



## Father and son share bond in kavadi making

Duo specialise in use of peacock feathers, with orders received locally and from Mauritius as well as South Africa.

Report on  
page 6

**ASCENT OF FAITH ...** Hindu devotees carrying Paal Kudam, or milk pots, making their way up the steps of Batu Caves to fulfil vows on the eve of Thaipusam yesterday. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN



# Action on Ramadan bazaar licence resale

Permits found to have been transferred will be revoked immediately as such violation could lead to greater breakdown of governance, says prime minister.

Report on  
page 2

## Foundation helps B40 to own first homes

Yayasan My First Home unites developers, financiers, donors, NGOs and govt agencies to facilitate ownership of affordable housing for underserved.

Report on  
page 3

## Addressing poor public transport etiquette

Apart from education and awareness campaigns, experts call for combination of fair enforcement and penalties to foster civic awareness.

Report on  
page 5



## Turkiye president in Malaysia for official visit

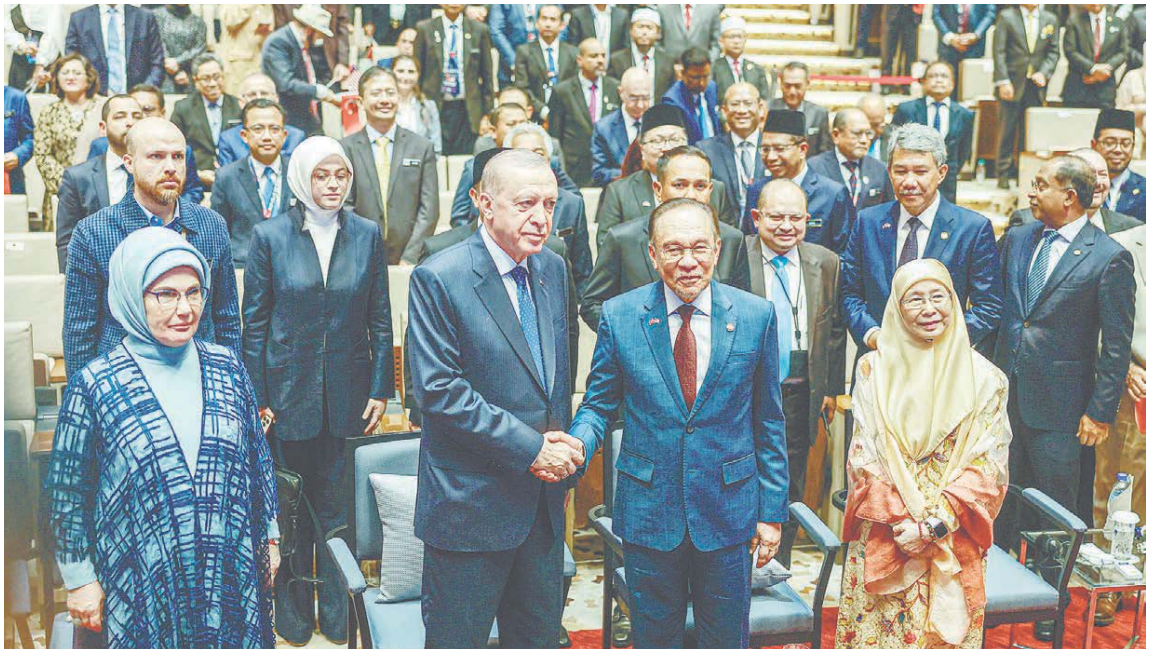
**SEPANG:** Türkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, accompanied by First Lady Emine, arrived at the Bunga Raya Complex of the KL International Airport at 2.10pm yesterday on a two-day official visit.

He then inspected a guard of honour consisting of 28 personnel from the First Battalion of the Royal Ranger Regiment (ceremonial) before proceeding to the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement Erdogan's visit reaffirms the solid relations between both nations, which continue to advance, premised on long-standing ties, particularly following the elevation of relations to the level of Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in July 2022.

In 2024, Türkiye was Malaysia's third-largest trading partner, largest export destination and fourth-largest import source among West Asian countries.

Total trade between Malaysia and Türkiye was recorded at RM24.13 billion in 2024, an 18.7% increase from 2023. — Bernama



Anwar and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail with Erdogan and Emine at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday to attend a public lecture. — BERNAMAPIC

## 'Revoke Ramadan bazaar licences sold to third parties'

➤ Certain individuals found to have transferred their permits for easy profit: PM

**PUTRAJAYA:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has warned traders that their Ramadan bazaar licences will be revoked immediately if they are found to have been sold.

He said this has to be done because lately, there have been certain people who have sold their licences for easy profit.

"If there is an association that charges a small fee for monitoring and cleanliness, I can understand. But not this (selling their licences). So, we must make sure we know who gets the licence. If he transfers the licence, revoke it immediately."

He was speaking during a meeting with staff of the Prime Minister's

Department yesterday.

Anwar said the revoking of licences of traders who sold their licences had been done by Kuala Lumpur City Hall, and should be emulated by other local authorities.

"So, I hope this strict action in Kuala Lumpur sets an example. Imagine, people are trying to earn extra income during Ramadan to prepare for Aidilfitri with their families, but there are those who impose additional charges beyond the set rate."

Anwar said if the matter is left unaddressed, it could lead to greater breakdown of governance in the country.

He added that if action is not taken, this is how the situation would be nationwide, from the smallest stalls to giant projects.

"What is not rightfully theirs will be taken from them. I believe this (enforcement) also needs to be carried out at ports and airports. We can see some orderly and efficient systems now but we have also noticed several violations that we need to monitor."

He also urged Muslims to prepare themselves ahead of Ramadan in March.

"Preparation here means at least reflecting on the meaning, essence and message of Ramadan for a more meaningful appreciation of the holy month."

"Ramadan emphasises discipline, spiritual strength and confidence as well as a moderate attitude and greater concern for the fate of those

who are marginalised and neglected."

Anwar said efforts to ensure the people's welfare, such as eradicating hardcore poverty and flood mitigation projects, should be expedited.

He said he has requested the Treasury to provide flexibility to fast-track these efforts through immediate allocations in collaboration with the Economy Ministry, as well as faster pre-queue processes.

Anwar said this primarily concerns projects that involve tender processes, which often take too long, Bernama reported.

"Why do we emphasise the issue of tenders? Because I see that if we use negotiations instead, there is a lot of room for error and leakage. Therefore, it is better to use a tender process."

"However, tenders, when following the usual process, can take too long. Yet, those affected by the floods cannot afford to wait."

## More schools to be built to ease overcrowding

**NIBONG TEBAL:** The government remains committed to addressing overcrowding in schools by building new ones, particularly in urban areas, said Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek.

She said under Budget 2025, the Madani government has approved the construction of 44 schools, the highest number in the past four years.

"The number of schools approved in the national budget was 26 in 2024 and nine each in 2023 and 2022."

"This reflects the government's ongoing efforts to increase construction of schools in urban areas, while the Education Ministry also implements various other initiatives."

She was speaking after attending the Penang PKR Chinese New Year open house on Sunday.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Penang PKR chairman Nurul Izzah Anwar were also present.

Fadhlina, who is also Nibong Tebal MP, was responding to concerns raised by parents on social media on overcrowded classrooms, with some Year One classes in urban schools having up to 50 pupils.

She said the ministry is taking the matter seriously and would implement appropriate measures, including relocating students to other schools if necessary.

"This is part of our commitment to ensure students can learn in a conducive environment."

On a separate matter, Fadhlina said children rescued from charity homes linked to GIBS Holdings Sdn Bhd would be enrolled in national schools when the new school session begins on Feb 17.

She said the children previously attended special classes fully managed by the ministry. — Bernama

## Training for security guards, auxiliary police to be improved

**PUTRAJAYA:** Training modules for security guards and auxiliary police will be improved to ensure they are aligned with current potential threats, especially in public places, said Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

"Before auxiliary police or security guards begin their duties, it is a requirement that they are trained by the police force."

He was commenting in the wake of a shooting incident at a shopping mall in Shah Alam on Saturday.

"Incidents like this provide us with a new perspective. It is time to update the training modules and

syllabi and enhance the training requirements for them."

"I will ask IGP Tan Sri Razarudin Husain and his deputy Datuk Seri Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay to look into this to ensure better security at business complexes and public areas."

He was speaking after the Home Ministry's monthly assembly yesterday.

Saifuddin said he would ask the relevant officers to hold discussions with the security industry to improve the necessary training modules.

"The aim is to ensure we address the public's concern, especially

regarding safety in public places."

He gave an assurance the safety of the public and the country remains the ministry's top priority, and there is no need for panic following the shooting incident.

He added that the level of preparedness of police is always at its best, which was proven when they managed to identify the shooting suspect in a short period of time.

"Not only did we identify the suspect, but we also discovered that he had a criminal record."

He said the ministry is also aware of the public's concerns about the possession of firearms.

He added that the licensing process for firearms is very strict and requires thorough security screening.

"No Malaysian citizen can possess a firearm except through proper licensing. Possessing a firearm without a licence is a serious criminal offence."

On Sunday, Bukit Aman CID director Datuk Seri Mohd Shuhaili Mohd Zain said police had identified the suspect, a local man in his 30s, responsible for the shooting.

He said efforts to track him down are being conducted by Selangor police, with assistance from Bukit Aman. — Bernama

# Foundation expands aid for first-time homebuyers in need

➤ Yayasan My First Home offers interest-free loans and builds homes for underserved communities

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**PETALING JAYA:** Owning a home is a dream many Malaysians aspire to, but financial constraints often make it difficult for low-income families and underserved communities to achieve.

Recognising this challenge, Yayasan My First Home (YMFH) was established in December 2021 to provide interest-free housing loans and build homes for those in need.

According to YMFH general manager Nambie Ashvin Nambiar, the foundation is committed to assisting first-time homebuyers with limited financial means, ensuring that more Malaysians have access to safe and affordable housing.

He explained that to qualify, applicants must be first-time homebuyers with a household income below RM5,000. The programme supports homes priced below RM300,000, with full financial assistance available for houses under RM100,000, subject to specific terms and conditions.

Additionally, applicants must have applied for a housing loan or had their loan approved by the bank.

YMFH serves as a platform that unites various stakeholders, including housing developers, financiers, donors, NGOs and government agencies, to collectively address housing challenges faced by low-income groups.

Nambie highlighted that the foundation's primary objective is to increase homeownership rates among underserved communities by working closely with stakeholders to provide financial assistance and support.

"YMFH also implements programmes and schemes designed to nurture and assist homebuyers through partnerships and sponsorships from private and government entities.

"Additionally, the foundation collaborates with NGOs to conduct studies, research and surveys to identify and evaluate the challenges faced by low-income families, ensuring that their needs are effectively addressed."

For the Orang Asli community, YMFH has gone beyond financial aid, acknowledging the unique challenges they face in securing proper housing.

Since its inception, YMFH has made a significant impact, helping 63 families secure homes.

Among them, 58 families have received interest-free housing loans, while five Orang Asli families were provided with newly built homes.

To date, the foundation has built five houses – two in Tapah, Perak, one each in Muadzam Shah and Raub in Pahang, and one in Hulu Selangor –

providing these families with a place to truly call their own.

With 10 more houses currently under construction, YMFH remains committed to expanding its reach.

Nambie emphasised that their next goal is to assist those who already own land but lack the means to build, ensuring more families transition from inadequate housing to secure and sustainable homes.

"We believe that no one should be deprived of a home due to circumstances beyond their control."

For many beneficiaries, YMFH's support has been life-changing.

Nambie said for years, a community of squatters lived in dilapidated houses on government land slated for redevelopment.

Though they were offered new homes as part of a relocation scheme, many struggled to secure a housing loan, leaving them in a vulnerable position.

"Many were small-time business owners or held informal jobs, such as working in school canteens, making them ineligible for conventional bank loans."

Desperate and out of options, some families considered turning to illegal moneylenders, a decision that could have trapped them in lifelong debt.

Recognising their struggles the foundation stepped in, providing full, interest-free housing loans, allowing them to finally purchase the homes they were promised.

"Today, seven former squatter families have moved into their dream homes, enjoying a quality of life they once thought impossible."

Looking ahead, YMFH plans to build 100 houses for the Orang Asli community and assist more Malaysians with homeownership costs, including deposits and legal fees.

Through strategic partnerships with housing developers, financiers, NGO and government agencies, the foundation remains steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that financial barriers do not stand in the way of a better future.

With continued support and collaboration, YMFH hopes to help even more Malaysians turn their dream of homeownership into reality.



From left: YMFH beneficiary Bahchem, his daughter Alyka Harnata and son Hezkeneas posing for a photo in their new home at Kampung Sungai Bindu, Chenderiang in Tapah, Perak. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

## Contractors urged to complete projects ahead of schedule

**MERSING:** Contractors undertaking projects under the Works Ministry have been urged to complete them ahead of schedule rather than merely adhering to the stipulated timeline.

Deputy Works Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan said this approach aligns with the ministry's directive to prevent project delays that result in requests for time extensions.

"Completing projects on schedule is the old approach. Starting this year, we are implementing a new method. Projects must be completed ahead of time, with a target of zero sick (delayed) projects nationwide. These are two of the ministry's calls starting this year."

"At the same time, we also hope to eliminate the need for time extensions. Instead, projects should be completed ahead of schedule, whether by 10 days, a month or even two to three months," he said during a working visit to the Mersing Public Works Department (PWD) office yesterday.

During his visit, he inspected several projects requiring improvements in the district, including the construction and upgrading of Social Welfare Department staff quarters in Desa Bina Diri, the completion of remaining work on the jetty at Pulau Pemanggil, the upgrading of basic utility infrastructure on Pulau Besar and the construction of a combat diving pool at Iskandar Camp.

"These projects are expected to be completed as soon as possible. However, the ones I mentioned are facing certain challenges, leading to time extensions."

Ahmad highlighted that six federal projects under the supervision of the Mersing PWD have been identified for this year. – Bernama

## Islamic council to intensify poverty eradication efforts

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Federal Territories Islamic Religious Council has been given the mandate to intensify efforts to eliminate hardcore poverty in the Federal Territories, in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's commitment to the national agenda of hardcore poverty eradication.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar emphasised that the initiative must be strengthened through the implementation of government assistance schemes targeting those most in need.

"Each agency must improve its quality of work, maintain governance and ensure efficiency in carrying out tasks within the scope of their respective agencies."

He said this was one of the key messages the prime minister highlighted when addressing staff of the Prime Minister's Department at the monthly gathering in Putrajaya yesterday.

The Economy Ministry previously announced that based on the eKasih National Poverty Databank as of Dec 31, 2024, the Federal Territory of Putrajaya, Negeri Sembilan, Malacca and Perlis had achieved zero hardcore poverty. – Bernama

## NRD expands outreach identity registration initiative

**JERANTUT:** The National Registration Department (NRD) has taken proactive steps to reach communities, including those in rural areas, to ensure identity document registration is accessible to all eligible individuals through the Menyemai Kasih Rakyat (Mekar) programme.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the community service initiative has assisted many people who face difficulties in visiting NRD branches, including the disabled, elderly, displaced patients and rural communities such as the Orang Asli.

"Today, we are in the Kampung Keniam Orang Asli village with the NRD to continue the Mekar programme, an outreach initiative where NRD teams go on the ground to resolve identity document-related issues.

"It is difficult for them to travel by boat – not only is it costly, but it also takes a long time and disrupts their livelihood."

He was speaking to Bernama after handing over Mekar community identity documents at Kampung Orang Asli Keniam, Taman Negara, Kuala Tahan in Jerantut, Pahang on Sunday.

During the visit, Saifuddin distributed 24 MyKads and 20 birth certificates to Orang Asli residents of the Batek community.

Additionally, six new MyKads were issued to replace damaged ones for six applicants, including heart and cancer patients, the elderly and the disabled in Kampung Teresak.

The expedition to hand over the documents involved a nearly two-hour boat ride from the Kuala Tahan jetty,

navigating the river, trekking through the forest and crossing seven rapids before reaching the Batek community's village in Kampung Keniam.

Located within the national park, the village comprises 40 families with 220 residents.

For them, travelling to the nearest town, Jerantut, for identity registration would cost over RM1,000 in transport expenses, including boat fares, car rentals and accommodation.

"This expedition was a unique experience – extraordinary, passing through river currents against the flow of the Tembeling and Keniam rivers. Several times, I was stuck going against the current, which delayed the journey slightly."

"Mekar is a successful initiative that truly helps the community. Many

parents fail to register their children's births within the legal 60-day period. Some individuals reach the age of 12 without a MyKad, even though they have a birth certificate."

Saifuddin noted that rural communities are becoming increasingly aware of the importance of identity documents, which are essential for school registration, financial assistance and access to treatment at government hospitals or clinics.

