil.)	
-20.34	+85.44
Bought (in RM mil.) 466.61	Sold (in RM mil.) 486.95
Bought (in RM mil.) 1039.05	Sold (in RM mil.) 953.61
Bought (in RM mil.) 822.67	Sold (in RM mil.) 887.77

Preliminary status (Excluding Trade Amendments) | Final data, refer to Bursa website

Need Some Ideas?
Our Monthly Trader's Talk will be held Every 1st Monday of the Month Live webinar with Q&A

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SUNBIZ presents a summary of the day's trading activity on Bursa Malaysia and other markets in an easy to digest format.

Sources: Bursa Malaysia, Bernama, shareinvestor.com and websites

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,023.70 +88.91
FBMKLCI	1,574.51 +9.95
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	526.12 +2.90
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	165.21 +0.71
CONSTRUCTION	279.77 +7.51
FINANCIAL SERVICES	19,061.70 +34.47
ENERGY	821.54 +8.15
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	524.63 +0.20
HEALTH CARE	2,213.70 +8.13
TRANSPORTATION	1,060.05 +11.77
PROPERTY	1,070.32 +20.94
PLANTATION	7,431.25 +58.17
FBMSHA	11,871.00 +116.20
FBMACE	5,287.51 +69.42
TECHNOLOGY	58.80 +0.87

TURNOVER: 2.864 bil

VALUE: RM2.328 bil

KL shares close higher, led by construction and utility stocks

SHARES on Bursa Malaysia closed broadly higher yesterday with buying mainly in construction, properties, utilities, and technology sectors, analysts said.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI gained 0.63% or 9.95 points to 1,574.51, compared with Tuesday's close of 1,564.56.

The benchmark index, which opened 1.07 points higher at 1,565.63, moved between 1,564.43 and 1,576.45 throughout the day.

On the broader market, gainers outnumbered decliners 622 to 345, while 493 counters were unchanged, 840 untraded and 10 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said however, the key regional markets saw mixed performances at the close, reflecting investor uncertainty over the economic impact of new US-China tariffs.

Back home, the online equities broker said it is cautiously optimistic about the local market as the US trade war could heighten market volatility and dampen investor confidence.

Meanwhile, UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said the FBM KLCI's positive performance was also supported by bargain hunting in data centre-related stocks.

Among the heavyweights, Gamuda climbed 20 sen to RM4.38, YTL Power International rose 13 sen to RM3.17, and YTL Corporation added 7 sen to RM1.95. Public Bank perked up 4 sen to RM4.44, and Press Metal Aluminium gained 6 sen to RM4.98.

For the most active stocks, TWL and Harvest Miracle Capital were both flat at 2.5 sen and 19.5 sen respectively, Oriental Kuning eased half-a-sen to 89.5 sen, MYEG gained 1 sen to 97 sen, and Nategate was 11 sen better at RM1.95. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWBZ	0.080	-0.085	-51.52	1,212,982
HSI-CWA1	0.135	-0.025	-15.63	1,164,778
TWL	0.025	-	-	926,176
HM-WD	0.080	-0.005	-5.88	859,037
HM	0.195	-	-	696,250
KOPI	0.895	-0.005	-0.56	504,756
HSI-PWDC	0.150	-0.190	-55.88	497,430
GAMUDA	4.380	0.200	4.79	483,754
HSI-CWAW	0.260	-0.050	-16.13	463,650
MYEG	0.970	0.010	1.04	463,069
HSI-CWCC	0.120	-0.015	-11.11	453,846
NATGATE	1.960	0.110	5.95	431,837
YTL	1.950	0.070	3.72	412,761
AUMAS	0.955	0.065	7.30	369,705
HSI-PWBW	0.065	0.005	8.33	315,229
YTLPOWR	3.170	0.130	4.28	299,727
CBHB	0.335	0.005	1.52	295,162
MAXLAND-WB	0.010	-0.005	-33.33	289,997
JAKS	0.120	-	-	288,608
SIMEPROP	1.520	0.080	5.56	278,264



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	89.380	1.160	609
LPI	13.360	0.540	1,583
FGN	25.880	0.380	437
KLK	20.200	0.360	2,506
MPI	22.400	0.300	762
MISC	7.500	0.230	12,203
GAMUDA	4.380	0.200	483,754
UTDPLT	31.000	0.200	2,470
SHH	1.480	0.170	41
CARLSBG	20.040	0.160	816
PETGAS	17.360	0.160	3,790
PPB	11.860	0.160	3,439
FAREAST	3.600	0.150	51
KESM	3.700	0.150	38
AJI	15.060	0.140	88
ECOWLD	1.900	0.140	95,365
MBMR	5.990	0.140	16,198
QUALITY	1.210	0.140	437
SUNCON	3.820	0.140	75,809
PIE	4.710	0.130	5,955

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
EAH	0.010	100.00	1,573
GREATEC-C9	0.010	100.00	10
MYEG-C7H	0.010	100.00	1,500
NATGATE-CA	0.010	100.00	28,742
PHB	0.010	100.00	7,501
PETGAS-C5	0.020	100.00	1,020
TEOSENG-CC	0.030	100.00	1
YTLPOWR-C60	0.010	100.00	1,000
YTLPOWR-C66	0.010	100.00	1,886
GAMUDA-C2T	0.100	81.82	4,839
SIMEPROP-C32	0.045	80.00	29,118
SIMEPROP-C40	0.080	77.78	2,001
GAMUDA-C2S	0.035	75.00	137,070
SUNCON-C25	0.035	75.00	6,469
TEOSENG-CA	0.115	64.29	8,041
ECOWLD-C35	0.070	55.56	4,003
GAMUDA-C2V	0.070	55.56	21,017
BAIDU-C2	0.015	50.00	7,766
GAMUDA-C20	0.090	50.00	9,450
IOICORP-C61	0.030	50.00	5,200

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	44,556.04	+134.13	+0.30
S&P 500 (US)	6,037.88	+43.31	+0.72
NASDAQ (US)	19,654.02	+262.06	+1.35
NYSE (US)	19,964.61	+94.28	+0.47
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	5,249.19	-15.40	-0.29
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,569.23	-1.54	-0.02
DAX (GER)	21,391.05	-114.65	-0.53
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	38,831.48	+33.11	+0.09
TOPIX (JPN)	2,745.41	+7.39	+0.27
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	20,597.09	-192.87	-0.93
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,795.08	-22.00	-0.58
SH SE COM (CHN)	3,229.49	-21.11	-0.65
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,509.27	+27.58	+1.11
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	182.61	+2.65	+1.47
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,416.87	+42.89	+0.51
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,683.48	+49.97	+0.58
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	78,433.38	-150.43	-0.19
FBM KLCI	1,576.33	+11.77	+0.75
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,815.99	-7.02	-0.18
WTI (US\$/BBL)	72.35	-0.35	-0.48
BRENT (US\$/BBL)	75.77	-0.43	-0.56
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	2,894.80	+19.00	+0.66
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	33.06	+0.04	+0.12
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	980.92	+11.84	+1.22
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	437.45	+2.10	+0.48
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,150.50	51.50	0.57
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	497.75	+3.25	+0.66
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	581.00	+4.00	+0.69
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	45.80	+0.04	+0.09
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	10,865.00	-47.00	-0.43
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	192.40	-1.90	-0.98

As at 5pm, Feb 5

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWDP	0.180	-0.560	5,521
HEIM	24.040	-0.340	811
HSI-PWDC	0.150	-0.190	497,430
KLUANG	5.980	-0.140	247
SRIDGE	0.485	-0.110	103,124
CANONE	2.300	-0.100	40
HSI-PWBZ	0.080	-0.085	1,212,982
KHIND	2.400	-0.080	8
METROD	1.210	-0.080	1
PANAMY	17.300	-0.080	60
UNISEM-C39	0.005	-0.080	6,180
AEONCR	5.670	-0.070	6,891
GENP	5.670	-0.070	2,275
HSI-CWCJ	0.665	-0.070	18,412
TANCO	1.860	-0.070	194,464
HSI-CWA7	0.465	-0.060	10,135
SURIA	1.730	-0.060	240
LBICAP	0.440	-0.055	158
GCE	0.350	-0.050	328
HSI-CWAW	0.260	-0.050	463,650

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
UNISEM-C39	0.005	-94.12	6,180
HSI-PWDP	0.180	-75.68	5,521
HSI-PWDC	0.150	-55.88	497,430
HSI-PWBZ	0.080	-51.52	1,212,982
AXIATA-C1F	0.005	-50.00	19,410
DSNOC-C65	0.005	-50.00	500
OCR-WE	0.005	-50.00	6,650
SUNCON-C21	0.010	-50.00	172
TAANN-CZ	0.010	-50.00	3,185
ZENTECH	0.005	-50.00	858
MNRB-CE	0.020	-42.86	13,500
HSTECH-H15	0.035	-41.67	1,000
FBMKLCI-HA2	0.015	-40.00	90
BURSA-C84	0.010	-33.33	1,200
D&O-C12	0.010	-33.33	4,650
GAMUDA-C2Q	0.010	-33.33	2,352
MAXLAND-WB	0.010	-33.33	289,997
TENAGA-C2L	0.010	-33.33	480
YTL-C99	0.010	-33.33	831
HSI-CWA2	0.035	-30.00	15,270

MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

SUNBIZ presents extracts of a selection of commentaries and research reports received from stockbrokers on counters that could be of interest to investors.

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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Miha: Jakim can revoke halal certification for non-compliance

BANGI: The Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) has the authority to revoke the halal certification granted to companies and traders at any time in the event of non-compliance, said Malaysia International Halal Academy (Miha) chairman Mohd Rizal Ismail.

For this reason, he said traders are reminded to always ensure their products are sourced from halal, clean and safe ingredients.

"The most crucial thing after obtaining halal certification is maintaining quality as Jakim has procedures to revoke the halal certificate if there are complaints.

"This means that once they obtain the halal certification, traders cannot neglect this responsibility but must continue to uphold it until the certificate expires," he told reporters after the presentation of halal certification to convenience store chain emart24 yesterday.

Mohd Rizal, who represented Jakim at the event, said authorities could also conduct spot checks to monitor non-compliance with the required standards, including following up on received complaints.

Meanwhile, emart24 Holding Sdn Bhd CEO Vuitton Pang praised Jakim for implementing a thorough yet smooth halal certification process.

"To arrive here today with the halal certification, the process was indeed tedious, but with the support of Jakim's dedicated team, it was very smooth.

"So it's possible for anyone to obtain this halal certification. It's just a matter of effort and the willingness to do it," he said.

He added that the retail chain aims to secure halal certification for all 84 existing outlets and new outlets by early 2026, with a target of five outlets obtaining certification each month. - Bernama

MARC: 'Gold' for Sentral REIT's sustainable finance framework

MARC Ratings Bhd has assigned Sentral REIT's sustainable finance framework a "Gold" impact assessment.

The framework was established to outline how the real estate investment trust (REIT) plans to undertake sustainable finance transactions to deliver environmental and social benefits.

"We opine that the framework is aligned with the core components of the applicable guidelines, frameworks, and principles published by the Securities Commission Malaysia, Asean Capital Markets Forum, and the International Capital Market Association, among others," MARC said in a statement.

The framework's Gold assessment reflects the view that sustainable finance transactions would provide relevant social and environmental benefits that support seven of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

Sentral's investment objective is to acquire and invest in commercial properties to achieve long-term growth and sustainable income distribution for its unitholders.

The REIT has 10 offices and retail space in the Klang Valley and Penang under its portfolio.

The framework was developed using an integrated approach, encompassing proceeds and sustainability-linked components, which can be used independently on a case-by-case basis.

Proceeds raised from the use of proceeds instruments will be channelled towards eligible green and social projects listed in the framework.

Conversely, sustainability-linked instruments align Sentral's sustainability ambitions with its business strategies.

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.4970	4.3630	4.3530
1 Australian Dollar	2.8240	2.7100	2.6940
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3210	3.2240	3.2160
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1340	3.0500	3.0380
1 Euro	4.6720	4.5200	4.5000
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5510	2.4570	2.4410
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3210	3.2240	3.2160
1 Sterling Pound	5.6170	5.4380	5.4180
1 Swiss Franc	4.9990	4.7850	4.7700
100 UAE Dirham	123.8500	117.4600	117.2600
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7500	3.5180	3.5180
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.1500	59.5300	N/A
100 Danish Krone	64.2000	59.0800	58.880
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.3500	55.4500	55.2500
100 Indian Rupee	5.2500	4.9200	4.7200
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0285	0.0258	0.0208
100 Japanese Yen	2.9330	2.8390	2.8290
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.8000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	41.0400	37.7600	37.5600
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6400	1.5400	1.3400
100 Philippine Peso	7.8600	7.4100	7.2100
100 Qatar Riyal	124.7100	118.3900	118.1900
100 Saudi Riyal	121.2300	115.0800	114.8800
100 South Africa Rand	24.9200	22.5100	22.3100
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5400	1.4200	1.2200
100 Swedish Krona	42.2500	38.4900	38.2900
100 Thai Baht	13.9500	12.3700	11.9700

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Telekom Malaysia Bhd Outperform. Target price: RM7.53



Source: Kenanga Research

TM has entered into "aggressive mode" to defend and expand Unifi's market share in response to intensified competition since 2H'24. To this end, TM plans to escalate its marketing efforts in 2025-26, including offering subsidised electronic devices for Unifi's service plans, to retain existing customers and attract new subscribers. According to TM, this marks a significant departure from its traditional approach, which was primarily defensive and refrained from aggressive competitive measures.

TM is keen to be an infrastructure partner with U Mobile in developing Malaysia's second 5G network (NW2) via provision of fiber backhaul services. This would be largely similar to TM's existing 10-year RM2b fibre leasing service contract (start: 2021) for the first 5G network developed by Digital Nasional Bhd (DNB). In our view, TM is the leading contender for NW2's fiberisation given its substantially larger and more extensive fiber footprint vis-a-vis its domestic competitors such as TIMECOM.

On the other hand, we believe TM does not intend to participate as an equity partner in NW2. However, it is indifferent towards seeking 5G access from either NW2 or DNB's network.

Looking ahead, in the near to medium term, TM is most optimistic of earnings growth in its retail (Unifi) and wholesale (TM Global) segments. Unifi is expected to benefit from its renewed aggressive market stance, while TM Global is poised for growth due to an expected increase in wholesale demand from NW2 (as mentioned above). On the back of this, we see potential upside risk to our forecasts, which do not account for the possibility of TM capturing significant market share from its competitors or securing NW2's fiberisation contract.

OUTPERFORM with RM7.53 TP. - Kenanga Research, Feb 5

LPI Capital Bhd Outperform. Target price: RM15.00



Source: Kenanga Research

IN accordance with the Companies Act, LPI is required to dispose its 1.1% holdings of PBBANK shares held within 12 months of the completion of PBBANK's acquisition of a 44.2% stake in Dec 2024, as it is now classified as a subsidiary. Based on PBBANK's Feb 4's closing price of RM4.40 per share, a 1.1% stake is valued at RM940 million. This is equivalent to 15 days of average daily traded value for PBBANK shares.

Following the meeting, the group has yet to determine the utilisation of its proceeds. We rule out the possibility of inorganic growth given Lonpac's leading ROE position of 22.5% which trumps the FY23 weighted industry average of 11%. Therefore, any potential acquisitions are more likely to be dilutive to the group.

Between reinvesting the proceeds and returning to shareholders, applying LPI's average historical payout ratio of 80% hypothetically translates to RM1.89 per LPI share in special dividends or 14.7% in additional yields. On the further end, a full payout equates to RM2.36 per LPI share, or 18.4% in additional yields.

In line with our meeting with PBBANK, synergies between both companies will materialise progressively as they assess cross selling propositions. This entails collaborative opportunities between LPI's active agent network and 21 branches alongside PBBANK's wider branch footprint, where certain shared services could also be optimised.

Recall that in Q1'22, LPI saw a 14% YoY decline in net earned premiums attributed to adjustments to provisions to reinsurance arising from Klang Valley floods in Q4'21. While we opine that the Q4'24 flooding appear more severe, the group indicated that lesser impact is expected in Q1'25 as their underwritten policies on industrial assets were less exposed.

OUTPERFORM with RM15 TP. - Kenanga Research, Feb 5

Keyfield International Bhd Outperform. Target price: RM3.18



Source: Kenanga Research

KEYFIELD has secured two new vessel charters, comprising one AHTS and one DP2 AWB, with a total contract value of RM59.6 million for the firm charter period. The AHTS charter will commence in April 2025 for a firm 720-day period with an option to extend for 180 days, serving in the United Arab Emirates. Meanwhile, the DP2 AWB charter will begin in February 2025, running for 150 days with a 120-day extension option, and will be deployed in Malaysia.

While the DCRs were not disclosed, we estimate the AWB to command at least RM150,000/day based on past contract announcements, while the AHTS DCR is expected at RM40,000/day, assuming it is a 60-tonne vessel. The win aligns with our expectations, as we have already factored in charters for these vessel types within KEYFIELD's fleet projections.

The group took delivery of Keyfield Itqan (formerly known as Belait Barakah), a 152-pax accommodation work barge, on July 3, 2024, and the vessel is currently being prepared for deployment. Keyfield Aulia (a second-hand AHTS vessel) was also added to the company's fleet upon delivery on Aug 13, 2024. These vessels are expected to start contributing from Q4'24 onwards, further driving earnings growth. Overall, we maintain that DCRs will continue to trend upwards in the local OSV market, as supply remains tight while client demand continues to increase.

We like KEYFIELD due to: (i) its exposure to the booming local OSV industry, (ii) its relatively young fleet age of eight years and DP2-rated vessels which are preferred by clients, and (iii) its inclusion as a panel contractor for AHTS for Petronas which could open doors for more third party AHTS charters.

OUTPERFORM with RM3.18 TP. - Kenanga Research, Feb 5



Lucky colours

Create positive feng shui vibes with right paint scheme - P22



WEEKLY FOCUS

MONDAY

Technology and social media

TUESDAY

Travel and leisure

WEDNESDAY

Fashion and beauty

THURSDAY

Home and living

FRIDAY

Food and beverage

INSIDE

P23

Vertical mix-use building gaining popularity

P24

New designs to refresh home

P25

Ejen Ali re-releases

P26

Jay B to rock KL with April gig



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Creating positive *feng shui* vibes

CLOURS are an essential tool in *feng shui*. They can create a comfortable living space that promotes good *qi* (energy) and good luck, but they can also be fun and playful. By using curated colour palettes, you can explore your creativity and design your home, a space that brings you joy, comfort, love, prosperity and even laughter.

Here are expert insights into how the energy of colours can transform your living space and empower you to embrace this year with positivity and confidence.

Right colours in right direction to achieve your goals

In *feng shui*, every area of the home is tied to a specific life aspect, such as love, career or health. By incorporating the right colours into these areas, you can enhance the flow of positive energy and align your surroundings with your goals.

➡ Hope for joyful events: Use red hues in the East to attract happiness and positive events such as marriage and the arrival of a child.

➡ Wealth and prosperity: Use beige tones in the South area.

➡ Career and academic success: Decorate the West with light green or blue to tap into academic luck.

➡ Love and relationships: The Southeast is where the love energy flows strongest, so incorporate pink in this area to enhance romantic luck.

➡ Health and well-being: Choose colours that promote balance and vitality, such as earthy tones, to maintain good energy in the Northeast.

Tailored *feng shui* colours for your zodiac sign

What colours will bring you the most luck this Chinese New Year (CNY)? Many turn to their Chinese zodiac signs for insights into the Year of the Snake. In *feng shui*, colours symbolise natural elements and influence emotions, mindset and intentions. Each shade carries power, helping you align with your goals and manifest what you desire.

The Year of the Wood Snake bring themes of transformation, strategy and resilience. While challenges may arise, the Snake's wisdom and the nurturing Wood element encourage adaptability and growth.

From career opportunities to health precautions, each zodiac sign will experience unique energies. That is why it is essential to create a space that resonates with your zodiac's energy, such as choosing the right colour palette.

Snake

The Snake's clash with the *Tai Sui* (Grand Duke) star may bring challenges, but with perseverance and determination, recognition, especially from your superiors, is well within reach. Make sure to prioritise your health, as you may be more prone to injuries or accidents, particularly those involving water.

To counteract negative energy, focus on self-care, engage in activities that promote positivity and incorporate red into your home and office for better luck.

Rabbit

After two years of less-than-ideal luck, Rabbits can finally look forward to a brighter 2025! Career growth is on the horizon, with promising opportunities for promotions and well-deserved recognition.

On a personal level, Rabbits might experience minor inconveniences, such as misplaced items or unexpected weather disruptions.

To maintain stability, add dark green hues to your environment to attract stability and growth.

➡ Unlocking good energy flow with colours this Year of Snake



Rooster

Roosters are set for a successful year, particularly in leadership roles, thanks to several auspicious stars. However, trust issues may arise due to excessive suspicion towards other people and things. Legal matters may also occur, so exercise caution when signing contracts or agreements.

Navigate these challenges with the luxurious gold!

Tiger

This year, Tigers may encounter health challenges, particularly affecting the knees, joints and back. Maintaining a low profile is advised, as ill-intentioned individuals could pose risks.

To counteract negative energy, consider undertaking auspicious activities such as getting married, having children or moving into a new house. Renovating your home can also help moderate the effects of bad luck.

Despite challenges, Tigers are supported by favourable stars that bring some good fortune. Maintaining a positive mindset is key to navigating the year successfully. Your other good luck charm is the colour silver.

Monkey

This year may feel like a test of endurance for Monkeys. While being close allies with the Snake should bring some support, both signs face a less-than-auspicious year. Those working in industries with a predominantly female customer base, such as beauty or fashion, are expected to thrive.

In relationships, Monkeys may experience loneliness due to communication difficulties, while financial conflicts might also arise. It is best to focus on managing finances wisely and incorporating yellow to navigate the year smoothly and encourage optimism to attract good fortune.



lives may remain unstable and caution is advised in financial investments to avoid losses. Embrace acts of charity and kindness to amplify positive energy and attract good fortune. Powder blue is your lucky colour as it creates a peaceful environment and encourages meaningful interactions.

Dragon

For Dragons, 2025 marks a rebirth with significant positive changes in work and relationships. Couples who tied the knot last year may welcome new additions to their families, while separated couples could find their way back to each other. But, be wary of your health as stress, colds and fatigue may pose challenges.