"The Mekar programme clearly provides great benefits and the number of applications has risen every year. For comparison, in 2024 alone, 2,311 Mekar programmes have been conducted. This figure has increased annually from 1,762 in 2023 and 1,393 in 2022."





# Bringing healthcare awareness to Penang folk

➤ New wellness hub prioritises prevention, early intervention to ensure overall well-being of community, says minister

BY T.C. KHOR  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**SEBERANG PERAI:** A wellness hub, a one-stop health centre, was launched in North Seberang Perai with allocations approved by the health education department of the Health Ministry.

The hub, costing RM1 million, took seven months to build from April to October 2024.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad officiated at the hub, which is the first of its kind in Malaysia to use a prefabricated container concept.

"Up until now, there were 33 wellness hubs nationwide, offering comprehensive healthcare, including Zoomers Wellness on Wheels for public outreach," he said at the opening ceremony on Saturday in Machang.

"Under the 13th Malaysia Plan, I will ensure that more facilities like this can be established in other districts in Penang."

Dzulkefly highlighted the urgent need to transition from treating illnesses to a healthcare system which prioritises prevention, health promotion and early intervention.

He added that a whole-of-nation and whole-of-society approach is needed, in which every sector plays a role in ensuring the overall and integrated health and well-being of the community.

"In line with the national health reform agenda, Wellness Hub supports the transition from the 'sick care' to the 'health care' concept that is more comprehensive.

"Our approach must be based on 'prevention, promotion and prediction,' or 'preventive, promotive and predictive' to ensure that every Malaysian is more aware and proactive in taking care of their health," he said.

He added that preventive health measures could reduce the burden on hospitals and clinics in the long run, and help to curb the



Dzulkefly (right) at the launch of the wellness hub in North Seberang Perai on Saturday.

— T.C. KHOR/THESUN

rising rate of non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as diabetes, hypertension and obesity.

Dzulkefly also said Penang is among states with a high NCD rate, surpassing the national average in several key health indicators.

Citing the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023, he said Penang registered a diabetes rate of 20.5% (vs 15.6% nationally), obesity of 56.5% (vs 54.4%), high cholesterol of 37.4% (vs 33.3%) and hypertension rate of 35.4% (vs 29.2%).

As Malaysia is projected to become an ageing nation by 2030, with 15% of its population aged 60 and above, Dzulkefly stressed that preventive healthcare initiatives must be strengthened to reduce the prevalence of age-related diseases and improve overall quality of life.

Meanwhile, Penang state health director Datuk Dr Fazilah Shaik Allaudin said the North Seberang Perai Wellness Hub offers 13 services, including health risk factor

management, weight management, smoking cessation, creative arts therapy and a gymnasium, among others.

The hub is running its Weight Management Programme (iFitEr) Series 1 and 2, which has 120 participants from the community.

iFitEr, or I-Fit-and-Eat-Right, is a structured intervention programme combining diet, exercise and behaviour modification.

Dzulkefly said the programme has been very effective nationwide, with a 60% success rate in helping participants lose weight and maintain healthier lifestyles.

Other activities at the hub include programmes for children and teenagers, such as the Resilience Programme, held under the "Wellness Hub Fun Week."

These feature basic exercise sessions, indoor fun games, healthy challenges and X-Break exercise demonstrations.

Fazilah added that the health services provided at the hub could foster a sense of ownership among the community.

## CNY luck brings RM23 million windfall to duo

**PETALING JAYA:** Two lucky winners jumped with joy during the Chinese New Year (CNY) celebrations when they shared a RM23.1 million Toto 4D Jackpot 1 prize pool to usher in the Year of the Snake.

A 54-year-old saleswoman from Sabah won the bigger share of RM20.9 million with a System Play ticket.

She told STM Lottery Sdn Bhd that she was only trying her luck when the Toto 4D Jackpot 1 surpassed the RM10 million mark.

"I did not have any specific numbers to buy, so I just took the car registration numbers from vehicles parked in my neighbourhood. I accumulated 18 sets of numbers to bet on a System Play ticket because 18 is the luckiest number during Chinese New Year.

"I only checked the results on the first day of Chinese New Year, and this big *ang pow* is the best thing that could have happened to me," she said.

Her pair of winning numbers – 8544 and 6238 on a System 18 ticket won her a total of RM20,924,354.85 and RM5,376 as a System Play bonus.

She said she planned to share part of the winnings with her family members and invest the rest.

The other winner, who is a 57-year-old designer from Selangor, won RM2.2 million with an i-System 20 ticket.

"I must thank the customer service assistant who advised me to bet on a Special Draw day. The 20 sets of 4D numbers I bought consisted of my winning numbers – 2896 and 6238. These are numbers I have been betting on for a long time," he said.

His i-System 20 ticket won him RM2,202,563.55 and an additional RM637.20 as an i-System bonus.

The winner said he planned to buy a house for his daughter and save the balance for his retirement.

## Specialised training initiative for Indian lorry drivers

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Indian Skills Initiative continues to strengthen the national workforce by training lorry drivers through the Certificate of Professional Competence – Dangerous Goods (DG) Integrated Truck Driver Training programme in Klang, Selangor.

The three-day training, which began on Saturday, is organised by the Human Resources Ministry through the Human Resource Development Corporation (HRD Corp).

The encouraging response reflects the high demand for specialised training in the logistics sector.

In a statement, HRD Corp said the programme, officiated by Batu MP P. Prabakaran, demonstrates the government's commitment to upskilling and empowering Malaysia's Indian community.

"This DG certification will enable lorry drivers in this category to secure higher salaries and better job opportunities.

"The intensive training also gives participants a competitive edge.

"The programme graduates can also explore entrepreneurship opportunities and qualify for management roles.

"It also supports ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) compliance and international safety standards, ensuring its continued relevance to industry needs," the statement added. — Bernama

## 'Use eco-friendly fishing gear to sustain marine life'

**PUTRAJAYA:** The fishing community must adopt environmentally friendly fishing technology, and adhere to closed fishing seasons and catch size limits to ensure sustainable marine resources, said Fisheries Department director-general Datuk Adnan Hussain.

He stressed that these measures are crucial to alleviating pressure on fish stocks and allowing marine species to reproduce and thrive.

Adnan said the department is actively developing and promoting fishing equipment that minimises environmental impact, such as trawls equipped with turtle excluder devices (TED).

TED are designed to ensure only target species are caught while reducing unwanted bycatch.

"The department is conducting training and awareness programmes, to educate fishermen on the importance of using sustainable fishing gear. Additionally, the department provides technical support and incentives to encourage

the fishing community to transition to more eco-friendly equipment," he told Bernama.

Currently, 112,344 fishermen are registered nationwide.

Adnan said strict enforcement measures are in place to prohibit the use of destructive fishing gear, such as "bubu naga" fish traps.

The department is also working closely with other agencies to ensure fishermen comply with relevant laws.

He added that technology, including the Vessel Monitoring System, is being used to track fishing activities in real-time, helping to detect and prevent unsustainable practices.

"The department also promotes the use of advanced fishing technology, such as sonar, echo sounders and GPS to help fishermen locate fish more efficiently while preventing overfishing. This includes the implementation of the Fishing Site Identification System."

He said the fishing community plays a crucial role in supporting the department's efforts in conserving and managing fish stocks.

"Fishermen are actively involved in managing fishing zones, including marine protected areas, and assist in monitoring fishing activities to ensure a high level of compliance with regulations.

"Local fishermen serve as the eyes and ears at sea, by reporting to the authorities illegal fishing activities, the use of prohibited fishing gear and other threats to fish stocks. Their vigilance plays a crucial role in supporting the enforcement of fisheries laws."

Additionally, Adnan said the department is actively promoting alternative economic initiatives, such as aquaculture and marine ecotourism, to reduce fishermen's reliance on marine resources. The initiatives help alleviate pressure on capture fisheries, contributing to the long-term sustainability of marine ecosystems.

He stressed that with the implementation of effective management strategies, fish stocks could be restored and maintained at optimal levels, aligning with the principles of sustainable development.



# 'Subpar services may cause poor mobility ethics'

➤ Consistent behavioural modelling and educational programmes required for cultural shift: MY Mobility Vision

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**PETALING JAYA:** Commuters refusing to give up seats for the elderly, pregnant women and persons with disabilities on public transport could be linked in part to its unreliable connectivity, overcrowding and poor maintenance, said MY Mobility Vision founder and CEO Wan Md Hazlin Agyl Wan Hassan.

As a leader of an organisation dedicated to transforming Malaysia's transport landscape, he said: "Passengers who are frustrated over poor services will be less mindful of social etiquette. While stricter penalties for antisocial behaviour on public transport could deter inconsiderate actions, they are not the ultimate solution."

He said educational and cultural gaps compound the issue, stressing that without consistent behavioural modelling or integrated educational programmes emphasising shared mobility ethics, the message of civic responsibility would fail to permeate society.

"Malaysia has undertaken several initiatives aimed at boosting civic awareness on public transport. For instance, the National Transport Policy 2019-2030 includes comprehensive programmes to promote public education on etiquette and low-carbon transport."

"However, significant challenges remain, particularly in the realm of enforcement and

sustained behavioural change. These have not yet achieved the deep, cultural shift required to ensure consistently respectful behaviour across the board."

He said while evidence suggests that visible and well-enforced fines could modify commuter behaviour, excessive penalties risk fostering resentment rather than genuine civic awareness.

"Issues such as queue-jumping, loud phone conversations and misuse of emergency buttons reveal that the problem extends to everyday commuter behaviour and illustrate a pervasive disregard for shared responsibilities."

"These issues are worsened by infrastructural limitations and inconsistent enforcement that foster an environment in which social responsibility is undervalued and public trust in the transport system is eroded."

Wan Md Hazlin said without concurrent improvements in service quality and infrastructural enhancements, harsher penalties might only reinforce negative perceptions about the public transport system.

"A balanced approach that combines fair enforcement with penalties proportionate to an offence and initiatives to improve overall service quality and public education is more likely to result in sustained civic awareness and compliance."

He urged public transport operators and local authorities to consider launching

targeted, creative awareness campaigns that leverage social media and popular culture to highlight the importance of courteous behaviour.

He said practical measures, including integrating technology such as RFID-based alerts to notify passengers when a priority seat is needed, could help remind users of their responsibilities in real time.

"Across the globe, several innovative strategies have fostered civic responsibility in public transport. In Bogota, Colombia the TransMilenio system integrates extensive staff training, community engagement and collaborative campaigns with NGOs to create a more inclusive environment."

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Research Institute for Sustainable Environment director Prof Dr Muhammad Zaly Shah said the conduct of Malaysians on public transport is not due to systemic failure but rather their inconsiderate actions.

"Education and awareness campaigns are the most effective ways to curb uncivilised commuter behaviour, with users playing an active role in discouraging such behaviour."

"This means setting a good example, speaking up when they witness inconsiderate actions and not turning a blind eye when it happens."

He said more creative and strategically placed signage is needed to reinforce the importance of civic awareness among public transport users, adding that periodic announcements on trains could serve as reminders to discourage inconsiderate behaviour.

"It may be just a seat on the train but this is a symptom of a larger societal problem in which caring for the underprivileged is absent."



Wan Md Hazlin said without concurrent improvements in service quality and infrastructural enhancements, harsher penalties might only reinforce negative perceptions about the public transport system. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

## Police announce new appointments, transfers

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Police have announced the new appointments and transfers of 36 senior officers, effective March 10.

Police force secretary Datuk Kamaruzaman Abdullah said the appointments and transfers include Pahang deputy police chief Datuk Noor Hisam Nordin, who will be the new Perak police chief, with the acting rank of police commissioner.

Sarawak deputy police commissioner Datuk Ibrahim Darus has been appointed as Bukit Aman Special Branch II deputy director, with the acting rank of police commissioner.

"Office of the Inspector-General of Police Head of Licensing (Firearms Licence) Datuk Dzulkhairi Mukhtar has been appointed as the

Malacca police chief, with the acting rank of deputy police commissioner.

"Datuk Mohammad Shaharul Md Osman, the head of the Pahang Special Branch, has been appointed as Bukit Aman deputy director of the E2 Special Branch, with the acting rank of deputy police commissioner."

He said Bukit Aman E3A Special Branch assistant director SAC Azhar Sepawi has been appointed as Bukit Aman E6 Special Branch principal assistant director while Bukit Aman Management Division principal assistant director of personnel (Staffing) SAC Mohd Zaini Abu Hassan will be the new Selangor deputy police chief, with both acting in the rank of deputy police commissioner.

He also said Hilir Perak district police chief ACP Ahmad Adnan Basri has been appointed as Kuala Lumpur Police Training Centre Crisis and Disaster Management Science School head while Sarawak Special Branch for Intelligence and Operations deputy head ACP Yuszida Basria will take up the position of Malaysian Border Control and Protection Agency Intelligence Division director.

He added that Bukit Aman Criminal Investigation Department (CID) Prevention of Gambling and Vice assistant director ACP Muhamad Riduan Manap has been appointed as Bukit Aman CID Special Investigations/ Organised Crime principal assistant director, acting in the rank of SAC. — Bernama

## Nine arrested over international job fraud

**MALACCA:** State police have arrested nine individuals believed to be involved in an international employment fraud syndicate operating through a call centre.

Acting Malacca police chief Datuk Md Nazri Zawawi said they were apprehended at 10am on Friday by a team from the Commercial Crime Investigation Department of the state contingent police headquarters.

"Those arrested include three local men, three local women and three Chinese nationals, two men and one woman, aged between 26 and 43."

"All are believed to be involved in an international employment fraud scheme, targeting individuals from a country in the Caribbean."

He added that investigations revealed the *modus operandi* of the syndicate involved posting fake job advertisements on Facebook.

He said those interested would contact syndicate members via WhatsApp or Telegram, after which they were instructed to complete 32 tasks on the website amcsthatres.com.

"The tasks were supposedly meant to increase the number of hotel and film reviews in the targeted country. Upon completing the first task, those who wished to continue were instructed to make payment transactions to syndicate members."

"The case is being investigated under Section 420 of the Penal Code for cheating." — Bernama

## Man held for verbal abuse of officers

**BUKIT MERTAJAM:** Police arrested a motorcyclist for allegedly hurling verbal abuse at Road Transport Department officers and traffic police during a special operation at the Penang Bridge Toll Plaza on Sunday.

The 50-year-old man, who was travelling with his Indonesian girlfriend, was initially fined by the department for riding with an expired motor vehicle licence and without insurance.

When informed that his motorcycle would be impounded due to the offence, he became aggressive, provoking department personnel and traffic police while shouting profanities.

Despite efforts by officers and his girlfriend to calm him down, he continued his behaviour for over half an hour before police finally detained him and took him to a station for further action.

State department director Zulkifly Ismail said the man was detained for obstructing civil servants from carrying out their duties.

"We believe the public should have a better understanding of enforcement duties and refrain from acting beyond limits." — Bernama

## RM115,000 lost in phone scam

**IPOH:** A woman has lost RM115,786 after falling victim to a phone scam syndicate impersonating authorities since January.

Taiping district police chief ACP Mohamad Nasir Ismail said they received a report on Feb 5 from the 25-year-old, who is a student at a university abroad.

He said she received a call from a man impersonating a representative from the Embassy of the People's Republic of China on Jan 13.

"The man claimed that a phone number registered under her name had been used to open an account linked to money laundering activities. The call was then supposedly transferred to a police station in China."

"The victim transferred RM115,786 into five accounts, allegedly for investigation purposes."

"On Feb 4, she was instructed to go to the nearest police station to obtain a proof of innocence letter. When she arrived at the police station and inquired about the matter, she realised that she had been scammed."

The case is being investigated under Section 420 of the Penal Code for cheating. — Bernama



STARBUCKS®

## Malaysian hits sweet spot with *halal* marshmallows

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Capitalising on the difficulty Muslim consumers face in finding *halal* marshmallows, Nur Ikmal Danial Zakaria created and marketed his version of the confectionery.

The entrepreneur, who holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Monash University in Australia, said he decided to produce marshmallows after being inspired by its manufacturing process abroad.

"I've always wanted to be an entrepreneur and looked for ideas to launch a product with low capital. At first, I tried selling popcorn but I changed my mind after realising that Muslim consumers were struggling to find *halal* marshmallow products."

He introduced his marshmallows, which he made using just three ingredients – sugar, glucose syrup and gelatin – in April last year under the brand "Hello Marshmallow".

To ensure his product not only satisfies customers and also adheres to Islamic laws, Nur Ikmal dedicated four months to research and development.

"I sourced recipes from TikTok and YouTube, then refined and modified them. Every ingredient is certified *halal* and follows standard operating procedures to ensure quality and safety."