Self-care can help, and what better way to do so than with soothing and gentle pink tones.

Goat

Goats may find 2025 challenging due to a lack of auspicious stars, but support from allies such as the Ox can help. Those in creative industries, such as advertising or writing, are likely to thrive but a hands-on approach will be required. In relationships, charm will draw attention but feelings of loneliness may persist. Do not fret as beige can help turn your luck around.

Rat

Rats have a promising year ahead, particularly in finances and interpersonal relationships. Wealth opportunities are abundant, though fluctuations might cause occasional setbacks.

The final quarter of the year may bring challenges, so vigilance and preparation will be key. When travelling, always remember to exercise caution to avoid theft or loss of personal belongings. Purple helps you attract steady wealth and foster clarity in decision-making.



Dog

The Year of the Wood Snake brings positive momentum for Dogs, especially in interpersonal relationships and career growth. Meaningful connections will form and professional breakthroughs are likely. However, love

See also
page 23

Everything in one place

➤ Vertical mixed-use buildings gaining popularity due to convenient lifestyle

■ BY R.BALA

ONCE upon a time, it was having amenities and facilities in the same locale that was the prerequisite to a successful residential development. But times have changed and with traffic becoming increasingly unmanageable, many prefer to have modern, everyday conveniences right at their doorsteps.

This has led to more residential developments being designed as vertical mixed-use buildings, with shopping and entertainment outlets aplenty within the same vicinity.

Here are some of the factors fuelling the rise of vertical mixed-use buildings, especially in the Klang Valley:

Cross generational appeal

Both young and old alike appreciate the convenience and walkability of vertical mixed-use buildings. Given that horrendous traffic jams are very much part of an urbanite's existence, there is a lot of appeal in being able to walk to your convenience store, pick up the laundry or catch the latest blockbuster all within the same building. Business owners also rely on the relationships built from this live-work-eat lifestyle. Easy access and good location are huge selling points when setting up a business in a mixed-use building.

Brick and mortar stores still have fans

Not every business has been shifted online or forced to close due to the pandemic. There a wide number of services that still need a business premise — salons, clinics and restaurants are just a few examples. Having them close to residential components is a huge benefit to business owner and residents, creating a sustainable synergy for



More home dwellers prefer to have conveniences such as shopping outlets within the same building.

the entire building.

Benefits of dealing with commercial tenants

Many landlords prefer to deal with commercial entities rather than residential tenants for a plethora of reasons. One benefit of this is many businesses will be open to longer term leases. Furthermore, commercial tenants will tend to ensure the store front is properly maintained to attract customers. Being in a vertical mixed-use building with substantial office and residential components will also ensure the requisite footfall for the long-term viability of the premises.

These have seen a rise in developments, in which residents live, shop and find entertainment all within the same housing complex. If such conveniences appeal to you, then a residence in a vertical mixed-used building is ideal. Just a brisk walk without having to get into the car for all your daily need and more.



More high-rise projects are incorporating shopping, entertainment and lifestyle options within the same development.
— PICS BY PEXELS

Heading towards auspicious year

Horse

There may be a fair share of hiccups and challenges for Horses, but resilience will see you through.

In your career, opportunities may lie overseas or in industries catering to male-dominated customer bases, such as automotive or engineering. Students, on the other hand, are set to thrive academically in 2025.

Interpersonal relationships will flourish as you form meaningful connections and enjoy the generosity of others.

However, when it comes to love, the year may feel ambiguous, with relationships tending to be short-lived or fraught with miscommunication. Find clarity and patience in orange, which will be vital to avoiding misunderstandings.

Ox

This year is likely smooth sailing for Oxen,

From page 22

with creativity and inspiration driving success in writing, art and other creative fields.

However, relationships may feel strained, with a sense of disconnect from loved ones. Rekindling bonds through shared experiences, such as revisiting familiar places, can help bring you closer.

Oxen should also tread carefully in interactions, as misunderstandings may arise easily. Practice patience and avoid confrontations to keep the peace. Light green can enhance creativity and harmony.

Pig

Pigs will experience the most changes among the zodiac signs in 2025. To combat inauspicious energy, consider making big life decisions such as getting married, having children or moving to a

new home. However, avoid substantial financial commitments or large instalments as the year may not favour such moves.

On the brighter side, certain stars bring opportunities for power and authority, aiding your climb up the corporate ladder.

Embrace change and movement by exploring opportunities overseas or stepping outside your comfort zone. Find comfort and luck in maroon red to maximise your positive energy.

Let 2025 be the year, in which thoughtful design and feng shui energy come together to support your goals and aspirations.

This article is contributed by
Nippon Paint Malaysia in collaboration with feng shui consultant Mak Ling Ling.



BY S.TAMARAI CHELVI

AS we are early into the new year, it is perhaps time to change things up at home. Our abodes reflect our personalities – after all, we spend most of our time there.

So, let us explore a few of the latest interior design trends that can let you express your inner beauty in your physical surroundings:

Colour drenching

This dramatic colour styling has been popular for some time and may appeal to homeowners who are just tired of pastels.

An entire room or space – from ceiling to floor – is painted (hence “drenched”) in the same shade of bold or intense colours, such as navy blue, mustard yellow or dark green.

For example, if you choose deep purple for the main colour, all four walls and ceiling are painted in that colour for an immersive feel. Even the furniture has to follow suit.

You could also opt for double-drenching, whereby two different colours are used, instead of one.

Personality themes

If you want to stand out, craft a design theme based on your own personality – something that communicates your personal story, traditions and culture.



Colour drenching involves painting a room entirely in the same shade of an intense colour. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @EVIE_POLKADOT

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Earthy colours are visually soothing and comforting. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @MAI_SAAD_DESIGNS

Refresh your home

➤ Latest design trends for spicing things up

Do not be afraid to be eclectic by mixing bold patterns and different types of textured fabric, prints and colours. Consider adding antique furniture pieces or bold artworks to your home.

You also can include favourite travel souvenirs, handmade items, quirky oddities and things that hold sentimental value. Go crazy. Ultimately, remember this is your space.

Biophilic design

This design is all about connecting people with nature to create

harmonious surroundings.

It incorporates natural materials, wood furniture and ample daylight and space. Plants and water unsurprisingly take centre stage.

Indoor flora are meticulously paired with existing physical structures. Plants such as Monstera are matched with wood or stone furniture and cool wall colours such as ivory, neutral and sage green. Natural shapes and forms – such as arches, curves or any unique patterns – are preserved.

Japandi

Minimalism never seems to go out of vogue. Japandi, a combination of Japanese and Scandinavian styles, is incredibly popular due to its clutter-free and spacious aesthetics.

The style favours natural materials such as wood and bamboo, warm lighting, soft hues or neutral colours,

earthy tones and pastels that give a feeling of serenity.

A typical setup would have wool-based sofas with plush cushions along with visually pleasing throws and rugs to give a sense of coziness. Look to wood flooring, ambient lighting and wall accents to add depth to the entire space.

Earthy or neutral tones

Pantone's colour of the year for 2025 is Mocha Mousse. So, earthy tones – from chocolate, deep brown, rustic brick colours to dark green – are the “it” colours for interior design.

Many warmer and subtler colour variations are soothing to the eyes and can evoke a comforting feel in any interior.

Employing deep brown shades, such as walnut, adds depth while the use of wood adds a touch of luxury.



Personality-themed designs incorporate items that are meaningful to the owner. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @THE_SHOETRING_HOME



Japandi is a combination of Japanese and Scandinavian aesthetics. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @JAPANDI.INTERIOR



Biophilic design emphasises natural materials, wood furniture and ample daylight and space. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @STUDIO7.83



A large student population will boost a suburb's value as there will be high demand for rented premises. – PEXELSPIC

Things to consider when picking your suburban address

BY R. BALA

SUBURBS are very much part of Malaysian city landscapes. Millions call them home – some sprang up organically while others are meticulously planned developments catering to every need.

If you are looking to invest in a suburban property, do note there are various factors that determine its value and desirability.

Here are key features that make for a great suburban address.

Getting around

A great transport network is vital for a suburb to thrive. Great road access aligned with efficient public transportation will greatly impact the area's desirability.

In the Klang Valley, having train stations servicing the area will

greatly enhance the value of properties. Access to employment is considered to be a big plus when it comes to the desirability of an address.

If the suburb is not located near an employment hub, it should have fast access to transport to allow workers to move about quickly and conveniently.

Academic options

A good suburb will have education options covering all age groups, from kindergarten to tertiary education. There should also be varying options available for each segment, such as public and private institutions.

A mature and cosmopolitan suburb will have religious schools, daycare centres as well as universities and colleges offering diverse programmes.

Being near institutions of higher

learning will also greatly affect the price of a property as the owner can opt to rent out the premises to students.

A large student population is a boon – one only has to look at SS15 in Subang Jaya where property values have sky-rocketed due to its proximity to various colleges and universities.

Park life

Most suburbs will be teeming with people – often in close proximity, especially in high-rise scenarios. Public parks thus are an essential component for suburban populations looking to unwind or sweat it out. Having fields for sporting activities is a bonus.

Hiking or biking trails will also make a suburb more appealing as they serve as avenues for healthy activities.

Swimming pools are now standard feature in most high-rises, so a water theme park will further boost an area's desirability – for example, the water theme park in Gamuda Cove.

Easy access to healthcare

This is an essential component that ranks high among many property buyers. Whether it be for infants or the elderly, having specialist medical care in the area is deemed vital.

Mature suburbs will usually have private and public healthcare facilities to service the local populace.

Shopping, dining, entertainment

It goes without saying that having a variety of lifestyle options at the doorstep is pivotal in determining quality of life. For many property buyers, this is the deciding factor on whether a suburb is worth investing in.



The re-release of the film in cinemas will feature a five-minute sneak peek of sequel *Ejen Ali The Movie 2*.

Ejen Ali returns to cinemas ahead of movie sequel

► Catch 2019 animated hit again on big screens

STARTING today, *Ejen Ali The Movie* will be re-released in selected cinemas nationwide, giving viewers another chance to catch the phenomenon that took Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei by storm in 2019.

This re-release by Primeworks Studios and WAU Animation is not just a chance to relive Ejen Ali's epic adventures in the futuristic city of Cyberaya – long-time fans can also expect an extra special treat.

For the first time ever, this cinema run will feature a five-minute sneak peek of *Ejen Ali The Movie 2*. Get a first look into Ejen Ali's challenging new mission as he takes up the mantle of the Satria Project – a new armoured suit designed for him to master all four Teras in Mata – Tekno (tech), Neuro (strategy), Kombatan (martial arts) and Inviso (stealth).

Ejen Ali The Movie previously shattered records, raking in over RM30 million in just six weeks, becoming one of the highest-grossing local animated films of all time. 2019 was then declared the "Year of Malaysian Animation", with *Ejen Ali The Movie* leading the charge and proving that local productions remain Malaysia's beloved choice against big-name international animation titles.

Since its debut in 2016, the popular animated TV series *Ejen Ali* has captured the hearts of audiences across generations, not just in Malaysia but in over 65 countries, including Disney Asia, Nickelodeon India, MNCTV and RTV in Indonesia, and AlMajed TV in the Middle East and North Africa.

With millions of viewers on TV3 and a dedicated following on YouTube, the franchise made history as the first Malaysian-animated IP co-produced with Walt Disney Company

Southeast Asia, solidifying its place as a trailblazer in the local animation industry and expanding its influence on the global stage.

Directed by Usamah Zaid Yasin, *Ejen Ali The Movie* plunges viewers into the story of a 12-year-old boy who is unexpectedly recruited as an "ejen" for the spy organisation Meta Advance Tactical Agency (Mata). Tasked with protecting the futuristic city of Cyberaya, Ejen Ali faces a crisis when his unique Iris gadget is upgraded to Iris Neo and then widely assigned to other Mata agents. Just as he grapples with no longer being the only special agent, a mysterious figure emerges, claiming to know secrets about his past.

Ali is forced to question his role in Mata, putting his loyalty to the agency to the ultimate test. With courage and determination, he embarks on a dangerous mission to uncover the truth, confront the unknown and discover the true meaning of responsibility as an "ejen".

The film's re-release is aimed at reigniting the Ejen Ali spark leading up to the release of the highly anticipated sequel, *Ejen Ali The Movie 2*. Buzz for the sequel has continued to build since the first official teaser was released in September 2024, further cemented by the debut of its official theme song *Hanya Kamu*, as performed by celebrated artiste Datuk M Nasir. The first single of the film's soundtrack album is now available on digital streaming services such as Spotify, Apple Music and YouTube Music.

Hanya Kamu is a landmark fusion of Ejen Ali's signature electronic music with Nasir's powerful vocal stylings. This single marks Nasir's distinctive foray into new sonic territories and was co-written by award-winning composer Azri Yunus of WAU Animation with lyrical contributions from Nasir. Alongside Ejen Ali's Satria evolution in *Ejen Ali The Movie 2*, it serves as a spirited anthem for the young generation to rise up to the challenge and become the truest version of themselves.

Black Sabbath to be given Freedom of Birmingham honour by city

TO say Black Sabbath changed the course of popular music would be quite an understatement. The Birmingham quartet pretty much laid the blueprint for all things doom laden and heavy since its eponymous debut in 1970.

Its initial run of eight studio albums are considered near flawless and their collective influence can still be heard reverberating in the noisier spectrum of music. With anthemic songs about mental health (*Paranoid*) to the insatiable hunger of the industrial military complex (*War Pigs*), Black Sabbath wrote some of heavy metal's defining tunes that remain as epic and majestic even today.

Having sold in excess of 75 million records worldwide, the band's city of origin decided last Tuesday to honour the four members with the Freedom of Birmingham title.

The City Council recognised the immense contribution Black Sabbath has made to the world of music and will bestow the honorary title on the four original members – Ozzy Osbourne, Tony Iommi, Bill Ward and

Gezzer Butler. The Crown pub, in which Black Sabbath played its first gig, was given listed status last year after falling into disrepair in recent years. There have been calls for a permanent museum commemorating heavy metal music in the region, with acts such as Judas Priest and Led Zeppelin having roots in the British Midlands.

As is, the band has a bench in its honour in the centre of Birmingham. There is also a large mechanical bull from the 2022 Commonwealth Games on display in New Street station, which was named Ozzy after a public vote.

In a statement, Osbourne said he was "honoured and shocked" to receive the honour.

"I am a proud Brummie from Aston through and through. I am still amazed to this day that no one outside of Birmingham can understand a word I say, but that has always made me laugh. My only regret is my mum and dad are not here to see what I became. Birmingham for ever!" he added. – by **R.BALA**



Black Sabbath is widely revered for its contributions to heavy metal. – PIC FROM FACEBOOK @BLACKSABBATH



Jay B set to perform in Malaysia

➤ South Korean R&B artiste will make KL appearance on April 27

BY VERONICA ELANKOVAN

AFTER releasing single *Python* and holding a two-day concert in Seoul, South Korea, Got7 is back on the K-pop radar after a successful series of solo careers.

High off the success of a new EP *Winter Heptagon*, the group's leader Lim Jaebom (Jay B) is bringing his talents to Malaysia on April 27 at Zepp KL.

The 2025 Jay B Concert [Tape: Re Load] in Kuala Lumpur promises to be a musical feast for Aghases (Got7 fandom name) and casual fans.

This concert serves as a treat for

fans who have journeyed with Jay B throughout his metamorphosis from a K-pop idol to an R&B artiste after leaving JYP Entertainment.

He first released his EP *Somo: Fume* that showed a different side to his artistry, featuring collaborations with notable names in the Korean music industry such as Jay Park, Whee In and Sokodomo.

The 31-year-old then released his special three-song EP *Seasonal Hiatus* as a nod to his imminent military enlistment in February 2023.

Jay B returned to the entertainment scene on Nov 1 last year and was warmly and

enthusiastically embraced by his fans.

Not long later, on Nov 27, the crooner dropped his first full-length album *Archive 1: [Road Runner]*, featuring 11 tracks. A former b-boy who operated under the alias Detsoul before catapulting to stardom, Jay B is a tastefully experimental artiste.

With honey-like vocals and a defining R&B sound, fans are in for a whole buffet of musical experiences from the South Korean singer.

Organised by Line Up Ent, tickets for the concert go on sale this Sunday.



Jay B is the leader of South Korean band Got7.



Over the last five years, *Grey's Anatomy* has always been among the six most-watched programmes on streaming.
— PIC FROM FACEBOOK @GREY'SANATOMY

Viewers spend 23 million years watching streaming content in 2024

ACROSS the year of 2024, viewers worldwide cumulatively spent more than 12 trillion minutes watching streaming programmes, the equivalent of 23 million years' worth, according to Nielsen. Time spent on the various video streaming platforms increased by 10% compared to 2023.

TV viewers have never spent so much time watching streaming programmes – that is one of the takeaways from a Nielsen report that takes stock of the most popular programmes on the platforms. In December 2024, for example, Americans allocated 43% of their TV viewing time to streaming, compared with 26% in May 2021.

Nielsen also looked back on the successes of the past year, with a surprise winner for the most-watched series of 2024. *Forget Squid Game*, *Stranger Things* and other high-profile dramas – it is the animated children's series *Bluey* that takes the prize. The Australian programme racked up 55.6 billion minutes viewed on Disney+.

The rest of the rankings are filled



Nielsen says viewers across the globe cumulatively spent more than 12 trillion minutes watching streaming programmes in 2024. — PEXELSPIC

with long-established programmes, often originating on traditional TV channels. In second place, *Grey's Anatomy* totalled 47.85 billion minutes watched on various

platforms. The medical series cements its position as a must-see programme. Over the last five years, the Shonda Rhimes creation has always been among the six most-



Australian animated series *Bluey* has clocked up 55.6 billion viewing minutes.
— PIC FROM FACEBOOK @BLUEY

watched programmes on streaming. *NCIS*, *The Big Bang Theory*, *Law & Order: SVU* and *Criminal Minds* also feature in the Top 10 most-watched streaming series. Also of note are the animated series *Family Guy*, *Bob's Burgers* and *SpongeBob SquarePants*.

Among streaming platform originals, *Bridgerton*, another Shonda Rhimes production, takes first place. The third season, released in spring 2024, boosted the audience of the first two seasons. In total, the series accumulated 21.42 billion cumulative minutes, 56% of which were generated by the final episodes. The reality show *Love Is Blind* took second place with 16.45 billion minutes watched, outperforming exclusive shows such as *The Boys*, *Fallout*

and *Futurama*.

The movie portion of the report is largely dominated by content aimed at younger viewers. *Moana* garnered 13 billion viewing minutes. In a year that saw its sequel released in cinemas, this Disney classic retained its position as the most-watched film on streaming, a position it has held since 2020. *Super Mario Bros Movie* took second place, accumulating 11.72 billion minutes viewed in 2024. Of these, 5.7 billion were consumed by children aged two to 11.

Children's content stood out in particular in this ranking. Of the top 10, nine were animated films. Only the Prime Video comedy *Red One* makes it into the top 10, albeit in last place. — ETX studio



RCB have no plans to own teams in other leagues

ROYAL Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) have no plans to own teams in other international cricket leagues, the Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise's chief operating officer Rajesh Menon said as they eye expansions through other means.

RCB, a subsidiary of United Spirits, were one of the original eight IPL teams that formed the Twenty20 league in 2008 that has since become the highlight of the Indian summer.

But they remain one of only two IPL teams without any ownership stakes in teams from leagues outside India, the other being the Gujarat Titans which made its IPL debut in 2022.

Other IPL teams such as the Mumbai Indians, Delhi Capitals and Kolkata Knight Riders own three or more teams in three different countries.

They include franchises in South Africa (SA20), the West Indies (Caribbean Premier League), the US (Major League Cricket) and the United Arab Emirates (International League T20), but Rajesh said RCB have different ideas about

expansion. "Expanding the brand globally doesn't mean only by participating in cricket," Rajesh told *Reuters*.

"We can expand our merchandise range to Australia, the US, and the UK through our bar and cafe, not just sports. Currently, we are not expanding RCB from a sporting point of view but we will expand RCB through other expansions."

Despite having heavy hitters such as Virat Kohli, Chris Gayle, AB de Villiers and Faf du Plessis over the years, the title has eluded the Bengaluru franchise, who have been beaten in the final three times - in 2009, 2011 and 2016.

"Icons are critical and that is what we have created in our RCB franchise," Rajesh said.

"Chris Gayle's 175 not out is still not broken... the most IPL runs record by an individual is still with Virat (8,004 runs), the highest partnership is with Virat and De Villiers (229 in 2016), so we have manifested the philosophy," - *Reuters*

302 Jobs

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IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN
(FAMILY DIVISION)
DIVORCE PETITION
No. BA-33-860-12/2024**

In the matter of Section 53, Parts VII and VIII of the Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976

And

In the matter of Sections 2 and 10 Domestic Violence Act 1994

And

In the matter of Sections 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 19A and 19B Guardianship of Infants Act 1961

And

In the matter of Sections 3, 4 and 9 Married Women and Children (Maintenance) Act 1950

And

In the matter of Section 24(d) Courts of Judicature Act 1964

And

Articles 1 to 5, 13 and 16 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

And

General Recommendations 19, 27, 28, 29 and 35 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

And

Articles 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 18, 27, 28, and 31 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

BETWEEN

LEE LAI YOUNG
(NRC No. 740926-08-5604) ... PETITIONER

AND

TAN CHOR YEW
(NRC No. 712029-14-5669) ... RESPONDENT

AND

PHRAEOWIRAI CHANMA
(Thailand Passport No. AC5438924) (Thailand ID No. 1-3605-01293-70-7) ... CO-RESPONDENT

NOTICE

To: PHRAEOWIRAI CHANMA
A-21-03, MENARA VISTA PETALING,
No. 137, JALAN PUCHONG, 58200
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

TAKE NOTICE that a petition for divorce has been filed against you by LEE LAI YOUNG in the High Court of Malaysia in Shah Alam Petition No. BA-33-860-12/2024.

And it has been ordered that service on you of the said petition, notice of proceedings, acknowledgment of service and statement as to arrangements for children filed in the above proceedings be effected on you by this advertisement.

You may apply to the senior assistant registrar of the High Court at Shah Alam or Messrs Low & Partners, solicitors for the said Petitioner for copies of the said documents and copies thereof will be sent to you. The said documents shall be deemed to have been served on you after two (2) days from the date of the publication of this advertisement.