"One of the biggest challenges is Malaysia's hot weather, which makes marshmallows prone to melting, so I had to tweak the recipe to improve its stability."

He said marshmallows are made by mixing sugar, water and glucose syrup and heating the mixture to a specific temperature before combining it with gelatin that has been soaked in water. The mixture is then whipped until it is fluffy.

Once ready, the desired flavouring and filling can be added to the mixture, which is then poured into moulds before being refrigerated or left at room temperature for four hours to set.

Actively marketing his marshmallows via TikTok @hello.marshmalloww, Nur Ikmal offers six flavours – cookies and cream, strawberry, chocolate, blueberry, mixed nut butterscotch and green tea. – Bernama

# Father and son share bond in *kavadi* making

► Duo specialise in use of peacock feathers, with orders received locally and from Mauritius, South Africa

**KAJANG:** The *kavadi* is an essential feature of the Thaipusam.

There are different types of *kavadi*, among them being the *mayil* or peacock *kavadi*, which has been the hallmark of the festival for years.

K. Sevaraja, a property agent and part-time *kavadi* craftsman, has had his hands full

meeting orders for *kavadi*, which means "load".

*Kavadi*, is an arched wood or steel structure that is carried by devotees as an act of devotion and gratitude to the deity Lord Murugan for the fulfilment of prayers or vows.

Sevaraja, 55, is dedicated to making peacock *kavadi* because in Hinduism, the peacock is

regarded as the divine vehicle of Lord Murugan.

He said he has had a passion for making peacock *kavadi* since he learnt the art from his late father 26 years ago.

Today, the legacy continues with his son Satish Raj, 26, as well as a small team of workers committed to preserving the heritage.

"From the beginning, I've focused solely on making *kavadi* adorned with peacock feathers because they represent the original tradition. The peacock *kavadi* is more natural and visually striking compared with others," Sevaraja said.

His family offers *kavadi* for rent to devotees observing Thaipusam at the Sri Subramaniam Swamy Temple in Batu Caves, Selangor.

To honour the spiritual significance of *kavadi* making, Sevaraja and his team observe a strict vegetarian diet throughout the production process, Bernama reported.

"I follow a vegetarian diet for 48 days while my son extends his commitment to 108 days. We also abstain from consuming intoxicants during this period."

Despite waning interest among youth in the craft, Satish Raj is determined to preserve the art.

While most *kavadi* makers use either rubber or styrofoam to make the frame, Satish Raj prefers to use rubber due to its durability, saying that *kavadi* made of styrofoam is prone to damage and requires frequent repairs.

"The *kavadi* we make is sturdy. We add sponges so that it can rest on the shoulders comfortably."

To enhance the visual effect, LED lights are also attached.

Other materials used include rattan, wooden plates, peacock feathers and metal rods as well as decorative items, with each component carefully selected to ensure the *kavadi* is both durable and captivating.

This year, *kavadi* rentals range between RM800 and RM1,300, depending on the size and design.

Sevaraja's family has received over 40 orders for rubber-based peacock *kavadi* and more than 20 orders for the styrofoam version, with some orders coming from overseas, including South Africa and Mauritius.



The use of rubber is preferred to make *kavadi* due to its durability, as styrofoam is prone to damage and requires frequent repairs. – BERNAMAPIC

## ENJOY A SEAMLESS READING EXPERIENCE.

Read our iPaper at <https://www.thesun.my/>



Or download the **theSun** app  
on the AppStore or Google Play





# Indonesia to cut early deaths with free screening

► Preventive care initiative targets 100m citizens

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia launched an annual free health screening programme yesterday, a 3 trillion rupiah (RM820 million) initiative to prevent early deaths that its Health Ministry said was its biggest ever undertaking.

Under the programme, all Indonesians will eventually be entitled to a free screening on their birthday, the ministry said.

The screening, which is not mandatory, includes blood pressure checks, tests to determine the risk of heart problems or stroke, and eye tests, the ministry said.

The programme targets children below six and adults aged 18 and above, Health Minister

Budi Gunadi Sadikin said last week.

The leading causes of death in the world's fourth most populous nation include stroke, heart disease, and tuberculosis, data from the World Health Organisation shows.

Budi said the 3 trillion rupiah allocation for the programme was about 1 trillion less than originally planned after President Prabowo Subianto ordered budget cuts to help fund election promises, including giving free meals to schoolchildren.

At a health centre in Jakarta yesterday, about 30 people had signed up for the screening on the first day.

Teacher Ramika Dewi Saragih said she was not apprehensive when she underwent a breast examination, an eye test and other checks.

"I was really looking forward to this," the 33-year-old said, adding that more people should take advantage of the programme.

A Health Ministry spokesperson said the target for the checks this year was 100 million people.

Budi said the programme was intended to promote preventive care as Indonesians tended to check for illnesses only when they were sick.

"Our culture is to check when we're already sick ... that cuts close to the grave," he said.

He said the programme was the biggest the ministry had ever undertaken.

Budi said the screening, which is to be rolled out at more than 20,000 health centres and clinics, also includes mental health tests to determine signs of depression or anxiety.

Researchers at the University of Indonesia's Economic and Social Research Institute warned the programme could burden the country's already-strained local health centres, citing uneven distribution of medications and doctors. – Reuters

## Mother of freed hostage says her son not mistreated

**BAN DUNG:** When Surasak Rumnao, 31, left his home in Thailand's rural Udon Thani province three years ago to go across the world to the southern Israeli town of Yeshva for agriculture work, his family never imagined they would lose touch with him for over a year when he was kidnapped in October 2023.

He and four others were reunited with their families this weekend after their release from captivity in Gaza.

According to Israeli authorities, more than 250 people were abducted on Oct 7, 2023.

During the attack, more than 40 Thais were killed and 31 Thai labourers kidnapped, some of whom died in captivity, according to the Thai government. Later that year, the first group of Thai hostages was freed.

Surasak's mother, Khammee Rumnao, was relieved that her son was not mistreated and has returned to his home, about 620km northeast of Bangkok.

"He mainly got to eat bread, he was looked after well and was fed all three meals (each day). He got to shower, he was looked after well," Khammee said, and that he ate whatever his captors had.

Her son does not plan to go back and wants to use the knowledge he gained in his agricultural work in Israel at their home, she said.

His grandparents and other relatives came to their home to welcome him home.

His stepfather, Janda Prachanan, was elated. "I couldn't find the words to describe how happy I am, that my son is safe and finally home," he said.

On Sunday, the other returnees were met by tearful family members at Bangkok's Suvarnabhumi Airport.

"We are all deeply touched to come back to



Freed Thai farm worker Watchara Sriaoun hugs his grandfather Sompong Sriaoun at his hometown in Udon Thani province on Sunday. – AFP/PPIC

our birthplace ... to be standing here. I don't know what else to say, we are all truly thankful," said Pongsak Thaenna, one of the returnees.

Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa, who met the hostages in Israel after their release last week, expressed relief.

"This is emotional ... to come back to the embrace of their families.

"We never gave up and this was the fruit of that effort," he said.

Before the conflict, approximately 30,000 Thai

labourers worked in Israel's agriculture sector, making them one of the largest migrant worker groups in the country. Nearly 9,000 Thais were repatriated following the Oct 7 attacks.

Thailand's Foreign Ministry said a Thai national is still believed to be held captive in Gaza.

"We still have hope and continue to work to bring them back," Maris said, adding that this includes the bodies of two deceased Thai nationals. – Reuters

## Manipur chief minister resigns over tribal clashes

**GUWAHATI:** The chief minister of India's northeastern state of Manipur resigned on Sunday, bowing to pressure to quit amid ethnic clashes that have cost at least 250 lives since they broke out nearly two years ago.

N. Biren Singh, a member of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), submitted his resignation to the state's governor in the capital city of Imphal, a day ahead of a scheduled legislative assembly session.

The governor accepted Singh's resignation and asked him to continue until alternate arrangements are made, according to a statement.

Singh's resignation follows clashes between

the majority Meitei and minority Kuki communities over economic benefits and job quotas.

The conflict has killed at least 250 people and displaced 60,000, with sporadic violence continuing.

Kuki groups have long accused Singh of his bias towards the Meitei community, and have demanded his removal since the conflict began.

Singh, a Meitei leader, has also been under increasing pressure from his own allies to step down. BJP lawmakers have periodically sought his resignation over his handling of the crisis.

In November, the regional National People's Party, a key BJP ally in the state, withdrew from

the ruling coalition, citing Singh's failure to resolve the crisis.

In his resignation letter, Singh thanked the federal government in Delhi for its efforts to protect Manipur's interests and urged continued action to curb border infiltration and deport "illegal immigrants".

Singh and the federal government have blamed the violence partly on an influx of refugees from Myanmar following the 2021 military coup.

Soon after Singh resigned, Manipur BJP president Sharda Devi told reporters that the chief minister took the decision "in the interest of the people of Manipur". – Reuters

## India keen to boost defence exports, manufacturing

**BENGALURU:** India is committed to boosting manufacturing and exports of defence equipment in the coming years, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said yesterday at the opening of the country's biggest air show, where its military ambitions will be in focus.

India, the world's largest arms importer, has stressed the need to modernise its military and boost domestic defence production to counter rival China's growing military strength and influence in South Asia.

India's domestic defence manufacturing value will reach more than 1.25 trillion rupees (RM63.6 billion) in the fiscal year ending in March, while its defence exports will cross a record 210 billion rupees for the first time over the same period, Singh said.

"We are fully committed to significantly increase these numbers in the coming years," he said at the show, which kicked off with the country's fighter jets flying past in formation across a clear sky.

New Delhi aims to explore possible joint production of defence equipment and to scout for billions of dollars worth of military deals at the biennial Aero India aerospace exhibition that began yesterday in the southern city of Bengaluru.

More than 150 foreign companies are taking part in the event that runs through Friday, while defence ministers or representatives from about 30 countries were expected to arrive, according to India's Defence Ministry.

Two Russian and US fifth-generation advanced stealth fighter jets will also be displayed at the event – the Russian Su-57 and Lockheed Martin's F-35 Lightning II, the Defence Ministry said.

"The inclusion of both the Su-57 and F-35 highlights India's position as a key hub for international defence and aerospace collaboration," the ministry said.

"Aero India 2025 will provide a rare side-by-side comparison of eastern and western fifth-generation fighter technology."

Over the past decade, India has steadily increased defence acquisitions from Western nations to diversify its supplies after traditional defence partner Russia was hobbled by the war in Ukraine. – Reuters

## Police pull plug on British singer's street performance

**BENGALURU:** A street performance by Ed Sheeran was stopped abruptly by police on Sunday, outraging fans and prompting the British singer to issue a clarification.

Sheeran, dressed in a white T-shirt and shorts was seen singing and playing his guitar on a pavement in the centre of Bengaluru ahead of his concert on Sunday night.

Local channels showed a policeman walking up to Sheeran as he was singing the hit single *Shape of You* and unplugging the microphone, as onlookers jeered. Sheeran left soon after.

Police said event organisers had been refused permission for the street performance, which was on one of the city's busiest streets.

"I refused to give permission because Church Street gets very crowded. That is the reason he was asked to leave," said Bengaluru police official Shekar T Tekkannanavar.

Sheeran, who began his career as a busker in the UK, said later on his Instagram account that he did have permission to perform.

"It wasn't just us randomly turning up. All good though," he wrote.

Sheeran is in India for a series of concerts, and performed at an open ground in the city later that night. – Reuters



# 'EU went too far with AI rules'

## Comprehensive law stifling innovation, say industry critics

**PARIS:** The European Union has gone too far with artificial intelligence regulations, making it harder for global companies to deploy the technology in the region, said Aiman Ezzat, chief executive of French IT consulting group Capgemini, in an interview.

Ezzat's comments, ahead of the AI Action summit in Paris yesterday,

come amid growing frustration with EU regulations from private players in AI and after US President Donald Trump revoked a 2023 executive order signed by Joe Biden that sought to reduce the risks that artificial intelligence poses to consumers, workers and national security.

The EU says its AI Act is the world's most comprehensive law governing the use of AI, but it has been criticised by some companies for stifling innovation.

"In Europe, we went too far and too fast on AI regulation," Ezzat told Reuters, adding that the absence of global standards on regulating AI was "nightmarish".

"It's complex for us because we have to look at regulation in every country where we operate, what we can do, what we cannot do, and what's our responsibility as a developer," said Ezzat.

One of Europe's biggest IT services companies, Capgemini has partnerships with firms such as Microsoft, Google Cloud and Amazon Web Services. Clients include Heathrow Airport and Deutsche Telekom.

Frameworks for AI policy are expected to be among topics under discussion by heads of state and executives from the world's leading technology firms at the Paris summit.

Ezzat expects regulators and companies meeting at the conference to try to come to some alignment on policy, he said.

While the EU's AI Act will take years to be fully implemented, European data protection authorities are already concerned that some AI actors could breach privacy laws.

Recently, the data protection bodies of half a dozen European countries issued requests for information or started analysis on DeepSeek.

The Chinese startup shocked industry and global markets last month by showing it could compete with US heavyweights in the field for

a fraction of the cost.

"It's a game changer, because it brings something new ... it's more open, so you can do more with it and fine tune it much better," Ezzat said of the Chinese firm.

However, he said that even though DeepSeek shares its models via open source, the transparency was limited.

"Is DeepSeek completely open source? No, absolutely not," he said, with no access to the datasets used to train the models, for example.

Capgemini has begun discussing implementing DeepSeek's models with clients, said Ezzat, but noted it was in the "very early stages". - Reuters

## US judge blocks transfer of detainees to Guantanamo Bay

**SANTA FE:** A federal judge in New Mexico on Sunday granted a preemptive restraining order to block the US government from sending three Venezuelan men detained in the state from being sent to a military base in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Judge Kenneth Gonzales of the Federal District Court for New Mexico said during a video conference hearing that he was granting the order, said Baher Azmy, a lawyer for the men.

The court did not respond to a request for comment. A court document confirming Gonzales' action was not available on Sunday.

Azmy is with the Centre for Constitutional Rights, which said in a written statement that

the men had filed the motion requesting that their possible transfer to Guantanamo be blocked, though there had not yet been any such order to send them to the base.

The men have a pending case before a federal court in New Mexico challenging what they say is their unlawfully prolonged detention after they fled Venezuela seeking protection in the United States.

The US Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency didn't respond to a request for comment on the men's request to not be sent to Guantanamo or if they even planned to send the men to the base.

President Donald Trump said in late January that his administration planned to create

capacity to house up to 30,000 migrants at the US naval base.

The Trump administration last week moved to end protections against deportation for hundreds of thousands of Venezuelans.

"I fear being taken to Guantanamo because news reports paint it as a black hole ... I also see that human rights are violated at Guantanamo, so I fear what could happen to me," said Abraham Barrios Morales, one of the detained men, in a written statement.

The American Civil Liberties Union on Friday demanded access to migrants at Guantanamo Bay saying the administration has provided no information about the migrants and the detentions raise legal questions. - Reuters

## Musk will help uncover fraud, says Trump

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump said in remarks aired on Sunday that Elon Musk, who is presiding over a purge of government jobs, will help find "hundreds of billions of dollars of fraud" in federal agencies.

Speaking in a Fox News interview aired before the Super Bowl football championship, Trump said the American people "want me to find" waste and that Musk, the world's richest man and the leader of the president's cost-cutting efforts, has been "a great help" in rooting out unnecessary spending.

"We're going to find billions, hundreds of billions of dollars of fraud and abuse. And, you know, the people elected me on that," Trump told Fox News Channel's Bret Baier.

During his three weeks in office the president has unleashed a flurry of executive orders aimed at slashing federal spending.

He has appointed SpaceX and Tesla boss Musk to lead his federal cost-cutting efforts under the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

The administration has highlighted several government projects Trump believes should be ended or curtailed, but evidence of any widespread illegal activity or fraud has not been presented.

Musk has already taken unprecedented steps to shut down the US Agency for International Development (USAID), laying off thousands of employees.

On Friday, a federal judge ordered a temporary pause to the administration's plan to put 2,200 USAID workers on paid leave.

In the interview, Trump accused the agency of "fraud", claiming there was "hundreds of millions of dollars of money that's going to places where it shouldn't be going".

The DOGE reform team has also triggered alarm among critics by gaining access through the US Treasury to the personal and financial data of millions in the United States.

On Saturday, another US judge issued an emergency order blocking DOGE from accessing Treasury Department payment systems that contain sensitive data.

Trump said in his interview that over the next day or so he will order Musk to turn his government scalpel to the Department of Education, a frequent target of Republican ire.

"Then I'm going to go to the military," Trump said, reiterating his call for a review of spending at the Pentagon, whose budget totals some US\$850 billion (RM3.8 trillion). - AFP



Protesters march against Immigration and Customs enforcement in Seattle. - AFP/PIIC

## Australian prime minister urges action on indigenous welfare

**SYDNEY:** Australia must act to improve indigenous people's lives, the government said yesterday, as an annual report highlighted their shorter lifespans, poorer health and higher incarceration rates.

Living in one of the world's wealthiest countries, the descendants of Australia's original inhabitants, comprising nearly 4% of the 27 million-strong population, fare worse than their compatriots.

Of 19 targets for improving indigenous people's lives, 11 show progress but only five are on track to be met, Prime Minister Anthony

Albanese told parliament as he presented the annual *Closing the Gap* report.

Indigenous and other Australians' stories are "intertwined", the prime minister said.

"But as the *Closing the Gap* report lays bare, there are still too many areas in which we are not together."

Among the disparities, official data show indigenous people's life expectancy is about eight years shorter than that of other Australians, incarceration rates are more than 10 times higher and more children are living in care.

He cited the prevalence of rheumatic heart disease - a result of untreated strep infections - "a disease that has all but faded from living memory in most of our nation but retains its grip on indigenous Australia".

"We are delivering real results, but we're clear-eyed about the truth that there is so much more that we need to do," Albanese said.

"The road ahead is not easy, but crucially there is a road, and we keep adding to it. To close the gap would ultimately erase the gulf that lies between us and our true potential as a nation." - AFP



## No good offer yet to start Ukraine talks: Russia

**MOSCOW:** Russia is yet to receive a good offer to start talks on Ukraine, Russia's deputy foreign minister said in remarks published yesterday, after US President Donald Trump said he believed Washington was progressing in negotiations to end the war in Ukraine.

"It is important that words be backed up by practical steps that take into account Russia's legitimate interests, demonstrating a readiness to eradicate the root causes of the crisis and recognise the new realities," Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Galuzin told RIA news agency.

"Concrete proposals of this nature have not yet been received."

There has been a slew of contradictory or guarded messages from Washington and Moscow in recent days about possible talks between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin on bringing an end to the war.

Trump said over the weekend that he has spoken with Putin and he expects more conversations.

"I do believe we're making progress. We want to stop the Ukraine-Russia war," Trump said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told TASS news agency on Sunday that "many different communications are emerging" on talks between Putin and Trump and that he may not be aware of everything.

"Therefore, in this case, I can neither confirm nor deny it," Peskov said when asked by TASS to comment.

Trump has repeatedly said he wants to end the war and that he will meet Putin to discuss it. On Sunday, Trump told reporters that he would meet Putin at an appropriate time.

On Friday, Trump said he would probably meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to discuss ending the war.

Putin sees the war as existential for Russia's survival. Kyiv and its Western allies see it as an unprovoked colonial style land grab. — Reuters



Palestinians make their way near Gaza City after Israeli forces withdrew from the Netzarim Corridor, allowing people to travel in both directions between southern and northern Gaza. — REUTERS/SPIC

# Gaza plan a 'scandal', says German chancellor

## ► Relocation against international law

**BERLIN:** German Chancellor Olaf Scholz on Sunday labelled as "a scandal" US President Donald Trump's plans for the war-ravaged Palestinian territory of Gaza.

Trump sparked global outrage by suggesting last week that Washington should take control of the Gaza Strip, clear out its inhabitants and turn it into "the Riviera of the Middle East".

Scholz, speaking in a pre-election TV debate, branded the plan "a scandal" and said "the relocation of a population is unacceptable and against international law".

His conservative election rival Friedrich Merz said "I share this assessment".

But Merz said that Trump's announcement is "part of a whole series of proposals coming from the American government".

"We have to wait and see what is really meant seriously and how it will be implemented. There is probably a lot of rhetoric involved."

Trump made matters worst on Sunday when he said he is committed to buying and owning Gaza, but could allow sections of the enclave to be rebuilt by other states in the Middle East.

"I'm committed to buying and owning Gaza. As far as us rebuilding it, we may give it to other states in the Middle East to build sections of it, other people may do it, through our auspices."

"But we're committed to owning it, taking it, and making sure that Hamas doesn't move back."

Trump made his remarks to reporters aboard Air Force One on his way to New Orleans to attend the National Football League Super Bowl championship.

"There's nothing to move back into. The place is a demolition site. The remainder will be demolished. Everything's demolished," he said.

Trump also said he was open to the possibility of allowing some Palestinian refugees into the United States, but would consider such requests on a case-by-case basis.

Ezzat El Rashq, a member of the Hamas political bureau, condemned Trump's latest remarks on buying and owning Gaza.

"Gaza is not a property to be sold and

bought. It is an integral part of our occupied Palestinian land," and Palestinians will foil displacement plans, Rashq said.

It was unclear under what authority the United States would take claim of Gaza. Trump's announcement drew immediate rebukes from several nations.

Earlier on Sunday, Israeli President Isaac Herzog said Trump was set to meet Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi and possibly Saudi Arabian Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, although he gave no dates for the talks.

The comments, delivered in an interview with Fox News' Maria Bartiromo, came in response to a question about Trump's recently unveiled proposal to take over and redevelop the Gaza Strip.

Saudi Arabia has flatly rejected Trump's Gaza plan, as have many world leaders.

Jordan's King Abdullah plans to tell Trump during their meeting today in Washington that the proposal is a recipe for radicalism that will spread chaos through the Middle East and jeopardise the kingdom's peace with Israel, Reuters reported earlier this week.

— AFP/Reuters

## BRIEFS

### KREMLIN WAITING FOR BUY GAZA PLAN DETAILS

**MOSCOW:** The Kremlin said yesterday it was waiting for more details of President Donald Trump's plan to buy the Gaza Strip. Asked whether Trump's plan was acceptable for Moscow, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov noted that 1.2 million people lived in Gaza. "It's worth waiting for some details here if we're talking about a coherent plan of action. We are talking about almost 1.2 million Palestinians who live there, and this is probably the main issue. These are the people who were promised a two-state solution. We don't know the details yet, so we have to be patient," Peskov told a conference call. — Reuters

### ECUADOR PRESIDENTIAL RACE SET FOR RUNOFF

**QUITO:** Ecuador's presidential race will go to an April 13 runoff if trends in the count persist, said National Electoral Council head Diana Atamaint, as incumbent Daniel Noboa led leftist Luisa Gonzalez by less than 1%. Noboa was barely leading the count on Sunday, with 44.5% to Gonzalez's 44.1%, with 78.7% of ballot boxes counted. "If the trend is maintained, Ecuadorians will return to the ballot box on April 13," Atamaint said. Gonzalez said: "We are nearly in a technical tie, with a trend, which is the most important, where we will keep growing in votes and Noboa will keep falling in votes." — Reuters

**TULKAREM:** The Palestinian Health Ministry reported that Israeli forces in the occupied West Bank shot dead three people on Sunday, including a woman who was eight months pregnant, while the military said it had "targeted terrorists" in a raid.

Israeli forces launched an operation in the Nur Shams refugee camp, on the outskirts of Tulkarem in the northern West Bank, at dawn on Sunday, as part of an offensive in nearby camps, the military said.

The ministry said 23-year-old Sundus Jamal Muhammad Shalabi was killed in a pre-dawn incident, with her husband Yazan Abu Shola critically injured.

The mother-to-be was dead when she arrived at a hospital, the ministry said.

"Medical teams were unable to save the baby's life due to the occupation preventing the transfer of the injured to the hospital," it added.

When asked by AFP about the shooting of the pregnant woman in Nur Shams, the Israeli

military said "following the incident an investigation was opened by the Military Police Criminal Investigation Division".

Murad Alyan, a member of the popular committee in the Nur Shams camp, said the couple was "trying to leave the camp before the occupation forces advanced into it. They were shot while they were inside their car."

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry condemned what it described as "a crime of execution committed by the occupation forces", accusing Israeli forces of "deliberately targeting defenceless civilians".

The Health Ministry later said a second woman, 21-year-old Rahaf Fouad Abdullah al-Ashqar was killed in a separate incident in Nur Shams.

A source in the camp's popular committee said she was killed and her father wounded when the "Israeli forces used explosives to open the door of their family house".

And late on Sunday the ministry said a third

Palestinian, Iyas Adli Fakhri al-Akhras, 20, had been killed "after being shot by Israeli forces" in the camp.

The Israeli military said it was looking into the incidents.

AFP footage from Nur Shams showed army bulldozers clearing a path in front of buildings in the densely packed camp, which is home to about 13,000 people.

The Israeli military earlier said its forces were "expanding the operation in northern Samaria", using the biblical term for the north of the West Bank, which Israel has occupied since 1967.

"The combat team of the Ephraim Brigade began operations in Nur Shams," the military said in a statement, adding that soldiers had "targeted several terrorists and arrested additional individuals in the area".

The Health Ministry said 70 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire in the West Bank this year and at least 887 killed since the Gaza war began. — AFP

COMMENT by Dr Vivian George Vincent Fernandez

A REFRESHING RETREAT  
NEAR KUALA LUMPUR  
colmartropicale.com.my

# Understanding hearing loss in children

**F**EBRUARY is Kids Ear, Nose and Throat (ENT) Health Month, a time dedicated to raising awareness about ENT health issues in children, including hearing loss. Hearing is essential for the development of an infant and child. It impacts intellectual growth and speech development.

When hearing impairment goes unnoticed, children may struggle with communication, experience social isolation and face delays in reaching developmental milestones.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), over 5% of the world's population – or 430 million people – require rehabilitation to address their disabling hearing loss, including 34 million children.

## Understanding developmental milestones

As infants grow, they reach specific milestones that indicate their growth is on track. Awareness of these milestones allows parents to detect potential hearing problems early and seek timely intervention.

Below is an overview of speech development for parents to monitor. Individual children develop at their own rate, but there are some general patterns to look out for.

➔ By one to three months, babies typically cry and coo. A lack of response to loud sounds or voices may indicate a hearing issue.

➔ Between four to six months, they gurgle, squeal and laugh. If they do not react to sounds or begin to make these vocalisations, it could be a sign of hearing loss.

➔ From six to nine months, they often babble and imitate speech sounds. Parents should be alert if their child shows a lack of babbling or fails to imitate speech sounds as this may indicate a hearing issue.

➔ At around 12 months, most children start speaking their first words. If a child has not spoken their first words or shows little reaction to spoken language, hearing loss should be considered.

➔ By 18 months to two years, they can use approximately 50 words and combine them into short phrases. A limited vocabulary (fewer than 10-15 words) or difficulty forming phrases may indicate hearing issues.

Babies must hear sounds and speech to learn how to produce them. Parents who monitor these milestones can quickly recognise delays and consult a healthcare professional. Early identification of hearing loss and speech delays leads to significantly better rehabilitation outcomes.

While hearing screening for newborns is standard in many urban medical centres, children born in the rural or underserved areas may not have access to these tests.

As a result, some cases of hearing loss may go undetected until

developmental delays become evident.

Once delayed speech development is confirmed, the child is referred for assessment to specialists in related fields. The underlying causes could stem from brain-related issues, hearing loss or oral cavity abnormalities.

## Treatment and rehabilitation options

Rehabilitative services focus on a child's individual needs. Hearing aids, training by speech and language specialists and cochlear implants are some of the modalities available today.

Parents play a crucial role in the rehabilitation process. Frequent interaction, conversation and engagement are essential for a child with hearing impairment.

Schools and teachers should also be aware, ensuring that the child is seated in front of the classroom. Teachers must take special care to ascertain the child's learning keeps pace with their peers.

Hearing loss can be challenging for the child and family. Building a strong support system, including family, teachers, therapists and support groups, can provide emotional and practical assistance.

Connecting with other families facing similar challenges can be incredibly reassuring.



Early detection and intervention are the cornerstones of successful rehabilitation.

– ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

## Early detection crucial

Early detection and intervention are the cornerstones of successful rehabilitation. Parents, healthcare providers and educators must work together to ensure children with hearing impairments receive the support they need to thrive.

This Kids ENT Health Month, let us spread awareness, encourage early screenings and empower families with the knowledge they need to support

their child's hearing health.

By staying informed and proactive, parents can make a profound difference in their child's development and overall quality of life.

**Dr Vivian George Vincent Fernandez**

is an associate professor at the School of Medicine, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, Taylor's University.

Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

## LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

## Air Selangor's quick response wins praise

A FEW days ago, I discovered a leak in the pipe leading to the water meter of my house. Upon closer inspection, I found numerous bite marks on the black pipe, with a small puncture visible. Water was gushing out through the puncture in a fine jet.

I noticed the leak only in the evening, so I used a raffia string to tie tightly around the puncture to reduce the water flow.

The next day, I instructed my handyman to fix the leak, not thinking it was anything major, so I

did not bother notifying Air Selangor.

While waiting for the handyman, I heard the sound of a lorry stopping in front of my house.

To my surprise, it was an Air Selangor lorry, fully equipped to

repair the damaged pipe.

I explained that I had not informed them about the leak, but they replied that they have staff patrolling daily on motorbikes around the neighbourhood to spot and report any pipe issues.

I would like to commend Air Selangor for their efficiency and the excellent service they provided. It was certainly a pleasant surprise.

**Thiagarajan Mathiaparanam**  
Klang

## 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!

**theSun**  
Malaysian Paper  
www.thesun.my

Contact us now for special deals on digital, video and print advertising.

☎ 03-7784 6688

✉ advertise@thesundaily.com





# Time to safeguard truth-tellers

## COMMENT

By Ts Dr Manivannan Rethinam

**W**HISTLEBLOWERS play a crucial role in exposing corruption, misconduct and systemic failures. They often risk their careers, reputations and personal safety to uphold justice and accountability. However, in Malaysia, the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010 (Act 711) has proven inadequate in safeguarding these individuals, effectively silencing them and undermining efforts to combat corruption.

The government's recent reaffirmation of its commitment to protecting whistleblowers contrasts sharply with its refusal to amend Act 711 to safeguard individuals who make public disclosures before reporting to enforcement agencies.

This stance, articulated by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said highlights systemic flaws in Malaysia's whistleblower protection framework and underscores the urgent need for reform.

### Flawed premise of Act 711

One of the most glaring weaknesses of Act 711 is its requirement for whistleblowers to report misconduct primarily through designated enforcement agencies or proper authorities, rather than allowing for external reporting (for example, to the media or civil society).

This creates a significant barrier, particularly when the alleged wrongdoing involves high-ranking officials or systemic corruption as whistleblowers may lack confidence in the independence or effectiveness of these channels.

A 2023 report by Deloitte highlighted that 80% of Malaysian respondents expressed concerns regarding the independence of the whistleblowing process, indicating widespread fear of retaliation or inaction when reporting misconduct internally.

Similarly, a study on the public sector, specifically the Youth and Sports Ministry, found that fear of retaliation significantly discouraged public servants from whistleblowing.

These concerns underscore the need for independent and impartial investigative mechanisms, particularly in cases involving politically connected individuals or powerful corporate entities, to ensure the protection of whistleblowers, prevent the suppression of critical evidence and avoid the silencing of whistleblowers.

The government's refusal to amend Act 711 to protect whistleblowers who go public first exacerbates this issue.

As Azalina noted in the Dewan Rakyat, whistleblowers who disclose information publicly

before reporting to enforcement agencies are not protected under Subsection 7(1) of the Act.

This rigid stance ignores the reality that public disclosure is often the only viable option for whistleblowers when internal channels fail or when there is a risk of evidence being suppressed.

### When public disclosure becomes a necessity

The government's assertion that public disclosures are inherently motivated by ulterior motives is dismissive and dangerous.

In many cases, public disclosure is the only way to ensure that serious wrongdoing is brought to light. This is particularly true when internal investigations are deliberately stalled, evidence is tampered with or when the accused individuals wield significant influence within the organisation.

For instance, the recent viral video case involving corruption allegations in Sabah underscores the importance of public disclosures. The whistleblower in this case could not be protected under Act 711 because the information was disclosed publicly before being reported to authorities.

This highlights the need for exceptions to be introduced for public-interest disclosures, particularly in cases where internal channels are ineffective or unsafe.

By penalising public disclosures, the current framework forces whistleblowers to choose between risking suppression within a compromised system and forfeiting any legal protection. This creates a chilling effect, discouraging individuals from coming forward and perpetuating a culture of silence.

### Illusion of strengthening protections

The government's recent initiatives, such as introducing a standard reward scale and expanding physical protection under the witness protection programme, while well-intentioned, fail to address the core issues.

These measures offer little solace to whistleblowers who face retaliation, legal persecution or threats to their personal safety after going public.

Moreover, the effectiveness of these measures hinges on the integrity and independence of the very institutions responsible for their implementation.

Without structural reforms to ensure the independence and impartiality of these institutions, such initiatives risk becoming mere window dressing, offering the illusion of protection without delivering tangible results.