Dated 06 February 2025

sgd

Messrs Low & Partners
Solicitors for the Petitioner

This NOTICE is filed by Messrs Low & Partners, solicitors for the Petitioner whose address for service is at 5, Jalan SS21/23, Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
No. Tel.: 03-7729 5293
Email: admin@lowpartners.com
No. Fax: 03-7729 5293

322 Notices

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYSIA AT KUALA LUMPUR
IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR
(FAMILY DIVISION)
JUDICIAL SEPARATION PETITION
No. WA-33-531-11/2024**

In the matter of Section 64, Parts VII and VIII and Section 102 Law Reform (Marriage and Divorce) Act 1976

And

In the matter of Sections 2 and 10 Domestic Violence Act 1994

And

In the matter of Sections 2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 19A and 19B Guardianship of Infants Act 1961

And

In the matter of Sections 3, 4 and 9 Married Women and Children (Maintenance) Act 1950

And

In the matter of Section 24(d) Courts of Judicature Act 1964

And

Articles 1 to 5, 13 and 16 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

And

General Recommendations 19, 27, 28, 29 and 35 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

And

Articles 3, 5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 18, 27, 28, and 31 Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)

BETWEEN

CHEONG WA CHING
(NRC No. 701209-08-6274) ... PETITIONER

AND

HEAH TIEN HUAT
(NRC No. 710930-06-5393) ... RESPONDENT

AND

TAN JOE YEE ... CO-RESPONDENT

NOTICE

To: TAN JOE YEE
No. 1007, TAMAN IBAI GOLF RESORT
20400 KUALA TERENGGANU,
TERENGGANU

TAKE NOTICE that a petition for judicial separation has been filed against you by CHEONG WA CHING in the High Court of Kuala Lumpur Petition No. WA-33-531-11/2024.

And it has been ordered that service on you of the said petition, notice of proceedings, acknowledgment of service and statement as to arrangements for children filed in the above proceedings be effected on you by this advertisement.

You may apply to the senior assistant registrar of the High Court at Kuala Lumpur or Messrs Low & Partners, solicitors for the said Petitioner for copies of the said documents and copies thereof will be sent to you. The said documents shall be deemed to have been served on you after two (2) days from the date of the publication of this advertisement.

Dated 06 February 2025

Low & Partners

Messrs Low & Partners
Solicitors for the Petitioner

This NOTICE is filed by Messrs Low & Partners, solicitors for the Petitioner whose address for service is at 5, Jalan SS21/23, Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.
No. Tel.: 03-7729 5293
Email: admin@lowpartners.com
No. Fax: 03-7729 5293

322 Notices

**THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYSIA AT KUALA LUMPUR
IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR
PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR
(COMMERCIAL DIVISION)
COMPANIES WINDING-UP PETITION
No. 280CC-32-01/2025**

In the matter of S.465 (1) (a) and S.466 (1) (a) of the Companies Act, 2016;

AND

In the matter of the Companies (Winding-Up) Rules, 1972;

AND

In the matter of Warisan Maju Bintang Sdn Bhd [Company No. 201301024339 (1054168-X)]

BETWEEN

POPULAR PILLAR SDN BHD [Company No. 201601000146 (1171071-X)] ... PETITIONER

AND

WARISAN MAJU BINTANG SDN BHD [Company No. 201301024339 (1054168-X)] ... RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

Notice is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the above-named Respondent Company by the Petitioner is presented by Popular Pillar Sdn Bhd [Company No. 201601000146 (1171071-X)] and that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Kuala Lumpur, at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon, on the 8th day of May 2025 via video conferencing; and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose and a copy of the petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is No. 242, Kampung Baru Jln, 46200 Batang Berjuntai, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Petitioner's solicitors are Messrs Atan M K Thas & Co, No. 19-1, Jalan Tiara 2B, Bandar Baru Klang, 41150 Klang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

signed

Messrs Atan M K Thas & Co
Solicitors for the Petitioner

Not -

Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named Respondent Company a notice in writing of his intention to do so. The Notice must state the name and address of the person, or if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or her solicitors (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named not later than twelve o'clock noon on the 7th day of May 2025 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the Petition).

Tel No: 03-3341 5322 Fax No: 03-33415332, Email: atanmkthas@gmail.com
Ref: AMKL705/07-24M1-M2

322 Notices

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYSIA AT SHAH ALAM
IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN
COMPANIES WINDING-UP NO.: BA-280CC-32-01/2025**

In the matter of Vantage Trading Partners Sdn Bhd [Company No. 1270875-1]

and

In the matter of Section 465(1)(a) and 466(1) (a) of the Companies Act 2016.

BETWEEN

CERMAT BIA SDN. BHD. [Company No. 330816-X] ... PETITIONER

AND

VANTAGE TRADING PARTNERS SDN BHD [Company No. 1270875-1] ... RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that the Petition for Winding-Up of the above-named company by the High Court, was on the 14th day of January 2025 presented by CERMAT BIA SDN. BHD. [Company No. 330816-X] and that the said petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Shah Alam High Court on the 21st day of April 2025 at 9.00 a.m. and any creditor or contributory of the said company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose and a copy of the petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said company requiring the same by the undersigned on the payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at No. 22, Jalan Taboh 3322, Section 33, Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Petitioner's Solicitors are Messrs. Samrith Sanjiv & Partners at 14-2, Jalan Sri Hartamas 8, Taman Sri Hartamas, 50460 Kuala Lumpur.

signed

Messrs. Samrith Sanjiv & Partners
Solicitors for the Petitioner

NOTE: Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named Petitioner's solicitors, Messrs. Samrith Sanjiv & Partners notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm or his or her solicitor (if any) must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named not later than 12.00 noon of the 20th day of April 2025.

Tel: 03-6201 9526; Fax: 03-6201 9527; E-mail: info@samrithsanjiv.com
[Ref No: SSP/SSP/CRSB-TRF/1780/2024(WU)]

322 Notices

**DALAM MARKAMAH SEYEN DI KLANG
DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN,
MALAYSIA
DIJUALAN NOBEL-553F-5-10/2024**

Antara

SHANMUGANATHAN AL. SARUMINGAM (No. KP-511012-10-5737) (dalam perkara ini dikenali sebagai Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor) (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) ... PLAINTIFF

Dan

RAJESWARAI AP MOOKAN (No. KP-530531-10-4928) ... DEFENDANT

NOTIS

Kepada :-

Rajeswari Ap Mookan
5/5 Srik Mahabhar
Jalan Telok Puti, 41100, Klang,
Selangor Darul Ehsan.

AMBI. PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dilakukan terhadap kami dalam Mahkamah Seyen di Klang melalui Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956 oleh SHANMUGANATHAN AL. SARUMINGAM (No. KP-511012-10-5737) (dalam perkara ini dikenali sebagai Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor) (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) terhadap saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (1) hari dan melalui mesji nota sura "voice note" kepada saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (2) hari dan melalui mesji nota sura "voice note" kepada saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (3) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (4) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (5) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (6) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (7) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (8) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (9) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (10) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (11) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (12) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (13) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (14) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (15) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (16) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (17) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (18) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (19) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (20) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (21) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (22) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (23) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (24) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (25) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (26) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (27) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (28) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (29) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (30) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (31) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (32) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (33) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (34) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (35) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (36) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (37) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (38) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (39) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (40) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (41) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (42) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (43) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (44) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (45) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (46) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (47) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (48) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (49) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (50) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (51) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (52) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (53) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (54) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-001-10-31081956) berhubung dengan tindakan tersebut. (55) Saya iktikad untuk mengemukakan kesertaan saya sebagai Plaintiff selagi Selatengah kepada Perusahaan Hindu Petaling Jaya Selangor (No. Perakuan Pendaftaran PPM-00

Alcaraz digs deep in Rotterdam

World No. 3 battles through in first match since Australian Open

SPANISH tennis star Carlos Alcaraz battled through against local hero Botic van de Zandschulp at the Rotterdam Open yesterday, his first match since quarterfinal heartbreak at the Australian Open.

The top seed had to dig deep to overcome the wildcard ranked 81 places below him, eventually coming through the first-round clash 7-6 (7-3), 3-6, 6-1 in nearly three hours.

"It was a really difficult match. I had to get through some really difficult moments," Alcaraz said.

"I started the match a little bit nervous, making some mistakes. I let him dominate the match, play his style," added the Spaniard.

Van de Zandschulp stunned Alcaraz with a straight-sets win at last year's US Open and the higher-ranked man initially struggled to find his range on the slow Rotterdam indoor surface.

A series of uncharacteristic errors handed the Dutchman several breaks of serve and Alcaraz became increasingly frustrated, chuntering at his box and the chair umpire.

Van de Zandschulp had a set

point at 5-4 but contrived to serve a double fault. Alcaraz sniffed an opportunity and he brought the match back on level terms at 5-5 with a powerful forehand drive.

The set felt destined for a tie-break and sure enough, the pair were soon locked at 6-6. Alcaraz saved his best form for the key moment, unleashing several winners to take the tie-break 7-3.

The second set was also hard-fought, going on serve until the sixth game when an errant Alcaraz backhand gifted Van de Zandschulp a break and a 4-2 lead.

The local favourite served for the set at 5-3 and levelled the match at one set all as Alcaraz hit yet another forehand wide to the delight of the partisan home crowd.

Two double faults and a wild forehand swung

the match back in the Spaniard's favour in the decisive set as he broke at the first time of asking, racing into a 3-0 lead.

The break seemed to knock the energy out of Van de Zandschulp and he lost his serve again to give the top seed the chance to serve out at 5-1.

Alcaraz sealed the match with a delicate forehand drop shot volley, the relief palpable on his face as he shook hands at the net.

"A bit up and down on my side. I have to work to see where my weaknesses were in this match to be better in the next round," he said.

Alcaraz is seeking to become the first Spaniard to triumph in Rotterdam but there are several obstacles potentially in his path, notably former champion here Daniil Medvedev.

The Russian No. 2 seed came through a gruelling encounter with veteran three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka.

Also through into the second round was Australia's Alex de Minaur, who has happy memories of Rotterdam, finishing runner-up last year to world number one Jannik Sinner.

De Minaur overpowered Belgium's David Goffin 6-2, 6-4 to book a second-round clash with Czech teenager Jakub Mensik.

Another former Rotterdam champion through with little difficulty was Russia's Andrey Rublev, who beat China's Zhang Zhizhen 6-3, 6-4. - AFP



Alcaraz.
- REUTERS/SPIC

Halep announces retirement

FORMER world No. 1 and two-time Grand Slam winner Simona Halep announced her retirement from professional tennis yesterday after losing in the first round at her home event in Cluj.

Halep, whose career stalled due to a doping ban that was reduced on appeal last year, lost 6-1, 6-1 to Italy's Lucia Bronzetti in her first match in 2025 before announcing her decision.

The 33-year-old Romanian had delayed the start of her season due to pain in her knee and shoulder.

"I don't know if it's with sadness or joy, I think I feel both, but I make this decision with my soul at peace, I have always been realistic with myself," Halep told the crowd at the BT Arena.

"My body cannot take as much so as to get back where I once was, it is very difficult to get there and I know what it means to get there. That is why I wanted to come to Cluj today to play before you and to say goodbye on the tennis court.

"Who knows whether I will return but at the moment it is for the last time that I play here. I don't want to cry, it is a beautiful thing, I became world number one, I won Grand Slams, it is everything I ever wanted. Life moves on, there is life after tennis too."

Halep lost in three Grand Slam finals before finally clinching her first major at the French Open in 2018 and went on to win Wimbledon the following year.

She was provisionally suspended in October 2022 after she tested positive for roxadustat – a banned drug that stimulates the production of red blood cells – at the US Open that year.

She was later banned for four years, a period which was cut to nine months last March following an appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

"Being away from the court in this period, I realised how hard the last 15 years were, working every day, no matter how you feel, you must push yourself to the max," Halep, who won 24 WTA titles, later told a press conference.

"Perhaps life also means something else. I understood that in this period, and I want to enjoy what I am living now. I have done a lot in tennis. I am at peace, content with what I did, and I feel the time has come to look in another direction." - Reuters

Woods announces death of mother

TIGER WOODS announced over social media that his mother, Kultida, died on Tuesday morning.

Woods did not reveal a cause of death for his mother, who reportedly was responsible for the 15-time major winner wearing red as his signature look in final rounds on Sundays.

"It is with heartfelt sadness that I want to share that my dear mother, Kultida Woods, passed away early this morning," the 15-time major champion wrote on X.

"My Mom was a force of nature all her own, her spirit was simply undeniable. She was quick with the needle and a laugh.

"She was my biggest fan, greatest supporter, without her none of my personal achievements would have been possible.

"She was loved by so many, but especially by her two grandchildren, Sam and Charlie. Thank you all for your support, prayers and privacy at this difficult time for me and my family. Love you Mom."

Kultida was in attendance at her son's TGL match in South Florida last week, prompting him to give her a quick message before his Jupiter Links Golf Club faced co-owner Rory McIlroy's Boston Commons Golf.

"Hey Mom," Woods said. "Not gonna suck tonight, OK?"

Woods made good on that statement, as his team recorded a 4-3 overtime win over McIlroy's squad.

Woods famously honored his mother during his acceptance speech for the 2024 Bob Jones Award, the USGA's highest honor.

"My mom doesn't get enough credit," he said. "Everyone thought it was my dad (Earl) when I went on the road, which it was, but mom was at home. If you don't know, mom has been there my entire life. She's always been there through thick and thin." - Field Level Media

McIlroy gets brutal reality check

RORY MCILROY has been told he needs to sort out two key areas of his game if he is to break his major drought.

The 35-year-old made a statement on the weekend by winning his 27th PGA Tour title at the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am, holding off Shane Lowry by two shots.

But it is now more than a decade since he last landed a major title, when he won his second PGA Championship.

A golden opportunity for the Ryder Cup star to break that run went begging in 2024 when he missed two short putts in the final three holes to miss out on the US Open to Bryson DeChambeau.

Now former professional player and commentator Brandel Chamblee has revealed the two factors he believes are preventing McIlroy from

adding to his haul of four majors. And he thinks one issue is psychological, with the other technical.

"One, I think he's got a mental hurdle," he told golf magazine Bunkered. "When you're a completely different person in the majors than you are in regular tour events – and he is – that screams that you've got a mental hurdle.

"The other one is his iron play. He's going to have to hit them better. Simple as that. Let's go back to a decade ago or more when he was winning major championships by eight shots.

"He was second on tour in strokes gained and approach. Only Tiger Woods was better than him at that time.

"He was picking up more than a shot on the field. Now, he's only picking up about a quarter of a shot.

So, he's got a little technical issue to get past and a not-so-little mental issue to get past in the majors."

Chamblee, 62, was a one-time winner on the PGA Tour whose best effort at a major came at the Masters in 1999, when he placed tied 18th.

It's Augusta that will represent McIlroy's next chance to not only land another big title, but complete a career Grand Slam.

Despite his reservations, Chamblee has faith that the Northern Irishman will add to his major haul before the end of his career.

"I think he's training better. His body's probably never better. He's still the longest hitter on the PGA Tour.

"So, you'd have to say it's highly unlikely that he's going to play the next five years without winning a major." - Express Newspapers

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA
DI SHAH ALAM
DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL
EHSAN, MALAYSIA
(BAHAGIAN KELUARGA)
PETISIYEN PERCERAIAN
NO. BA-33-985-12/2024

Dalam Perkara mengenal Seksyen
53 (1) (a), 76, 88, 89, 92, 93
Akta Membaharu Undang-undang
(Perkahwinan dan Perceraian), 1976
(Akta 164)

Dan

Dalam Perkara mengenal Kaedah-
Kaedah Prosiding Perceraian Dan Hal
Ehwal Suami Isteri 1980

ANTARA

SOR KIM LEONG
(No. K/P: 880312-14-5355)

... PEMPETISIYEN

DAN

TIEW POH POH (P)
(No. K/P: 820103-10-5790)

... RESPONDEN

NOTIS IKLAN

Kepada:

TIEW POH POH
Block B-13A-3A,
Imperial Residence,
Taman Sri Aman,
43200 Cheras,
Selangor Darul Ehsan

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa
satu Petisiyen Perceraian telah
dikeluarkan terhadap kamu di
Mahkamah Tinggi Shah Alam oleh
SOR KIM LEONG (No. K/P: 880312-
14-5355) dan Mahkamah telah
memerintahkan bahawa Petisiyen
Perceraian diserahkan kepada kamu
secara penyempalapan ganti dengan
menampikan sesalisan Perintah
Penyempalapan Ganti bertarikh 16
Januari 2025 dan Petisiyen Perceraian
bertarikh 11 Disember 2024 ini di
Papan Notis Mahkamah Tinggi Shah
Alam dan penyempalapan di alam
terakhir kamu yang diketahui iaitu di
Block B-13A-3A, Imperial Residence,
Taman Sri Aman, 43200 Cheras,
Selangor Darul Ehsan dan dengan
mengiklankan satu Notis mengenai
Petisiyen Perceraian tersebut di
dalam satu akhbar tempatan
iaitu "The Sun" DAN AKHIRNYA
ADALAH DIPERINTAHKAN bahawa
penyempalapan tersebut hendaklah
menjadi satu penyempalapan yang
sempurna dan cukup ke atas kamu
dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas
tarikh akhir penyempalapan-penyempalapan
dan pengiklankan tersebut.

tt

Tetuan WVK Wong & Co.
Pegamcara Pempetisiyen

NOTIS IKLAN ini ditanam oleh Tetuan
WVK Wong & Co., Pegamcara, bagi
pihak Pempetisiyen yang berminat di
K-3A-8, No. 2, Jalan Solaris, Solaris
Mont Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur
(Tel: 03-22889465)
Faks: 03-27269883
Email: wvwongleg@gmail.com
(Ruj: RW/AA/24/10264/SOP/SKL)

Kovac pledges to get Dortmund back on track

NEWLY-APPOINTED Borussia Dortmund coach Niko Kovac said on Tuesday he would demand "dedication and passion" as he hopes to get the struggling German club back on track.

Dortmund were Champions League finalists in June but have floundered this season and sit 11th in the Bundesliga.

Dortmund sacked previous coach Nuri Sahin in January, just six months after his appointment.

Former Bayern Munich, Eintracht Frankfurt and Monaco coach Kovac, 53, signed a deal at Dortmund until 2026 on Sunday.

Speaking at his unveiling yesterday, Kovac

said he would not budge from his disciplinarian style which has won him trophies, but also left noses out of joint at previous clubs.

"We want to work hard because I believe only someone who works will get something in return," he said.

"I'm a hard worker... everything that me and my family have achieved comes through hard work.

"Titles mean success, but (last year's Champions League final) is also a success. I see some very, very positive developments."

Kovac, who has only once served longer than

two years in a coaching role, is the latest man tasked with bringing back consistent success since Jurgen Klopp's seven-year tenure at the club ended in 2015.

Kovac said the short stints were part of "the business of modern football".

"There are of course exceptions, like Jurgen, whether that was here or in Liverpool," he said. "But we are convinced we can chart the right course together."

Kovac revealed he would live in a hotel until the summer, away from his family, to allow him "to focus fully" on the task at hand.

Despite taking training for the first time on Sunday, Kovac has had a hand in recruitment, including the deadline day signing of Chelsea midfielder Carney Chukwuemeka on loan.

Dortmund managing director Lars Ricken said bringing in the experienced Kovac was needed, with the club's last two coaches Sahin and Edin Terzic promoted from assistant jobs.

"In our current situation, external input is extremely necessary," Ricken said.

"In Niko, we've found the right person. He stands for success, but has also taken over teams in difficult situations." – AFP

SIDENETTING

Bologna reach Coppa Italia semifinals after 26 years

REACHING the semifinals of Coppa Italia for the first time in 26 years was a historic moment for Bologna, coach Vincenzo Italiano said after his side's 1-0 win at Atalanta yesterday. Bologna struggled in their Champions League campaign, crashing out from the league phase with only one win in eight matches. But yesterday's victory over a top-three Serie A side would boost the team's confidence, the coach said. "We played for history and we succeeded," Italiano told reporters. "This is a beautiful moment, it always pushes you to give your best." Italiano said winning at Atalanta made the result more special. "I think it gives you self-esteem and awareness, you can see that there is growth. The Champions League gave us a big hand, this is a group that is constantly growing... it's not easy to play in Bergamo," he added. "The club had this dream of getting as far as possible in Coppa Italia. Right now we have achieved the first goal, now we are waiting for the next opponent," Italiano said.

Undav sends Stuttgart into German Cup final four

A 29th-minute goal from Stuttgart striker Deniz Undav was enough for a 1-0 home win over Augsburg yesterday, sending them through to the German Cup semifinals. "It wasn't our strongest game but at the end it was enough," Undav told Germany's ARD of the "dirty" win. Stuttgart coach Sebastian Hoeness, who has turned the club's fortunes around since arriving in the middle of a relegation battle in April 2023, also praised his side's fight. "With all the games we've played, it certainly wasn't a performance to savour, but the win was deserved." After a goalless first half, Undav put the home side in front on the hour mark when he played a clever one-two with former Augsburg striker Ermedin Demirovic, before blasting through Keven Schlotterbeck's legs and into goal. Three-time winners, Stuttgart last lifted the German Cup in 1997 and have not won a title since the 2006-07 Bundesliga.

PSG reach French Cup quarters

PARIS ST GERMAIN reached the French Cup quarterfinals yesterday, with Desire Doue and Bradley Barcola scoring in each half to earn a 2-0 win at third-tier Le Mans. Second-tier Dunkerque reached the quarters by beating top-flight Lille on penalties after a 1-1 draw while Brest eliminated Ligue 2 side Troyes with a 2-1 win. The hosts' attempts to hold off PSG were undone by a defensive mistake in the 25th minute, when Alexandre Lauray's attempted pass was blocked by Goncalo Ramos on the edge of the box. The ball reached Doue, who buried it into the bottom-left corner. Barcola replaced Doue in the 68th minute and within three minutes he was on the scoresheet as he got hold of a lofted ball from Nuno Mendes, sprinted into the Le Mans box and finished at the near post.

Atletico Madrid's Giuliano Simeone celebrates scoring his second goal during the Spanish Copa del Rey quarterfinal first leg match against Getafe. – AFP/ICC



Atletico flying high

Simeone brace helps Madrid thrash Getafe, reach Copa del Rey semis

GUILIANO SIMEONE struck twice as Atletico Madrid thrashed Getafe 5-0 yesterday to power into the Copa del Rey semifinals.