### Lessons from international best practices

Malaysia can draw valuable lessons from countries with more robust whistleblower protection frameworks. For example:

➤ **United States:** The Whistleblower Protection Enhancement Act offers broad protections for

public disclosures, recognising that in certain circumstances, going public may be the only viable course of action.

➤ **European Union:** The EU Directive on Whistleblower Protection mandates protections for public disclosures when internal channels prove ineffective or unsafe.

➤ **Australia:** The Public Interest Disclosure Act establishes an independent oversight body to handle whistleblower complaints, ensuring impartiality and accountability.

These frameworks demonstrate that a balanced approach is crucial. While confidentiality within internal channels should be encouraged, a well-designed system must also recognise the importance of public interest disclosures in certain situations.

### Recommendations for reform

To truly empower whistleblowers and create a system that fosters accountability, the following reforms are essential:

#### Expand protections for public disclosures

➤ Establish clear and objective criteria for when public disclosures are justified, such as evidence of systemic corruption, imminent danger to public safety or the failure of internal channels to address the issue.

➤ Ensure that whistleblowers who make public disclosures in good faith and in accordance with established criteria are protected from retaliation and legal repercussions.

#### Strengthen anonymity and anti-retaliation measures

➤ Empower the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC):

➤ Grant the MACC greater operational independence to ensure impartiality in handling whistleblower complaints.

➤ Allocate additional resources to establish a dedicated Whistleblower Protection Unit within the MACC. This unit would be responsible for receiving complaints, ensuring whistleblower safety and conducting thorough investigations.

➤ Amend the Whistleblower Protection Act 2010 (Act 711):

➤ Address the Act's current weaknesses, such as the lack of protection for external reporting (for example, disclosures to the media or civil society) and inadequate anti-retaliation measures.

➤ Introduce provisions to safeguard whistleblowers who report misconduct externally, particularly when internal channels are ineffective or compromised.

➤ Implement robust anti-retaliation measures:

➤ Enforce severe criminal penalties for employers, officials or individuals who retaliate against whistleblowers. This would deter reprisals and reinforce the credibility of the whistleblowing framework.

➤ Establish a compensation fund to provide financial assistance to whistleblowers who suffer

financial losses, job termination or other damages as a result of their disclosures.

### Enhance public awareness and education

➤ Launch nationwide public awareness campaigns to educate citizens and employees about their rights under whistleblower protection laws and the importance of reporting misconduct.

➤ Require all public and private organisations to implement mandatory training programmes for employees on whistleblower protection policies and procedures.

### Adopt and adapt global best practices

➤ Thoroughly review and adapt best practices from countries with effective whistleblower protection frameworks, such as the US, the EU and Australia.

➤ Consider establishing a dedicated Whistleblower Protection Authority to oversee the implementation and enforcement of whistleblower protection laws.

### Protecting whistleblowers, not corruption

Malaysia's current whistleblower protection framework is deeply flawed, offering little more than the illusion of safety for those brave enough to expose wrongdoing.

By failing to address the critical need for protecting public disclosures and by relying heavily on potentially compromised internal channels, the government perpetuates a culture of silence that benefits the corrupt and undermines efforts to combat corruption and uphold the rule of law.

If Malaysia is serious about combatting corruption and upholding the rule of law, it must stop treating whistleblowers as inconvenient nuisances and start giving them real, untouchable protection.

This requires a fundamental shift in approach, moving away from a system that prioritises secrecy and control towards one that empowers citizens to speak truth to power without fear of reprisal.

The time for comprehensive reform is now. Without meaningful changes, Malaysia risks becoming a nation where truth-tellers are silenced and corruption continues to flourish unchecked.

**Ts Dr Manivannan Rethinam** is a distinguished professional technologist and holds a doctorate in Business Administration, with a focus on marketing and technology management. As the chairman of Majlis Gagasan Malaysia, he is a fervent advocate for civil liberties and interfaith harmony, deeply committed to fostering compassion, justice and unity as foundational values for building a more empathetic and inclusive society. His work reflects a steadfast belief in the power of dialogue and collaboration to bridge divides and create a better future for all. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

## Essential tips for buying electrical appliance

**CONSUMERS** must stay vigilant when purchasing or using electrical appliances. Safety should always come first as defective or substandard products can pose serious risks, including electric shocks, fires and even fatalities.

To ensure quality and compliance with safety regulations, always check that electrical and electronic products are Sirim-certified or approved by other recognised international standards.

A recent tragic incident highlights the dangers of unsafe electrical usage – an 18-year-old was electrocuted while charging his phone using a socket in a bus.

This underscores the need for stricter guidelines and enforcement for charging ports on public transport to protect passengers.

### Guidelines

➤ **Choose Sirim-approved products:** Sirim certification ensures products meet Malaysian safety and quality standards. Home appliances such

as refrigerators, microwaves, kettles, lighting equipment, extension cords and adaptors must have Sirim approval before they can be legally sold.

➤ **Buy from authorised dealers:**

Avoid uncertified sellers and unverified imports that may not comply with safety regulations. Purchasing from reputable dealers ensures after-sales support and warranty coverage.

➤ **Compare brands and models:** Stay informed about the latest models and their features. Compare different brands, specifications and prices to make informed decisions.

### Read product documentation:

Review booklets and brochures provided by manufacturers to understand the appliance's features, safety instructions and warranty terms.

### Be cautious with discounts:

Discounted or clearance items may have defects, scratches or have been used as display units. Inspect them carefully before purchasing.

### Check warranty and servicing:

Confirm if the product comes with a warranty or guarantee period. Find out where and how the appliance can be serviced if it becomes faulty.

➤ **Ask about delivery and installation:**

Check if the price includes delivery, installation and servicing. Opt for dealers with reliable after-sales support.

### Use licensed installer:

For appliances requiring specific voltage or safety settings, always hire a



To ensure quality and compliance with safety regulations, always check that electrical and electronic products are Sirim-certified. – REUTERSPIC

trained professional for installation. Do-it-yourself installations can be hazardous.

**Bulbir Singh** is a former president of the Negeri Sembilan Consumers Association.

# Preparing for final moments

➤ Recognise signs of impending death, comfort those nearing end of life

**D**EATH is an inevitable part of life, but the physical process leading to it can vary greatly from person to person. Whether it is a prolonged illness, a sudden event or the natural decline due to age, the body undergoes several stages as it approaches death.

While death is inevitable, how we approach the end of life is influenced by various factors, including the individual's health, age, emotional state and the circumstances surrounding their death. While these stages may differ depending on the individual and the circumstances of their death, there are common physiological patterns that people tend to go through in their final days, hours and moments.

Understanding death and accepting it is a deeply personal journey, in which one must come to terms with the inevitability of mortality, embracing it not as an end, but as a natural part of life's cycle.

## Signs of impending death

### ➤ Decreased circulation and blood flow

As the body approaches death, one of the most immediate signs is the slowing down of circulation. The heart begins to pump less effectively and blood pressure drops. The skin may appear pale or bluish, and the hands and feet may become cool to the touch. The lack of proper circulation leads to reduced oxygen levels in tissues, contributing to the body's general weakening.

### ➤ Breathing changes

As the body moves closer to death, changes in breathing patterns are one of the most prominent signs. These can include irregular, shallow breathing and the cessation of normal rhythms. Common breathing changes include Cheyne-Stokes breathing, which is a pattern of irregular breathing that involves rapid, deep breaths followed by periods of no breathing or shallow breaths. It can occur in the final stages of life, particularly in patients with terminal conditions. Other than that, breathing may become more labored, with the chest and abdomen moving in an effort to get air. Patients may also experience irregular gasps or "agonal" breathing, which occurs when the brainstem is still partially functioning, but the body is no longer able to take in oxygen efficiently.

### ➤ Failure of organ systems

As blood flow becomes less efficient, the body's organs gradually cease functioning, starting with those that are less essential to basic survival. The decline of organ function can follow a general pattern starting with the urinary system where the kidneys may stop functioning as the body becomes dehydrated, resulting in reduced urine output or in some cases, no urine production at all. This is often accompanied by fluid retention, causing swelling (edema), especially in the lower extremities and abdomen. Next is the liver. As it shuts down, the liver can no longer detoxify the blood or metabolise medications and nutrients effectively. The accumulation of toxins in the bloodstream can lead to confusion, agitation or unconsciousness. Following this, the heart's pumping efficiency weakens, which can lead to arrhythmias (irregular heart rhythms) and a general failure to circulate blood effectively. Ultimately, the heart may stop beating altogether. The respiratory system will also weaken where the lungs lose the ability to properly oxygenate the body, and fluid buildup can accumulate in the lungs (pulmonary edema), causing difficulty



The emotional weight of a loss is devastating, not only for the patient but also for the family.

— 123RFPICT

in breathing.

### ➤ Neurological decline and cognitive changes

As the body nears death, the brain's ability to function declines rapidly, leading to changes in consciousness and cognitive abilities. Some of the most common neurological symptoms include:

**Confusion and disorientation:** As blood flow to the brain diminishes, mental clarity becomes compromised. The individual may experience confusion, agitation or a decrease in cognitive awareness. This may manifest as difficulty recognising loved ones, disorientation regarding time and place and confusion about their condition.

**Loss of consciousness:** The individual may become semi-conscious or unresponsive. The person may slip in and out of consciousness, drifting into a state of deep unresponsiveness as the brain shuts down.

**Hallucinations or vivid dreams:** Some people report vivid hallucinations or strange dreams in their final days or hours. These can involve seeing deceased loved ones, animals or experiencing a sense of peace.

**Decreased sensory perception:** As circulation to the senses weakens, hearing, vision and other senses may fade. Many people in the final stages of life are still able to hear even if they can no longer respond to stimuli. Speaking to a person at this stage can offer comfort and reassurance, as they may still be aware of their surroundings.

### ➤ Changes in digestive system

In the final stages, the digestive system slows dramatically. The individual will experience loss of appetite and interest in eating or drinking. Even if food or fluids are offered, they may refuse. This is often due to the body's natural decline in energy needs as it prepares to shut down. As the body stops producing saliva and swallowing becomes more difficult, a dry mouth and throat may occur, which can lead to discomfort and the need for frequent mouth care. Additionally, the bowels and bladder may stop functioning, leading to incontinence or a lack of urination. In the final hours, some people may lose control of their bodily functions altogether.

➤ Muscle weakness and loss of coordination  
As the body weakens, muscle mass begins to

decrease, and the individual may become unable to move or hold themselves up. The loss of muscle strength can also result in rigidity and stiffness as well as the inability to speak or move. The person may exhibit rigidity in their limbs as the muscles begin to stiffen. In some cases, there may be a loss of reflexes, including the inability to respond to stimuli. Following that, the weakening of the muscles and overall physical decline means that the person may be unable to speak or perform basic movements. They may be bedbound and completely dependent on others for care.

### ➤ Temperature regulation changes

As circulation declines, the body becomes less able to regulate its temperature. This can lead to cold extremities where hands and feet may feel cold or clammy, as the blood flow to these areas slows down. In some cases, the body may experience episodes of fever or sweating. This is particularly common in patients with terminal illnesses such as cancer or infections.

## Final moments: What happens at the moment of death

The final moments of life are marked by a cessation of all vital functions such as heartbeat, breathing and brain activity. The body will show physical signs of death where the body will begin to cool after the heart stops beating and *rigor mortis* (muscle stiffening) sets in. This process can take a few hours.

## Conclusion

The process of dying involves complex physiological changes across multiple body systems, with signs and symptoms varying depending on the cause of death and the individual. These changes are a natural part of the life cycle, though they can be distressing or difficult to witness. Understanding the physical and neurological changes that occur can help caregivers, families and healthcare professionals offer the best support and comfort to those nearing the end of life. It is important to recognise while the process of dying is often marked by loss of function and awareness, it can also be a time for peaceful reflection and connection for the person nearing death and their loved ones.

*This article is contributed by Dr Yuhananantini Gopal Kishnam, general practice/extended care medical officer, Columbia Asia Extended Care Hospital, Shah Alam*

## Govt allocates RM18.9m for digitalisation of 100 clinics

**THE** government has allocated RM18.9 million this year for the digital transformation of 100 public health clinics nationwide with a cloud-based management system (CCMS).

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said the initiative includes the Air Putih Health Clinic, Bayan Baru Health Clinic, Bukit Minyak Health Clinic, Jalan Perak Health Clinic, Kepala Batas Health Clinic, Seberang Jaya Health Clinic, Sungai Bakap Health Clinic, Sungai Dua Health Clinic, Tanjung Bungah Health Clinic and Tasek Gelugor Health Clinic in Penang.

"This initiative is part of Budget 2025. The government will also introduce an electronic medical records system at Penang General Hospital and Seberang Jaya Hospital in 2026," he said after officiating the Seberang Perai Utara Wellness Hub Open Day at the Sungai Dua Health Clinic in Butterworth last Saturday.

He added that other hospitals in the state would follow suit, subject to allocations under the 13th Malaysia Plan.

The digital transformation through CCMS is expected to cut patient waiting times from three hours to just 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, Dzulkefly announced that there are currently 33 wellness hubs nationwide offering comprehensive healthcare services, including the mobile health initiative Zoomers Wellness on Wheels.

In line with the national healthcare reform agenda, he said the wellness hubs facilitate the shift from a "sick care" model to a more holistic "health care" approach, focusing on prevention, promotion and prediction to encourage Malaysians to be more proactive about their health.

"Data from 2020 to June 2024 shows that nearly one million clients have visited wellness hubs nationwide, including 20,000 from Seberang Perai Utara. Meanwhile, the iFitEr (I Fit and Eat Right) programme has recorded a 60% success rate in participants achieving weight loss," he said.

He added studies have shown the model increases awareness and reduces the burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) by providing accessible healthcare services.

Dzulkefly said that the government bears an estimated RM64 billion in healthcare costs for NCDs, particularly diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, chronic respiratory conditions and cancer.

Beyond serving as community health centres, wellness hubs also play a role in behaviour modification by providing guidance, motivation and social support to help clients achieve better health outcomes.

Additionally, the hubs offer health literacy programmes, free health screenings and counselling sessions, helping the community detect health risks early and take appropriate preventive measures. — Bernama





# Malaysia's US Pizza on regional expansion trail

► Home-grown chain looking at the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei this year

BY HAYATUN RAZAK  
[sunbiz@thesundaily.com](mailto:sunbiz@thesundaily.com)

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysian home-grown pizza chain US Pizza is eyeing expansion into the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei this year to strengthen its regional presence.

COO Deric Yeo said the company, which operates in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia currently, is targeting to open about 30 new locations in Malaysia this year, along with six to nine more outlets in Singapore.

"In Indonesia, we plan to expand beyond Jakarta," Yeo told *SunBiz* in an interview.

He said the company has received expansion requests from countries outside Asean, including the Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh.

"Representatives from these three countries - Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives - will be visiting us within the next two months, after Hari Raya Aidilfitri. As all three nations have Muslim-majority populations, they prefer to schedule their visit



Yeo says US Pizza is targeting to open about 30 new locations in Malaysia this year.

after Ramadan to finalise the details," he said.

To support rapid expansion, Yeo said, US Pizza is actively recruiting franchisees while maintaining strict selection criteria.

"We are careful in choosing the right partners. It's not just about financial capability; they must share our passion for the brand and ensure consistency in service and product quality," he added.

Looking ahead, US Pizza's short-term goal is to optimise its product consistency and delivery speed.

Yeo acknowledged that delivery services have slowed post-

pandemic due to a decline in the number of gig economy riders. "Ensuring speed and consistency is crucial for us. We make sure the pizzas remain hot and fresh upon delivery," he said.

In the long term, Yeo expressed aspirations for US Pizza to be a listed company but emphasised that the company must first meet specific revenue targets before considering an initial public offering.

"For now, our priority is expansion, ensuring brand quality, and creating business and job opportunities within the ecosystem," Yeo said.

Founded in Penang in 1997, US Pizza has since grown to more

than 100 outlets across its existing markets.

While international brands occupy the top two spots in the domestic market, US Pizza stands as the leading home-grown competitor.

US Pizza outlets are traditionally located in shop lots rather than shopping malls. However, it recently launched its first mall-based store at Melawati Mall, with plans for a second outlet in Sunshine Central Mall, Penang.

"Our new concept stores feature a futuristic design and cater to customers who want a dining-in experience while shopping," Yeo said.

## MPOB: Palm oil exports slip to 1.17m tonnes in January

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's palm oil exports in January 2025 slipped 12.94% to 1.17 million tonnes from 1.34 million tonnes in December 2024, according to the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB).

In its January 2025 industry performance report, MPOB said crude palm oil (CPO) production for the month slid by 16.8%, or 249,864 tonnes, to 1.24 million tonnes from 1.49 million tonnes in the preceding month.