The son of Atletico coach Diego Simeone has become vital for the *Rojiblancos* in recent months and his brace got his side off to the perfect start in a one-sided last eight clash.

Samuel Lino, Angel Correa and Alexander Sorloth were also on the scoresheet as the hosts ran out convincing winners.

"I'm very happy to have a night like that in the stadium, it was crazy, but first of all I have to thank the whole team because we made a huge effort," man of the match Simeone told TVE.

"I am happy, I am thinking a lot about the things that I have to improve, I'm working on improving day to day... and I have to keep growing."

Atletico, who last won the Spanish cup in 2013, came flying out of the blocks at their Metropolitano stadium.

Simeone nodded them ahead after just eight minutes, with Getafe goalkeeper Jiri Letacek wavering on his initial decision to come out for Javi Galan's cross and getting caught in no man's land.

Rodrigo De Paul teed up the 22-year-old forward for his second goal in the 17th minute, as Getafe's defence was cracked open too easily.

Julian Alvarez should have tucked home the third but fired wide after Antoine Griezmann fed him unselfishly.

Lino grabbed it before halftime, producing a clever turn to leave

defender Juan Iglesias sliding in the wrong direction before finishing clinically.

Simeone tapped home early in the second half for what would have been his hat-trick, but the goal was disallowed for offside against Galan in the build-up.

Getafe steadied the ship for a while, giving up fewer chances to an Atletico side seemingly content with their advantage.

Atletico substitute Correa eventually drilled home the fourth from outside the area with a low effort after 78 minutes.

The fifth followed with another substitute Sorloth firing past Letacek after Correa laid the ball off to him.

"The team started very well, playing at such a high speed... we took control early on," said Diego Simeone, who added that his son had to continue his rich vein of form.

"He's in a very good moment, the fans recognise it, they will demand a lot more from him and he has to maintain this level," noted the Atletico coach.

Simeone also expressed pride in the debut of several youth academy products who have had the opportunity to play with the first team.

He recalled prominent names such as Saul, Koke, Riquelme, and more recently, Pablo Barrios, emphasising the joy fans feel when young players make the leap to the first team.

"Whenever the academy players perform well, it brings joy to the fans and to us who have watched them grow," stated Simeone.

"The satisfaction is immense for all of us who have worked on this over the years," he added. – AFP/Agencies

Bove's future uncertain as Fiorentina finish Inter clash

EDOARDO BOVE and Fiorentina will relive Italian football's most harrowing episode of recent years tomorrow (3.45am Malaysian time) when *La Viola* complete their home match with Inter Milan, which was interrupted in December when the midfielder suffered a heart attack on the pitch.

The 22-year-old will be watching from the bench as Inter try to join Napoli at the top of the table in the remaining 74 minutes of a fixture stopped by his collapse in front of distraught players and fans, who watched in horror as medics dashed onto the Stadio Artemio Franchi pitch and rushed him to Florence's Careggi hospital.

That quick response saved Bove's life but his future in football is still uncertain as he awaits the results of a raft of tests carried out during his two-week stay in intensive care.

Bove left hospital with defibrillator which could be removed if deemed safe to do so, but if the test results show he has to have one permanently installed his career in Italy will almost certainly be over due to the stringent health regulations which govern sport in the Mediterranean nation.

Bove's situation is further complicated by the fact that he is on loan from his boyhood club Roma until the end of June, with Fiorentina having an option to make his transfer

permanent but unable to do so before finding out whether he will have to try his hand at playing abroad.

That was what Christian Eriksen did when he was released by Inter Milan in 2021 after his own brush with death during that year's European Championship, playing first with Brentford and then Manchester United in the Premier League.

But while Eriksen is a recognised star and Denmark's most-capped player, Bove is yet to make 100 league appearances and has never even played senior international football, limiting his options should an anxious wait end with his and Fiorentina's worst fears confirmed. – AFP

BURNLEY climbed into the English Championship automatic promotion places yesterday after beating Oxford United 1-0 to extend their unbeaten run to 18 league games. Scott Parker's side have struggled in attack and were grateful for an own goal from Oxford's Michal Helik in the first half.

The goal came in the 33rd minute when Lyle Foster spotted the run of Josh Cullen into the box and the midfielder's low cross was aimed at Zian Flemming but before it could reach him the unfortunate Helik turned it into his own net.

It was only Burnley's 37th goal in 31 league games this season. But they were worthy of the lead and the win as, eight days after failing to register a shot on target at home against Leeds,

Burnley climb to second in Championship

they created more than enough chances to have made the match much more comfortable.

Burnley, who had played out three consecutive goalless draws at home before yesterday's game, have now kept nine straight clean sheets.

The win lifts the Clarets to second in the table, two points behind leaders Leeds and level with Sheffield United on 61 points, although both of their rivals have a game in hand.

"The first 45 minutes I thought we were nothing short of superb. We really dominated the game and we were everything we weren't at the weekend throughout," Burnley head coach Scott Parker said via *BBC Sport*. "We created a lot of chances and showed real quality."

"It's fair to say that going in at halftime 1-0 up was a little unjust because it could have been more. We missed some big chances."

"Overall I was delighted with the team, our general endeavour

and the way we went about it tonight."

In the other Championship match yesterday, veteran midfielder Jack Colback came off the bench to fire QPR to a 2-1 victory over Blackburn.

The 35-year-old thumped home his first goal in just over a year as Rangers got back to winning ways after two straight defeats.

Michael Frey had put Rangers ahead early but Rovers thought they had secured a point through Tyrhys Dolan's second half penalty.

However, Colback's thunderbolt put a dent in Blackburn's playoff bid, although they remain fifth, while Rangers are now only three points off of the top six.

"We got 56 points last season and our target was to improve on that. I don't think we need to get very carried away," QPR boss Marti Cifuentes told the *BBC*. - AFP/Agencies

Mikel Arteta.
- REUTERS/SPIC

Disappointed Arteta

Failure to sign new striker irks Gunners boss

ARSENAL manager Mikel Arteta has admitted he is "disappointed" by the club's failure to sign a new striker before the transfer window closed on Tuesday.

Arsenal were unable to lure England forward Ollie Watkins away from Aston Villa after their £60 million (RM330m) bid was rejected last week.

The Gunners also reportedly rejected a move for both Mathys Tel and Evan Ferguson but were open to signing Alvaro Morata.

According to *The Athletic* though, Arsenal's interest in the duo was never deemed too serious, with Tel's inexperience deemed a concern for the Premier League hopefuls, who were keen to only add players that would make an immediate impact.

Ferguson is believed to have been held in higher regard behind closed doors at the Emirates Stadium, but given Arsenal have already registered two players on loan from Premier League clubs this season (Neto from Bournemouth and Raheem Sterling from Chelsea), there were no more slots available.

Having failed to pivot to another deal after the Watkins snub, the Gunners ended the January window with questions about a forward line weakened by long-term injuries to Gabriel Jesus and Bukayo Saka.

Ahead of this morning's League Cup semifinal second leg at Newcastle, Arteta conceded the lack of transfer activity was frustrating.

"We talked very openly about the intention to improve the squad if we had the capacity. With players with injuries,

we've been impacted and we haven't achieved it," Arteta told reporters yesterday.

"We are disappointed in that sense but as well we are very aware that we only want to bring certain kinds of players."

"We couldn't do it for certain reasons and we have to accept it. It was a combination of things. We have to be very disciplined with that as well."

Arsenal operated in the window without their former sporting director Edu, who resigned in November after playing a key role in their transfer policy.

Edu was a close ally of Arteta but the Spaniard insisted he had no complaints about Arsenal's recruitment process despite their unsuccessful striker hunt.

"When you try your best and do things with the right process, and after you don't achieve it, OK. For sure there are things to learn from it but now we have to move on," he said.

While Arsenal have to cope with an under-strength attack for now, they showed no signs of being affected in Sunday's 5-1 demolition of Manchester City.

German forward Kai Havertz and teenage attacking midfielder Ethan Nwaneri both netted against City and Arteta remains confident in the players at his disposal.

"From now there is no discussion on it and we focus on improving the group we have. It is remarkable what the team has done. I have full faith in them," he said.

"We are going to have to be flexible in the front line. We have to make sure they stay fit, contributing, and can play that position. At some point we will have to try something different." - AFP/Express Newspapers



SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 5922/2025 DATE: 05/02/2025 (WED)
STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.
19690100099 (8420-D)

TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

1st Prize	7883
2nd Prize	1436
3rd Prize	0886

Special	Consolation
1523 8026	1902 1624
2125 6231	0433 8176
4111 1776	0085 1653
3731 3144	0014 6914
7934 5547	2564 3142

4D JACKPOT

Jackpot 1 **RM 7,636,190.90**

7883 1436	1436 7883
7883 0886	0886 7883
1436 0886	0886 1436

Jackpot 2 **RM 560,639.79**
Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D ZODIAC

1st Prize	7883	+	TIGER
2nd Prize	1436	+	
3rd Prize	0886	+	
4th Prize	Special Prize	+	
5th Prize	Consolation Prize	+	
6th Prize	Any 4D drawn number	+	

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

5D	1ST	2	1	2	6	7
2ND	7	2	4	5	8	
3RD	2	8	6	5	3	

6D	1ST	6	9	1	8	5	7
2ND	6	9	1	8	5		
3RD	6	9	1	8			
4TH	6	9	1				
5TH	6	9					

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SUPREME	2	30	46	48	55	56
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Jackpot **RM 16,859,630.45**

POWER	1	5	28	35	44	47
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Jackpot **RM 8,064,493.43**

STAR	3	6	26	34	44	46	+30
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Jackpot 1 **RM 3,346,910.68**

Jackpot 2 **RM 403,348.25**

Visit www.sportstoto.com.my for e-Results and more info.



WINNING NUMBERS damacai

Draw Date: 05/02/25 (Wed) Draw No: 5869/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

1+3D SUPER1+3D	
1st Prize	3292
2nd Prize	3114
3rd Prize	9295
Starters	Consolation
3486 8554	5911 1610
4817 2595	9362 1380
8894 5511	9703 1139
1716 6266	2096 4912
6994 6405	1969 5523

1+3D	
Jackpot 1	RM16,157,386.20
3292 + 3114	3114 + 3292
3292 + 9295	9295 + 3292
3114 + 9295	9295 + 3114
Jackpot 2	RM198,944.60

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.			
3+3D Bonus			
1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus	
753 292 +	DOG	RM200,000.00	
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus	
053 114 +	ROOSTER	RM1,195,904.60	
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus	
349 295 +	OX	RM1,691,506.00	
Starters		Consolation	
273 486	978 554	235 911	071 610
934 817	462 595	939 362	561 380
128 894	295 511	249 703	281 139
821 716	886 266	312 096	094 912
936 994	676 405	711 969	145 523

3D	
1st Prize	292
2nd Prize	114
3rd Prize	295
Jackpot	RM707,510.70
292 + 114 + 295	114 + 295 + 292
292 + 295 + 114	295 + 292 + 114
114 + 292 + 295	295 + 114 + 292

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.
1+3D Jackpot 2 RM179,171.70 won on 4/2/2025!