Palm kernel output dropped by 13.57% month-on-month to 290,883 tonnes in January from 336,558 tonnes in the previous month.

The production of crude palm kernel oil declined by 12.6% to 137,158 tonnes from 156,926 tonnes in December, while palm kernel cake fell by 12.16% to 151,813 tonnes from 172,826 tonnes.

MPOB reported that CPO stocks decreased by 11.78% to 788,946 tonnes against 894,330 tonnes in December.

Processed palm oil stockpiles were lower by 2.9% to 790,817 tonnes in January 2025 from 814,426 tonnes in the preceding month, while total palm oil stocks narrowed by 7.55% to 1.58 million tonnes from 1.71 million tonnes in December.

MPOB noted a significant drop in palm kernel oil exports by 40.85% to 56,737 tonnes in January from 95,918 tonnes in December. Palm kernel cake exports inched lower by 0.09% to 177,396 tonnes in January from 177,553 tonnes in the previous month.

However, biodiesel exports surged by 121.89% to 33,795 tonnes in January from 15,231 tonnes previously, while oleochemical exports in January were higher at 232,567 tonnes, a 4.08% increase from 223,447 tonnes in December.

MPOB reported zero CPO imports in January, whereas palm kernel oil imports fell by 72.04% to 5,673 tonnes from 20,291 tonnes in the preceding month. - Bernama

# Pantech Global does not expect US tariffs to have major impact

BY AIMIE SHAZRIE  
[sunbiz@thesundaily.com](mailto:sunbiz@thesundaily.com)

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Butt weld pipe fittings and welded pipes manufacturer and exporter Pantech Global Bhd (PGB) does not foresee significant impact from newly announced US tariffs on steel and aluminium, owing to its downstream business model and diversified global supply chain.

PGB managing director Adrian Tan said unlike upstream producers, which are directly affected by raw material price fluctuations, the company primarily operates in the value-added segment, which mitigates exposure to tariff-related cost increases.

He noted that the company has a proven track record in navigating international trade regulations, having successfully defended itself in anti-dumping and circumvention cases in both the US and European Union markets.

"This experience gives PGB confidence in its ability to maintain competitiveness and market access

despite evolving trade policies," Tan told reporters at PGB's prospectus launch yesterday.

Looking ahead, he said PGB continues to explore new opportunities in North Africa (Egypt) and South America (Brazil), ensuring its expansion strategy remains resilient to geopolitical trade shifts.

PGB unveiled its initial public offering (IPO) prospectus and coming listing as a syariah-compliant stock on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia.

"Our fluid transmission products showcase Malaysia's ability to produce reliable, high-quality solutions for demanding industries that require precision and uncompromising standards. PGB's pipes and fittings are designed, manufactured, and tested to meet strict international certifications," Tan said.

The listing, he added, will mark a strategic step in PGB's global growth aspirations.

"We are focused on our approach of delivering solutions that meet customers' technical specifications in



From left: Pantech Global group executive director Lim Soon Beng, Tan, non-executive, non-independent chairman Datuk Jimmy Chew and deputy group managing director Kong Chiong Lee at the company's prospectus launch.

a timely manner and strengthening longstanding relationships with on-ground partners in international markets. These partnerships provide invaluable local insights that enhance our offerings and market presence.

"Transitioning into a public-listed entity under PGB will further elevate our profile as a true Malaysian manufacturer and reinforce our role in contributing to the country's economy," Tan said.

Pantech Global's listing marks the first Main Market IPO in 2025.

The IPO is expected to raise about RM178.32 million through the public issue of 262.23 million new ordinary shares at 68 sen per share.

A retail tranche of 21,250,000 IPO shares is available for application by the Malaysian public.

Applications close on Feb 19, ahead of balloting on Feb 24. PGB's listing is targeted for March 3.

Of the proceeds, the company will utilise RM67.32 million (37.75%) for business expansion, RM64.68 million (36.27%) for capital expenditure, RM22.72 million (12.74%) as working capital, RM15 million (8.41%) for repayment of bank borrowings and RM8.6 million (4.83%) for listing expenses.

PGB's business expansion entails setting up a factory and corporate head office in Selangor to broaden the range of fittings manufactured, a warehouse in Johor to improve order fulfilment and a pickling facility in Johor to accommodate longer pipes.

In addition, PGB is acquiring its rented factory in Klang, Selangor, and operational land in Johor.

The company also plans to purchase, upgrade and replace machinery and equipment to enhance production capabilities and efficiency.

PGB operates in Malaysia, with its head office in Klang, and factories in Klang and Pasir Gudang, Johor. It mainly serves customers in the US, Malaysia, Taiwan, Indonesia, Canada and Europe.

# Colform set for long-term growth post-listing

➤ Sabah-based steel products manufacturer and building materials supplier to strengthen operations, enhance offerings and explore new market opportunities

**PETALING JAYA:** Colform Group Bhd will utilise the RM41.19 million raised from its initial public offering (IPO) to strengthen operations, enhance product offerings and explore new market opportunities.

Managing director Kang Ket Hung said the company's ACE Market listing yesterday is a monumental achievement that represents its dedication to delivering quality steel solutions and expanding its footprint across Malaysia.

"The overwhelming response from investors is a reflection of the confidence placed in Colform's vision and potential. This trust inspires us to continue striving for excellence as we move forward under the leadership of our management team and the guidance of our board of directors," he said at the listing ceremony yesterday.

Colform shares opened at 40 sen compared to the IPO price of 36 sen a piece.

From the proceeds, Colform is allocating RM9 million to establish a new colour coil coating production line in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, and RM4.5 million to construct a

storage facility to enhance operational efficiency.

Further, RM5.1 million will be used for market expansion through the establishment of a branch and factory in Klang, Selangor, RM18.09 million for working capital and RM4.5 million for listing expenses.

With more than 20 years of experience, Colform has solidified its presence, delivering end-to-end steel solutions to support Malaysia's construction development from concept to completion. Its offerings span various types of downstream steel products, such as roofing sheets, wall claddings and Industrialised Building System (IBS) steel framing systems.

The company provides cost-efficient, labour-saving solutions tailored to meet industry standards. It serves a diverse clientele, including government, commercial, and private sectors, and embodies reliability and innovation in every project.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd said Colform is well-equipped to sustain its financial strength

and drive long-term growth post-listing.

Riding on East Malaysia's growth, Colform has a strong balance sheet of net cash and is poised to provide a competitive edge within the steel and construction materials market segment, Rakuten Trade said.

Colform is expanding to Peninsular Malaysia with a 50,000 sq ft factory in Klang that is set to begin operations by the fourth quarter of this year. The new facility will serve as a hub for production, storage, and sales, targeting the larger downstream steel and colour-coated coil markets.

With Public Works Department's certification, Colform is able to secure large-scale public projects for prefabricated steel roof trusses, Rakuten Trade said in a note. "This accreditation further strengthens its foothold in Sabah's IBS segment while unlocking new opportunities in Peninsular Malaysia."

The securities firm said Colform has a strong presence in Kota Kinabalu and Sandakan, differentiating itself between integrated steel production and its ability to handle project-specific needs efficiently.

"We project Colform to achieve core net earnings of RM18.4 million-RM22.4 million for FY24-FY26. We recommend a 'buy' call with a fair value of RM0.52 based on a 15x price-to-earnings ratio over FY25 earnings-per-share," Rakuten Trade said.

## Foreign investors return to M'sian bonds in January, ending three months of outflows

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Foreign investors reversed course in January, posting a net inflow of RM1.2 billion.

Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd (Kenanga IB) said foreign debt holdings edged up to RM276.4 billion in January, though their share of total outstanding debt remained unchanged at 13.1% amid RM14 billion plus issuance of Malaysian Government Securities (MGS) and Government Investment Issues (GII).

The investment bank said key drivers include Moody's reaffirmation of Malaysia's A3 rating and better-than-expected trade data, which boosted investor confidence.

Additionally, Bank Negara Malaysia's decision to hold the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3% and Malaysia's deepening regional ties – including the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone and Indonesia collaborations – attracted further inflows.

However, a US\$0.9 billion divestment on the last trading day of January, triggered by renewed trade tensions following US President Donald Trump's tariff threats, partially offset gains, Kenanga IB said.

It added that the inflows were primarily driven by strong buying activity in MGS and corporate bonds and sukuk (CBS), which offset the outflows in Malaysia Islamic Treasury Bills (MITB).

MGS recorded a net inflow of RM1.6 billion in January, reversing the previous month's outflow of RM1.9 billion, though total foreign holdings remained unchanged at 32.3%.

Net inflows into CBS moderated to RM0.7 billion, compared with RM1.8 billion in December, raising foreign ownership to 1.8% from 1.7% previously.

Meanwhile, MITB saw increased outflows of RM1.5 billion, up from RM1.3 billion in December, bringing foreign holdings down to 14.7% from 27.2% in the prior month.

Further, Kenanga IB noted that foreign selling in equities continued for the fourth consecutive month in January, with net outflows reaching RM3.1 billion, up from RM2.9 billion in December.

The investment bank said investor sentiment toward risk assets weakened as rising 10-year US Treasury yields and a stronger US dollar – driven by Trump's tariff threats and escalating geopolitical tensions – prompted foreign investors to reduce their exposure to Malaysian stocks.

"The construction and utilities sectors experienced the heaviest selling, reflecting broader caution amid uncertainty surrounding US economic policies," it said.

Net foreign outflows from Malaysia's capital market eased to RM2 billion in January from RM4.3 billion in December, supported by bond inflows.

However, outflows are set to accelerate as trade tensions mount.

"By early February, RM2.1 billion had already exited Malaysia's debt market, with daily outflows driven by Trump's expanded trade war with Mexico, Canada, and China. While a 30-day tariff delay on Canada and Mexico raises uncertainty, escalating tensions with China remain a key concern."

"If Trump proceeds with reciprocal tariffs, capital flight from emerging markets, including Malaysia, could intensify, further disrupting global trade," Kenanga IB said.

However, it said that despite these risks, Malaysia remains relatively resilient.

"A stable sovereign rating, unchanged OPR, and strong trade and FDI outlook provide key support. Fiscal consolidation efforts reinforce investor confidence, while the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone emerges as a long-term investment driver," Kenanga IB said.



From left: Mercury Securities Sdn Bhd head of corporate finance Eric Chong, Colform Group independent non-executive directors Tan Yun Su and Noor Ilienna Rahayu Ibrahim, non-independent executive director Kang Phui Ting, Kang Ket Hung, non-independent non-executive director Kang Ah Hin, non-independent executive director Kang Phui Yie, independent non-executive chairman Datuk Ali Ahmad Hamid, independent non-executive director Tan Kung Ming and Mercury Securities managing director Chew Sing Guan at the listing ceremony.

## 'Local industrial sector to maintain momentum in near term'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's industrial sector is poised to maintain positive momentum in the near term, underpinned by resilient domestic demand and a gradual easing of supply chain constraints, said Public Investment Bank Bhd (PIBB).

In a note yesterday, PIBB opined that downside risks to external demand remain pronounced, particularly in the second half of 2025 (2H 2025), as subdued global growth and persistent geopolitical uncertainties could dampen export-oriented industries.

"That said, sustained private consumption, targeted fiscal support for investment, and a measured recovery in key trading partners could provide some offsetting support to mitigate external pressures," it said.

Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd (Kenanga IB) said the manufacturing index is expected to

expand by 4.7% in 2025 compared with 4.4% in 2024.

"Growth momentum of manufacturing to continue in 1H 2025, supported by a low base effect from the early part of 2024, the ongoing tech upcycle, and strong domestic demand, backed by a steady labour market and record-high government spending under Budget 2025."

"We also believe Malaysia could benefit from a renewed trade war as Trump's policy shift may drive trade and investment diversion," it said.

Kenanga IB maintained Malaysia's Q4 2024 gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast at 4.6%, reflecting a second consecutive quarter of moderation weighed mainly by slower manufacturing expansion.

"That said, 2024 GDP growth is likely to settle at 5% and is projected to moderate to 4.8% in 2025," it said.

CIMB Securities Sdn Bhd forecast 5% GDP growth for 2025.

"Given the softness of the 4Q 2024 industrial data, we expect GDP growth to come in at 5.1% for 2024, slightly missing our earlier estimate of 5.2%."

"For 2025, a sustained external demand recovery fuelled by the global tech upcycle, alongside strong investments and resilient consumer spending, is anticipated to sustain GDP growth at 5%, consistent with the government's target of 4.5% to 5.5%."

"Nevertheless, downside risks remain elevated owing to uncertainties about a potential global trade war escalation, which may heighten global inflationary pressures, prompting central banks to adopt a more cautious approach to rate cuts, potentially dampening growth prospects," it added. – Bernama



# Petronas says 'rightsizing' not due to gas distribution deal with Sarawak

**PETALING JAYA:** National oil company Petroliaam Nasional Bhd's (Petronas) move to reduce its workforce to the "right size" is not due to its latest agreement with the Sarawak government on gas distribution.

President and CEO Tan Sri Tengku Muhammad Taufik Tengku Aziz said negotiations between Petronas and Sarawak's state-owned oil and gas company Petros since last year have raised concerns about their impact on Petronas, a key contributor to federal funds, and its operations in Sarawak, which holds more than 60% of Malaysia's gas reserves.

Muhammad Taufik stated that future oil and gas development projects would face thinner margins and greater technical challenges.

He said changes in the composition of production sharing contracts were expected, leading to a reduction in Petronas' revenue share. He added that the company's lucrative margins, which currently exceed 20%, were projected to decline to the lower

double digits in the coming years.

Looking ahead, Petronas must go beyond being just an oil and gas supplier by offering more products such as blue ammonia, a clean fuel derived from hydrocarbons, he said during a town hall session last Friday.

Petronas has nearly 50,000 employees, according to its website.

The company confirmed media reports in an email response to Reuters, stating that the number of affected employees was not mentioned during the briefing.

Malaysia's national energy company, Petronas, will reduce its workforce to ensure its long-term sustainability amid increasing challenges in the global operating environment, Muhammad Taufik said.

"The rationale for this move is to secure Petronas' survival in the coming decades.

"If we do not act now, there will be no Petronas in 10 years," he said, without specifying how many jobs would be affected.



Negotiations between Petronas and Petros have raised concerns about Petronas' impact on federal funds and its operations in Sarawak, which holds over 60% of Malaysia's gas reserves. — BERNAMAPIX

## SME Bank financing hits RM3.6b in FY24

➤ Approved lending increases 35% from previous year, directed mostly at unserved and underserved MSMEs

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Small Medium Enterprise Development Bank Malaysia Bhd (SME Bank) has successfully facilitated about RM3.6 billion in approved financing for FY24, a 35.1% increase from 2023.

This funding has been directed towards micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME) classified as unserved and underserved, spanning key strategic sectors such as bumiputera enterprises, technology and digital adoption, climate-related industries, halal businesses, and tourism.

This initiative aligns with Bank Negara Malaysia's Performance Measure Framework (PMF), which emphasises the role of Development Financial Institutions (DFIs) in driving greater developmental impact.

SME Bank acting group president and CEO Datuk Dr Mohammad Hardee Ibrahim said aligning with the Madani government's aspirations, the bank continues to drive high-impact growth initiatives.

"As a DFI wholly owned by the Finance Ministry and supervised by the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development (MECD), we believe in providing financing and beyond financing support to MSMEs at every stage of their growth journey - from Asnaf entrepreneurs taking their first steps to thriving exporters expanding into global markets.

"We are proud to be the sole DFI providing financial support with structured capability-building programs that ensure long-term business resilience.

"This milestone reflects our commitment to mobilising the RM1.7 billion allocation from National Budget 2024 targeting MSMEs," he said.

The bank's initiatives comprised various high-impact strategic initiatives aimed at providing financing and beyond financing support for the MSME community.

The Program Pembangunan Keusahawan Halal has benefited over 130 participants since its inception in 2023, while the Program Pembangunan Vendor has onboarded 106 vendors with over RM13.6 million in approved amounts since its inception in 2022.

As of 2023, the Program Pembangunan Vendor has seen an increase in revenue by 17.5% to RM204 million.

Meanwhile, as of December 2024, the Business Exports Programme, a structured intervention programme curated by MECD, has onboarded 83 companies, facilitating over RM192 million in total export sales across key global markets such as Southeast Asia, the UAE, the UK, and the US.

In support of growing SMEs to expand their footprint internationally, the bank's

signature business matching programme SME Bank XCESS has facilitated international industry players to handpick Malaysian SMEs to venture into the export markets.

In addition, the SME Bank iTekad Ishraf by BNM proactively supports the government's aspirations in empowering the B40 community, specifically the Asnaf entrepreneurs.

The SME Bank iTekad Ishraf, which received approximately RM5 million crowd-in funds from strategic partners recorded an increase in the number of participants from 20 participants for Ishraf 1.0 within one state and 79 participants for Ishraf 2.0 across six states to 400 participants nationwide.

In 2025, the government continues to entrust SME Bank to empower the growth of MSMEs with existing programmes as mandated in the National Budget 2025.

The bank will extend its financing and beyond financing support with emphasis on financial inclusion to MSMEs across key strategic sectors such as the bumiputera, technology, environmental, social & governance, halal and tourism segments.

These strategic priorities are intended to support the country's economic growth, amplifying the positive momentum achieved by the bank in 2024 and beyond.

## Value of construction work done rises to RM158.8b in 2024

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The value of construction work done in Malaysia in 2024 grew by 20.2% to RM158.8 billion, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia.

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the quarterly value continued to rise in the fourth quarter (Q4) of 2024, surging 23.1% year-on-year (y-o-y) after recording a 22.9% growth in Q3'24, amounted to RM42 billion in construction work done value.

"The vibrant performance was primarily driven by the buoyant (y-o-y) performance of the special trade activities and residential buildings sub-sectors, which recorded substantial double-digit increases of 44.9% and 38.9%, respectively," he said in a statement yesterday.

The non-residential building sub-sector also contributed to the growth, recording a 24.6% y-o-y increase.

Meanwhile, the civil engineering sub-sector continued to grow, albeit at a slower rate of 9.3%.

Mohd Uzir stated that of the RM42 billion worth of work done in Q4'24, RM15.6 billion or 37.2% involved the civil engineering sub-sector, primarily in the construction of roads and railways (RM6.9 billion) and

utility projects (RM6.8 billion).

The value of work done for non-residential buildings was RM11.8 billion (28%) and for residential buildings RM9.9 billion (23.5%).

"The special trade activities contributed RM4.7 billion (11.3%), largely in sites preparation (RM1.2 billion); electrical installation (RM1.1 billion); and plumbing, heat and air-conditioning installation (RM1 billion) activities," he said.

The private sector remained the primary driver of growth in Q4, contributing RM27 billion or 64.2% of the total value of work done.

According to Mohd Uzir, the private sector recorded a notable expansion of 32.9% y-o-y in the quarter from 33.3% in Q3'24, supported by the strong performance of the special trade activities and residential buildings sub-sectors.

"In contrast, the public sector, which accounted for a 35.8% share valued at RM15.1 billion, recorded a more moderate growth of 8.8% in Q4 from 8.1% in Q3'24, fueled by the residential buildings (46.8%) and special trade activities (22.4%) sub-sectors totalling RM600 million and RM1.4 billion, respectively," he said. — Bernama



Strong performance mainly fueled by robust y-o-y growth in special trade activities and residential buildings sub-sectors, which experienced double-digit gains. — UNSPLASH PIX

## 11 tech bosses back launch of 'public interest' AI partnership

**PARIS:** A group of 11 tech industry chiefs on Sunday threw their backing behind a partnership promising tools, data and infrastructure for "public interest" artificial intelligence (AI), the Current AI organisation announced.

Figures including Mistral AI chief Arthur Mensch and LinkedIn boss Reid Hoffman said they would support Current AI's mission, said the statement.

The organisation said US\$400 million in funding would come from governments including France, Germany, Finland, Chile and Nigeria as well as companies and philanthropic organisations.

Its announcement came the day before a two-day global summit on AI opens in Paris, bringing together government and tech industry chiefs to discuss the technology's promise and challenges.

Current AI aims to raise as much as US\$2.5 billion for its mission to grant AI developers access to more data, offer open-source tools and infrastructure for programmers to build on, and "develop systems to measure AI's social and environmental impact".

"We've seen the harms of unchecked tech development and the transformative potential it holds when aligned with the public interest," Current AI founder Martin Tisne said in the statement.

"By supporting innovation that benefits all, we can ensure AI serves the public good."

French President Emmanuel Macron was quoted as saying that the effort would "contribute to developing our own AI ecosystems in France and Europe, to diversifying the market, and to fostering innovation throughout the world".

Current AI's work would focus on areas including healthcare, linguistic diversity and science, the organisation said. — AFP

## Google halts workplace diversity push

**SAN FRANCISCO:** Google parent company Alphabet has stopped making diversity and inclusion a workplace priority, according to a filing with US regulators.

The internet giant's annual 10-K report, filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), no longer contained a commitment to workplace inclusion and diversity that had been there the prior year.

"At Alphabet, we are committed to making diversity, equity, and inclusion part of everything we do and to growing a workforce that is representative of the users we serve," the removed line read.

Internally, Alphabet workers were given word that the company no longer had hiring goals based on race or gender.

"We're committed to creating a workplace where all our employees can succeed and have equal opportunities, and over the last year we've been reviewing our programs designed to help us get there," a Google spokesperson said in response to an AFP inquiry.

"As a federal contractor, our teams are also evaluating changes required following recent court decisions and executive orders on this topic."

US President Donald Trump has repeatedly attacked diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, issuing an executive order last month calling such programmes illegal. — AFP

# Trump to impose 25% tariffs on steel, aluminium imports

## French foreign minister says EU will counter in kind

**WASHINGTON:** The United States will move to impose 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium imports this week, President Donald Trump said, the latest in a slew of trade levies he has announced.

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday that the tariffs will apply to "any steel coming into the United States", adding this will also affect aluminium.

Trump imposed similar tariffs during his 2017-2021 presidency to

protect American industries, which he believed faced unfair competition from Asian and European countries.

Canada — which Trump has already threatened with tariffs — is the largest source of steel and aluminium imports to the United States, according to US trade data.

Brazil, Mexico and South Korea are also major steel providers to the country.

On Sunday, the Republican also said he would announce "reciprocal tariffs" to match his government's levies to the rates charged by other countries on US products.

"Every country will be reciprocal," Trump said, adding that he would make a detailed announcement on the tariffs today or tomorrow.

In response, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noel Barrot said yesterday the European Union will counter in kind and "replicate" any tariffs imposed on it.

"There is no hesitation when it comes to defending our interests," he added during an interview with broadcaster TF1.

Trump has already shown his fondness for weaponising the United States' financial power, ordering tariffs on key trade partners China, Mexico and Canada soon after he took office.

He paused 25% levies against Canada and Mexico for a month after both countries vowed to step up measures to counter flows of the drug fentanyl and the crossing of undocumented migrants into the US.

The tariffs against China went ahead, however, with products entering the US facing additional levies of 10% since Tuesday.

Beijing responded with targeted tariffs on certain US products such as coal and liquefied natural gas, which will come into play yesterday.

The new Chinese tariffs cover US\$14 billion (RM62 billion) worth of US goods, while the tariffs announced by Trump cover US\$525 billion worth of Chinese goods, according to Goldman Sachs.

Trump has also pledged tariffs on the European Union and said that he would soon announce unspecified "reciprocal tariffs".

French President Emmanuel Macron vowed in an interview aired on Sunday to go head-to-head with Trump over his financial threats to Europe, though he said that the US should focus its efforts on China rather than the European Union.

Macron also warned on CNN that Americans would feel the effects of any tariffs on Europe, saying they "will increase the costs and create inflation in the US".

And in an otherwise friendly meeting on Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Trump warned Tokyo could still face tariffs on exported goods if it fails to cut the US trade deficit with Japan to zero.

The trade deficit of the US — the world's largest economy — widened last year to nearly US\$920 billion.

Trump, who has promised a "new golden age" for the United States, has insisted that the impact of any tariffs would be borne by foreign exporters without being passed on to US consumers, despite most experts saying the contrary.

But he did acknowledge after announcing tariffs on Mexico, Canada and China earlier this month that Americans might feel economic "pain".

Trump has wielded tariffs as a threat to achieve his wider policy goals, most recently when he said he would slap them on Colombia when it turned back US military planes carrying deported migrants.

The Colombian government later backed down. — AFP



Rolled steel are seen at a Hyundai plant in the South Korean city of Dangjin. — REUTERS/SPIC

## 'Modi planning tariff concessions ahead of US visit'

**NEW DELHI:** Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is preparing additional tariff cuts ahead of a meeting this week with US President Donald Trump that could boost American exports to India and avoid a potential trade war, government officials said.

Modi's two-day US visit from tomorrow comes as Trump plans to announce reciprocal tariffs on many countries, including tariffs of 25% on all steel and aluminium imports.

Trump has previously called India a "very big abuser" on trade and urged it to buy more US-made security equipment to move

towards a fair two-way trading relationship.

India is considering tariff cuts in at least a dozen sectors, from electronics to medical and surgical equipment, and chemicals, to boost US exports in line with New Delhi's domestic production plans, three government officials said.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorised to speak to the media.

In a statement yesterday, Modi said: "This visit will be an opportunity to build upon the successes of our collaboration in his (Trump's) first term."

He added that technology, trade, defence, energy, and supply chain resilience were areas in which the partnership could be elevated and deepened.

The officials said concessions were being considered on items that India primarily sources from the United States or has more potential appetite to buy, such as dish antennas and wood pulp.

Two-way trade exceeded US\$118 billion (RM528 billion) in fiscal 2023-2024, with India posting a surplus of US\$32 billion.

Modi is expected to discuss tariffs with Trump and India is open to

discussing a possible mini trade deal, two government officials said.

His early visit aims to avoid a "trade war-like situation that is happening between the United States and China", said a third official, who also sought anonymity.

But the meeting has been overshadowed by the recent deportation of Indians from the US.

Nearly a fifth of India's exports of engineering goods — comprising steel and aluminium and worth about US\$25 billion — are at risk if Trump adopts the proposed 25% tariff, an official of an industry body said. — Reuters



# Vietnam seeks to cut one in five govt jobs

➤ **Bloated bureaucracy seen as brake on growth**

**HANOI:** Vietnam is aiming to cut one in five public sector jobs and slash billions of dollars from government budgets, mirroring US President Donald Trump's push to take a hatchet to spending.

The drive – due to go before the rubber-stamp Parliament in the coming days – is creating unease in a communist country where working for the state long meant a job for life.

Vietnam's top leader To Lam, who half a year ago became Communist Party general secretary following the death of his predecessor, has said that state agencies should not be "safe havens for weak officials".

"If we want to have a healthy body, sometimes we must take bitter medicine and endure pain to remove tumours," Lam said in December.

The reforms, described as "a revolution" by senior officials, will see the number of government ministries and agencies slashed from 30 to 22.

The media, the civil service, the police and the military will all face cuts.

Almost two million people worked in the public sector as of 2022, and one in five of

these jobs will go over the next five years, according to the government.

Of those cuts, 100,000 people will be made redundant or offered early retirement, but it has yet to offer clarity on how the much larger target will be reached.

Some have already been given notice, like Thanh, a pseudonym to protect his identity, who told AFP his 12-year career as a TV producer was "aggressively" terminated last month.

The state-controlled news channel where he worked was shuttered, one of five broadcasters already closed, and the father-of-two was given two weeks' notice.

"It is painful to talk about," said the 42-year-old, who has turned to driving a taxi.

Building on stellar economic growth of 7.1% in 2024, Vietnam – a global manufacturing hub heavily reliant on exports – is aiming for 8% this year.

But anxiety is mounting over the country's potential vulnerability to tariffs under the new Trump administration.

A bloated bureaucracy is also seen as a brake on growth, as is a high-profile anti-corruption campaign that has slowed everyday transactions.

Vietnam is aiming to become a middle-income country by 2030 and leap into the high-income ranks by 2045.

"They really want to achieve the goal," said Nguyen Hong Hai, Fulbright Vietnamese

Scholar at American University in Washington.

"It's about (demonstrating) the legitimacy of the party, the power of the party."

Authorities say savings from the cuts in spending could total 113 trillion dong (RM20 billion) over the next five years, despite the costs of retirement and severance packages.

But Vu Quynh Huong, a civil servant, said she was concerned that the most capable staff – who will have options to work elsewhere – could be the ones who leave.

"I am considering taking early retirement. I can work as a freelance consultant or for my family business," the 51-year-old told AFP.

Streamlining the bureaucracy has been a Communist Party policy for nearly a decade but To Lam is pushing the scheme with intensity and rapidity.

He has also enthusiastically pursued an anti-graft campaign that has swept up dozens of business leaders and senior government figures, including two presidents and three deputy prime ministers since 2021.

Critics accuse him of targeting his rivals, but the drive has proved popular with the public, and analysts say he may be looking to bolster his legitimacy ahead of the next Communist Party congress in early 2026.

But the turmoil threatened the country's reputation for stability and there are fears the bureaucratic reforms could also cause short-term chaos. – AFP

## DBS shares surge on higher margins, capital return plans

**SINGAPORE:** Shares of DBS soared to a record high yesterday after Singapore's largest bank flagged an improvement in net interest income for 2025 and a dividend capital return plan, in line with a jump in fourth-quarter profit that met expectations.

Southeast Asia's largest bank by assets now expects 2025 group net interest income to slightly exceed last year's S\$15.04 billion (RM50 billion), an upgrade from its previous forecast of remaining at 2024 levels.

"Our previous guidance was actually for four U.S. rate cuts in 2025, we are now assuming two rate cuts, and probably likely in the second half as opposed to the first half," DBS deputy CEO Tan Su Shan said in a briefing yesterday.

Tan, who will take over as CEO in March from Piyush Gupta, said DBS is mindful of current geopolitical risks.

"We continue to stress test our portfolio very, very regularly whatever new news comes out from the (Donald) Trump administration, we try to stay on top of it," she said.

Tan added that DBS expects more volatility in markets, rates and foreign exchanges.

Nevertheless, both Gupta and Tan said more intra regional trade such as in Asia in response to Trump's trade tariffs could present opportunities for DBS.

"It depends exactly on how they levy tariffs, but it could actually have some interesting possibilities," Gupta said.

DBS's net interest margin, a key profitability gauge, rose to 2.15% during the quarter from 2.13% a year earlier.

DBS, the first Singapore lender to report this earnings season, said October-December net profit climbed to S\$2.62 billion from S\$2.39 billion a year earlier, driven by growth in its commercial book and markets trading.

This matches the mean estimate of nearly S\$2.63 billion from five analysts, according to LSEG data.

DBS stock hit a record high of S\$46.5 earlier in the day, driving the Straits Times Index to its highest level ever.

DBS declared a final dividend of S\$0.60 per share, versus S\$0.54 declared a year ago.

It said it planned to introduce a capital return dividend of S\$0.15 per share per quarter to be paid out over 2025, and expected to pay out a similar amount of capital either via this plan or other mechanisms in subsequent two years. – Reuters

## Shiseido says annual profit plunges 73%

**TOKYO:** Japanese cosmetics giant Shiseido said yesterday its full-year profit fell 73% amid sluggish sales in China.

Shiseido said operating profit was ¥7.58 billion (RM223 million) in the 12 months to the end of December, compared with ¥28.13 billion the prior year.

A retailer of high-end personal goods, Shiseido is seen as a barometer for consumer confidence in China, a market the company and its peers have come to rely on for sales growth.

"China's cosmetics market suffered a prolonged downturn, weighed down by a decline in consumer spending and rising household savings amid worsening economic sentiment," the Japanese company said in a statement.

Shiseido's China sales were down 4.6% year-on-year on a like-for-like basis, excluding the impacts of foreign exchange and business transfers, the company said.

It forecast a further sales decline in 2025.

Poor results in China also dragged down interim earnings reported last week by cosmetics competitors L'Oréal and Estée Lauder. – Reuters



People riding motorbikes outside the Ministry of Transport in Hanoi. – AFP/PC

## Thai minister supports more US imports to reduce trade surplus

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's government supports increased US imports of necessary goods as a way to reduce the country's trade surplus with the United States, the finance minister said yesterday.

Authorities will also talk with US business people in Thailand to find ways to ease any impacts of President Donald Trump's trade policies, Pichai Chunhavajira told reporters.

"This will help create understanding with the United States that most Thai exports to the country are investments by American

companies based in Thailand," he said.

Thailand had a trade surplus last year of US\$35.4 billion (RM158 billion) with the US, according to the Thai Commerce Ministry.

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

The Commerce Ministry has cited uncertainty over US trade policies as a challenge to increasing Thai exports.

Trump has ordered US federal agencies to complete comprehensive reviews of a range of

trade issues by April 1, including analyses of persistent US trade deficits.

Last week, a Thai government official said US ethane imports would be increased by at least one million tonnes, starting from the second quarter, to try to reduce the trade surplus.

Pichai also said the government wanted to drive economic growth to above 3% this year by accelerating investment, and said he supported the use of digital assets as funding sources to boost the economy. – Reuters



# Nissan said to be looking for new partners

➤ Automaker willing to work with tech firms, including Taiwan's Foxconn, say sources

**TOKYO:** Nissan is open to working with new partners after merger talks with Honda foundered, two people familiar with its thinking said, with Taiwan's Foxconn seen as one candidate.