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RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP: Burnley 1 Oxford 0, QPR 2 Blackburn 1.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Leeds	30	18	9	3	60	19	63
Burnley	31	16	13	2	37	9	61
Sheff Utd	30	19	6	5	41	21	61
Sunderland	30	16	10	4	45	26	58
Blackburn	31	13	6	12	35	31	45
West Brom	30	10	14	6	39	27	44

COPA DEL REY (QUARTERFINALS): Atletico Madrid 5 Getafe 0.

ITALIAN CUP (QUARTERFINALS): Atalanta 0 Bologna 1.

GERMAN CUP (QUARTERFINALS): Stuttgart 1 Augsburg 0.

FRENCH CUP (ROUND OF 16): Lille 1 Dunkerque 1 (Dunkerque win 5-4 on pen), Troyes 1 Brest 2, Le Mans Paris Saint-Germain 2.

SHORTS

Spanish trio to bolster JDT squad

MALAYSIAN League heavyweights Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) have confirmed the signing of three former Spanish La Liga players to strengthen their squad in pursuit of their Asian Champions League Elite (ACLE) dream.

The trio are former Valencia striker Jonathan Viera, former Sevilla and Swansea City midfielder Roque Mesa, and former Villarreal defender Alvaro Gonzalez, who previously played alongside Portuguese legend Cristiano Ronaldo at Saudi club Al-Nassr.

JDT announced the signings in phases via their official Facebook page, Johor Southern Tigers.

The Southern Tigers are set to face Australian side Central Coast Mariners on Feb 11 in New South Wales before concluding their East region league stage campaign against South Korea's FC Pohang Steelers on Feb 18 at the Sultan Ibrahim Stadium in Johor.

JDT currently hold a strong position to advance to the knockout stage, sitting in sixth place on goal difference despite sharing eight points with China's Shanghai Port and Thailand's Buriram United after six matches.

Only the top eight teams from the 12-team league stage will advance to the Round of 16.

Ferjani strike boosts Al-Gharafa's ACL prospects

QATAR'S Al-Gharafa secured a 1-0 victory over Pakhtakor in Doha yesterday to edge closer to a place in the knockout rounds of the Asian Champions League Elite as former champions Al-Hilal thrashed Persepolis 4-1 in Riyadh.

Ferjani Sassi scored six minutes before halftime to earn Al-Gharafa a win that takes Pedro Martins' side up to seventh in the 12-team standings with one round remaining.

The top eight in both west and east Asia qualify for the round of 16.

Persepolis' hopes, meanwhile, suffered a blow as their heavy defeat to the current Saudi Pro League champions saw them drop out of the qualification berths.

Ismail Kartal's side now sit in ninth, behind compatriots Esteghlal on goal difference ahead of their meeting with Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr in Tehran on Feb 17.

Malcom opened the scoring for Al-Hilal, who have already secured their place in the next round, with a solo effort 10 minutes into the game at the Kingdom Arena.

Joao Cancelo added the second 15 minutes later when he was granted the space to smash a low right-foot drive into the bottom corner after a weak attempted save by Alexis Guendouz.

Salem Al-Dawsari rounded Guendouz to score from a tight angle seven minutes before halftime to net Al-Hilal's third and, in injury time, the captain struck from distance to claim the fourth. Giorgi Gvelesiani scored a late penalty for Persepolis.

Bangkok mission

THE national para archery squad's main mission will be to collect World ranking points and improve their performance when the 2025 season kicks off for the squad at the Asian Para Cup (World Ranking Championships) starting today in Bangkok, Thailand.

National para archery coach Marzuki Zakaria said only senior archers were selected to participate in the tournament in an effort to maintain the momentum of his charges.

The national squad comprise men's compound archers Wiro Julian and G. Daneshen, Nur Jannaton Abdul Jalil (women's compound) and Nurfaizal Hamzah (men's recurve), while 2019 men's recurve world champion S. Suresh is not competing in the tournament because his wife has just given birth.

"There are not many tournaments this year, so we don't want archers to lose their momentum and ranking if they take a long break without overseas competitions.

"High rankings can increase their confidence during competitions to some extent, although any archer can be on the podium at an international level.

"We want them to maintain the momentum, as well as improve their ranking and performance. I also want to see how far Wiro and Daneshen can go, if possible if they want to advance to the final," he said when contacted.

Based on the rankings posted on the World Archery website, Daneshen and Nur Jannaton are ranked 22nd and 23rd in the world respectively, while Suresh is ranked 17th.

Nurfaizal and Wiro were ranked 45th



Goh Soon Huat (left) and Shevon Lai Jemie. —BERNAMAPIC

Pro guidance for young national team

PROFESSIONAL national mixed doubles pair Goh Soon Huat and Shevon Lai Jemie are looking to make the most of the short centralised training camp to build chemistry with the national squad ahead of the 2025 Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships (BAMTC) next week.

The husband-and-wife duo will join a lineup of young players at the Akademi Badminton Malaysia (ABM) for a three-day training session from today until Saturday before heading to Qingdao, China, for the BAMTC, which runs from Feb 11-16.

Shevon said team chemistry is crucial in building momentum and harmony during team events like BAMTC.

"As we all know, the pressure in team events is different from individual tournaments. So, we will use these three days to build our communication and get to know each other better.

"This time, the lineup does not include top players, and we are not very familiar with some of the players joining. There is

also a significant age gap. For me, communication is key, just like it was at the Sudirman Cup," she said when met after a training session yesterday.

Shevon, who was part of the Malaysian squad that won bronze at the 2023 Sudirman Cup, said she would rely on her past experience to assist the team at BAMTC.

"We have played in team tournaments before, with the last one being the Sudirman Cup two years ago.

"So, I hope the experience that Soon Huat and I have can help our team, especially since many of the players this time are young," she added.

At this year's BAMTC, Malaysia has been drawn into Group B alongside Indonesia and Hong Kong, with only the top two teams from each group advancing to the quarterfinals.

Since the tournament's inception in 2017, Malaysia has yet to win a medal in the competition. —Bernama

Pang Ron-Su Yin aim for consistency ahead of BAMTC

NATIONAL MIXED doubles pair Hoo Pang Ron and Cheng Su Yin are focusing on overcoming their weaknesses to achieve greater consistency ahead of the Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships (BAMTC), set to take place from Feb 11-16.

Pang Ron said one of the key areas they need to improve on is reducing unforced errors while also managing the high expectations placed on them.

"For BAMTC, I believe we have prepared well after taking a short break for Chinese New Year. We are focusing on enhancing our consistency on the court.

"This year, we may have set expectations too high, which added to the pressure. Fans have also started to place their hopes on us, so we need to learn to handle that better,"

he said.

Pang Ron and Su Yin had been announced as part of Malaysia's mixed doubles lineup for BAMTC alongside Goh Soon Huat and Shevon Lai.

On Malaysia's opponents Indonesia and Hong Kong in Group B, Pang Ron believes all teams have an equal chance of advancing.

Although both teams are expected to field their best doubles pairs, he is confident Malaysia can put up a strong fight to progress beyond the group stage.

"I don't think any team has a clear advantage because once we step onto the court, anything can happen. We just need to keep fighting for the team and never give up," he added. —Bernama

National para archers in pursuit of world ranking points, says Marzuki

respectively in the men's recurve and compound categories.

Meanwhile, Marzuki said the national squad, which did not play in Bangkok, will be tested in the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM) Open Championships in Lumut, Perak from Feb 7-13.

He said the five archers who are currently in the squad based on their performance at the Sarawak Para Games (Para Sukma) last September, have been given a target to at least bring home medals from the Asean Para Games (APG) in Thailand next January.

"One of the main conditions for them to be promoted to the main squad is the achievement of medals in the APG. Most of them are new athletes and winning medals at the APG is not easy, but we want them to challenge themselves to achieve the mission," he added. —Bernama

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GROUP 2	3 1 1 8 3	OR 1 1 8 3 9
GROUP 3	3 1 1 8	OR 1 8 3 9
GROUP 4	3 1 1	OR 8 3 9
GROUP 5	3 1	OR 3 9
	OR 1 8	
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How low can you go?

Carragher believes United have regressed under Amorim

RUBEN AMORIM'S task to heave Manchester United out of the mess left behind by Erik ten Hag in November was widely acknowledged as a daunting one.

However, not many could've predicted just how low the situation has stooped since Amorim took charge as records continue to break for all the wrong reasons.

Inconsistency was to be expected during the former Sporting boss' attempts to instil his 3-4-3 philosophy into an already underperforming squad.

But United are rotting in 13th in the Premier League after picking up just 29 points from 24 matches with a -6 goal difference, losing 11 times.

In all competitions, Amorim has won just nine of his 19 games at the helm, drawing two and tasting defeat in eight while scoring and conceding 34 times.

There has been little sign of early progress, and Jamie Carragher actually believes United have regressed under the Portuguese tactician.

The ex-Liverpool defender was among those with raised eyebrows after Amorim decided to start Kobbie Mainoo as his striker in Sunday's 2-0 defeat to Crystal Palace.

"I felt the bar had been so low under Erik ten Hag that I didn't think it was too difficult to raise it without really competing with the top teams in the country," Carragher told *Sky Sports*.

"But it's actually got lower under the new manager, which is not a great thing to say."

"I know he's playing a new system, but I don't think it was too difficult to make Manchester United better than what we've seen over the last 18 months, but it just hasn't happened at all.

"Some of the decisions, when you see the teams he's picked, like (Kobbie) Mainoo as a striker or a false No. 9 (on Sunday), that's not right."

The loss against Palace was United's seventh in 13 matches at Old Trafford this season – a shambolic record at the core of the club's recent woes.

After Amorim's 1st match against Ipswich on Nov 25, 2024

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
12 Man United	12	4	4	4	13	13	16

After losing to Crystal Palace on Feb 2, 2025

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
13 Man United	24	8	5	11	28	34	29

And Carragher focused on the Red Devils' dire home form to emphasise his belief that Ten Hag's team was better than Amorim's.

He added: "It's far too easy for teams to go to Old Trafford and win, and it's actually got worse in the last two or three months than anything I think we ever saw under Erik ten Hag."

United suffered the lowest Premier League finish in the club's storied history by slumping to eighth last season, only qualifying for Europe through an unlikely FA Cup triumph.

Amorim is on course to smash that unwanted record unless the final few months of the campaign showcase a stunning turnaround.

And the task does not look good after the club failed to recruit a centre-forward in the January transfer window, despite their current lack of a prolific goalscorer.

United have failed to find the back of the net in nine Premier League matches this season, including Sunday's defeat to Crystal Palace.

The £108.5 million (RM597m) spent on strikers Rasmus Hojlund and Joshua Zirkzee in the past two years has limited United's ability to bolster their attack.

Hojlund has yet to score in 13 games, while Zirkzee has only managed one goal in 16 appearances. The club's management had no plans to bring in a temporary signing that could be seen as a panic buy.

Instead, they've focused on younger talent, signings Ayden Heaven, 18, and Patrick Dorgu, 20, more in line with the £58 million (RM319m) deal for Leny Yoro last year.

Former captain Rio Ferdinand believes there is a free agent signing United should look at following Tuesday's transfer deadline closure.

And it's one that would send shockwaves through the fanbase, with Ferdinand urging Amorim to "have a look at" Paul Pogba by inviting him to train at Carrington.

He explained on his *YouTube* channel, *Rio Ferdinand Presents*: "I'd say to Pogba, 'Come in and train with us, let me see what you've got. I'd do that. I would have done that already. Come in and get fit, but I'd also have a look (at him).'" – Express Newspapers