The struggling Japanese automaker is again at a crossroads after backing out of negotiations with bigger rival Honda to create the world's No. 3 automaker, a deal that would have been the latest major change in the shifting global car industry.

Nissan CEO Makoto Uchida met with Honda counterpart Toshihiro Mibe last week to say he wanted to end the discussions after Honda proposed making Nissan a subsidiary, according to a third person, who had knowledge of the matter.

All three people declined to be identified because of the sensitivity of the topic.

Nissan is now open to working with new partners, including technology companies, as it looks to navigate the technological upheaval

brought by electric vehicles, software-driven cars and new, fast-moving Chinese manufacturers, the two people familiar with the management's thinking said.

It was also open to working with Taiwan's Foxconn, the world's largest contract electronics maker, one of them said.

Foxconn, which manufactures Apple's iPhones and has been seeking to expand its nascent EV contract manufacturing business, approached Nissan about a bid but was rejected by the carmaker, Reuters reported in December.

Foxconn's EV business is led by a former Nissan senior executive, Jun Seki, who was once seen as a contender to become the automaker's CEO, before the job went to current boss Uchida.

Nissan and Honda spokespeople declined to comment on the status of their talks, repeating earlier statements that they aimed to finalise a future direction by mid-February.

Foxconn did not immediately respond to a

request for comment.

Honda and Nissan in December signed a memorandum of understanding to discuss an integration under a holding company.

But the talks have been complicated by growing differences, multiple people familiar with the matter have told Reuters, and hit a wall after Honda said it wanted to turn Nissan into a subsidiary.

A consensus was reached on Nissan's side that the talks could not proceed under that proposal, said the person with knowledge of the matter.

Nissan will formalise the decision to withdraw from the MOU at a board meeting to be held before the company's third-quarter earnings announcement next week, the person added.

Honda's current stance is that it would not accept an integration unless Nissan agrees to become a subsidiary, Japanese public broadcaster NHK reported.

Honda is Japan's second-largest carmaker behind Toyota, and Nissan is the third-largest.

A scrapping of the discussions raises questions about how Nissan, which is in the middle of a turnaround plan, can ride out its latest crisis without external help. — Reuters



Uchida (left), and Mibe posing at the end of a press conference in Tokyo last year. — AFP/PICT

## UAE leans on trade deals for growth

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates' non-oil trade in goods touched a record three trillion dirhams (RM3.6 trillion) in 2024, up 14.6% from the previous year, as the Gulf oil exporter leans on its trade strategy to spur future growth.

Thani Al Zeyoudi, the UAE's trade minister, announced the figures in a post on X.

Earlier, UAE Prime Minister Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum wrote on X that the country had already reached 75% of its four trillion dirham target for non-oil trade set for 2031.

The UAE is widely considered to be the region's tourism and business hub, and it has

invested heavily in trade and logistics infrastructure and devised policy to help accelerate efforts to diversify its economy.

Since 2021 it has initiated a raft of bilateral trade, investment and cooperation deals called Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreements (CEPAs), and has so far negotiated deals with countries ranging from India and Indonesia to politically opposed nations such as Israel and Türkiye, as well as smaller states.

The share of exports in UAE's total non-oil trade rose to 18.7% last year, from 11% in 2015, Thani said.

The value of exports to partner CEPA

countries jumped 42.3% year on year in 2024, and accounted for about a quarter of overall non-oil exports, which reached 561.2 billion dirhams last year.

"Through our CEPA programme, we are securing partnerships with those nations who share our belief that open, rules-based trade is an essential driver of economic growth, development and diversification," Thani said in e-mailed comments to Reuters.

"The UAE will always take a long-term view," he said, adding the country's economic strategy is not informed by day-to-day headlines. — Reuters

## China to further shrink renewables subsidies

**SHANGHAI:** China's top economic planner said it would reduce some renewable energy subsidies in reforms intended to open the booming sector to market forces.

China has sought to scale back government support for renewable energy companies in recent years as the sector reaches critical mass.

It installed a record amount of renewable energy last year and has already surpassed a target to have at least 1,200 gigawatts of solar and wind capacity installed by 2030.

New clean energy projects completed after June 1 must sell electricity at rates determined by the market rather than at preferential rates previously used to support China's energy transition, the National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) said in a statement.

The NDRC urged energy producers to "push forward clean energy's participation in market transactions".

The commission also said it "encourages electricity providers and electricity buyers to sign multi-year purchase agreements and pre-emptively manage market risks".

Beijing invested more than US\$50 billion (RM224 billion) in new solar supply capacity from 2011 to 2022, according to the International Energy Agency.

It has built almost twice as much wind and solar capacity as every other country combined, according to research published last year.

However, China's grid is struggling to keep up.

Renewable supply is increasingly being blocked to prevent the grid from becoming overwhelmed, a process known as curtailment. — AFP

## Yum posts quarterly sales beat as value meals whet demand

**NEW YORK:** Yum Brands surpassed Wall Street estimates for fourth-quarter comparable sales, as value offerings from Taco Bell attracted budget-conscious US consumers to the popular Tex-Mex chain.

Fast-food chains from McDonald's to Burger King are leaning on their value meals to revive demand, after high prices of essentials and steep borrowing costs forced customers to dine out less.

Taco Bell's Luxe Carvings Box value meal, starting at US\$5, was a big hit and helped drive up same-store sales at US outlets by 5% in the quarter.

Yum has also invested in growing international stores for its KFC chain, where worldwide same-store sales grew 1% despite some impact through 2024 from boycotts related to the Middle East conflict.

The company's core operating profit, more than 80% of which comes from Taco Bell US and KFC International, jumped 8% in 2024, excluding the impact of an extra week in the year.

Yum expects the metric to grow at least 8% this year, in line with its long-term target.

Its worldwide same-store sales rose 1% in the quarter ended Dec 31, compared with analysts' estimates for a 0.42% rise, according to data compiled by LSEG.

Same store sales at its Pizza Hut division fell 1% in the fourth quarter, a sequential improvement from a 4% drop in the third quarter. — Reuters



# MARKET ROUND-UP: FEBRUARY 10

## Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

10 Feb 2025

### Participation

Retail (22.00%)

Net (in RM mil.)

+36.27

Bought (in RM mil.)

425.32

Sold (in RM mil.)

389.05

Institution (41.67%)

Net (in RM mil.)

-60.87

Bought (in RM mil.)

740.43

Sold (in RM mil.)

801.30

Foreign (36.33%)

Net (in RM mil.)

+24.60

Bought (in RM mil.)

684.37

Sold (in RM mil.)

659.77

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

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

**DISCLAIMER:** The data and reports are provided as a service to investors. Sun Media Corporation Sdn Bhd shall not be liable or responsible for any consequences resulting from usage of the information.

## Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,124.00 -25.50
FBMKLCI	1,589.95 -0.96
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	526.82 -1.49
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	166.11 -0.40
CONSTRUCTION	284.20 -2.95
FINANCIAL SERVICES	19,259.10 +25.67
ENERGY	825.37 -1.07
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	529.01 -0.39
HEALTH CARE	2,229.42 -6.20
TRANSPORTATION	1,068.85 -1.29
PROPERTY	1,074.24 -2.82
PLANTATION	7,400.74 -53.10
FBMSHA	11,934.00 -51.50
FBMACE	5,230.79 -29.50
TECHNOLOGY	59.54 -1.13
<b>TURNOVER: 2.988 bil</b>	<b>VALUE: RM1.848 bil</b>

## Main index down less than a point but Bursa broadly lower

**GAINS** in Axiata, Tenaga Nasional, and Maybank helped Bursa Malaysia's main index pare earlier losses, ending marginally lower yesterday amid ongoing concerns about US inflation and President Donald Trump's reciprocal tariff threat.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI fell 0.96 of-a-point to 1,589.95 compared with last Friday's close of 1,590.91.

The benchmark index opened 3.26 points lower at 1,587.65 and moved between 1,584.20 and 1,590.49 during the session.

The broader market remained negative, with losers outpacing gainers 589 to 366, while 503 counters were unchanged, 872 untraded and 22 suspended.

Turnover improved to 3.0 billion units worth RM1.85 billion from 2.93 billion units valued at RM2.22 billion on Friday.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said investors have shifted their attention to smaller-cap stocks, particularly in the healthcare and telecommunication stocks, with profit-taking in technology stocks.

He noted that short-term sentiment remained cautious and set to be heavily influenced by external factors, including the prolonged US-China trade war.

Axiata led the gainers among the heavyweights, gaining seven sen to RM2.28, followed by Tenaga Nasional, which rose 10 sen to RM13.84, while Maybank and Sime Darby added four sen each to RM10.46 and RM2.25 respectively.

In contrast, SD Guthrie dropped 11 sen to RM4.80, MISC lost 15 sen to RM7.23, and Gamuda was eight sen weaker at RM4.48.

Among the active counters, Borneo Oil and TWL were flat at one sen and 2.5 sen, respectively, while newly-listed Colform Group perked up 3.0 sen to 39 sen, Capital A lost 6.5 sen to 84.5 sen, and Asia Poly added 2.0 sen to 14.5 sen. - Bernama

## Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
BORNOIL	0.010	-	-	2,555,757
HSI-PWB9	0.140	-0.050	-26.32	1,505,753
COLFORM	0.390	+0.030	+8.33	1,460,918
HSI-CWCC	0.190	+0.025	+15.15	1,328,273
HM	0.160	-0.010	-5.88	1,086,136
HSI-PWDK	0.100	-0.040	-28.57	1,027,370
TWL	0.025	-	-	813,344
ASIAPLY	0.145	+0.020	+16.00	580,953
CAPITALA	0.845	-0.065	-7.14	562,957
HSI-CWA1	0.200	+0.020	+11.11	446,082
HSI-PWDC	0.085	-0.025	-22.73	443,322
WIDAD	0.040	-0.005	-11.11	437,023
MYEG	1.010	-0.010	-0.98	403,307
CFM	0.120	-0.010	-7.69	371,873
YTL-CIF	0.040	-	-	345,027
GAMUDA-C2R	0.135	-0.010	-6.90	320,057
VELESTO	0.185	-0.005	-2.63	288,083
KAB	0.320	+0.010	+3.23	273,087
HSI-PWBW	0.010	-0.020	-66.67	257,439
YTL	2.020	-	-	252,280



## Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
ALLIANZ	19.280	+0.300	87
NESTLE	90.800	+0.300	264
XIAOMI-C33	0.750	+0.240	40
HSI-CWAD	0.505	+0.170	6
CHINAETF-MYR	5.000	+0.130	658
HSI-CLWJ	0.950	+0.120	25,471
ALIBABA-C41	0.305	+0.115	41,098
HKEX-CQ	0.510	+0.115	2,025
AMBANK	5.800	+0.100	38,711
AYER	7.100	+0.100	123
MATRIX	2.290	+0.100	24,062
SAB	3.080	+0.100	199
TENAGA	13.840	+0.100	45,245
GOLDET	4.020	+0.100	197
HSI-CWAW	0.455	+0.090	203,832
KKB	1.480	+0.090	10
KFIMA	2.440	+0.090	3,586
HSI-CWA7	0.675	+0.085	26,563
HSI-CWCB	0.420	+0.085	10,082
HSI-CWCO	0.630	+0.080	3,050

## Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
UNISEM-C39	0.055	+100.00	3,000
HSTECH-H15	0.035	+133.33	220
CFM-WA	0.010	+100.00	5,156
DSONIC-C62	0.010	+100.00	1
ERDASAN-WC	0.010	+100.00	1,500
JAKS-WC	0.010	+100.00	2,051
KGROUP	0.010	+100.00	101,393
PARLO-WA	0.010	+100.00	260
VS-C87	0.010	+100.00	1
YTL-C91	0.010	+100.00	3,570
ALIBABA-C41	0.305	+60.53	41,098
HSI-CWJ	0.505	+50.75	6
HIBISCS-C69	0.015	+50.00	200
MSC-CQ	0.015	+50.00	2,000
SNTORIA	0.015	+50.00	618
SUNCON-C21	0.015	+50.00	500
XIAOMI-C33	0.750	+47.06	40
ALIBABA-C40	0.105	+40.00	2,950
HSTECH-C16	0.055	+37.50	57
ALIBABA-C42	0.140	+33.33	800

## World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	44,303.40	-444.23	-0.99
S&P 500 [US]	6,025.99	-57.58	-0.95
NASDAQ [US]	19,523.40	-268.59	-1.36
NYSE [US]	20,039.48	-118.1	-0.59
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,337.77	12.37	0.23
FTSE 100 [UK]	8,736.40	35.87	0.41
DAX [GER]	21,815.15	28.15	0.13
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	38,801.17	14.15	0.04
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	2,733.01	-4.22	-0.15
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	21,521.98	388.44	1.84
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,901.06	8.36	0.21
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	185.71	0.46	0.25
SHANGHAI SEI COM [CHN]	3,322.17	18.5	0.56
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,521.27	-0.65	-0.03
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	77,288.94	-571.25	-0.73
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,482.78	-28.65	-0.34
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,747.61	-32.67	-0.37
FBM KLCI	1,589.95	-0.96	-0.06
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	3,878.17	16.75	0.43
WTI [US\$/BBL]	71.51	0.51	0.72
BRENT [US\$/BBL]	75.19	0.53	0.71
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	2,926.70	39.1	1.35
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	32.67	0.23	0.7
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	987.49	9.01	0.92
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	459.5	0.6	0.13
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,407.50	131	1.41
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	485.5	-2	-0.41
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	579.25	-3.5	-0.6
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	46.36	-0.12	-0.26
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	10,113.00	-14	-0.14
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	196.4	-0.2	-0.1

As at 5pm, Feb 10

## Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWB9	0.505	-0.805	18
MPI	22.120	-0.620	609
DLADY	30.720	-0.280	61
GCB	4.000	-0.230	33,587
F&N	26.000	-0.200	464
NIKKEI-CM	0.195	-0.165	770
PETGAS	17.320	-0.160	2,377
HSI-PWBX	0.150	-0.150	11,348
MISC	7.230	-0.150	11,027
KLK	20.220	-0.140	1,490
PPB	11.640	-0.140	1,628
SHH	1.330	-0.130	20
ATLAN	2.580	-0.120	45
GENETEC-CH	0.060	-0.120	47,030
INARI	2.610	-0.110	207,199
SDG	4.800	-0.110	16,074
ECOMATE	0.915	-0.105	-
EG-CE	0.050	-0.100	24,316
PENTA	3.630	-0.100	2,003
SANCY	0.250	-0.100	-

## Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWDQ	0.005	-75.00	17,265
EG-CE	0.050	-66.67	24,316
GENETEC-CH	0.060	-66.67	47,030
HSI-PWB7	0.005	-66.67	20,760
HSI-PWBV	0.005	-66.67	1,050
HSI-PWBW	0.010	-66.67	257,439
LCTITAN-CT	0.055	-63.33	231
HSI-PWB5	0.505	-61.45	18
HSI-PWB3	0.010	-60.00	32,370
ALIBABA-HID	0.015	-50.00	400
CMSB-C51	0.005	-50.00	1,800
HSI-PWBX	0.150	-50.00	11,348
HSI-PWBZ	0.020	-50.00	11,863
MPI-C8	0.005	-50.00	500
NIHSIN-PA	0.010	-50.00	490
YTLPOWA-C80	0.080	-46.67	31,213
NIKKEI-CM	0.195	-45.83	770
EKOVEST-C66	0.015	-40.00	7,600
GCB-C12	0.015	-40.00	370
HSI-PWDI	0.030	-40.00	1,400

# 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**

**DISCLAIMER:** The information is extracted from stockbrokers' commentaries and research reports and do not represent the views or opinions of Sun Media Corporation Sdn Bhd. It is not a solicitation, recommendation or an offer to buy or sell the equities featured. Sun Media Corporation shall not be liable or responsible for any consequences resulting from usage of the information.

## BNM likely to keep OPR at 3% throughout 2025: Kenanga IB

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) is expected to keep the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3% throughout 2025, balancing growth support with inflation control.

Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd (Kenanga IB) said while domestic fundamentals remain solid, global risks — US President Donald Trump's escalating tariff war and ongoing geopolitical tensions — warrant caution.

"A steady policy stance should anchor fiscal reforms and curb inflation risks without derailing growth," the research firm said.

BNM international reserves increased marginally by US\$0.2 billion (RM888 million) or 0.2% month-on-month, reaching US\$116.4 billion as of Jan 31.

Kenanga IB said despite this modest rise, reserve adequacy remains unchanged, with import coverage holding steady at five months and full coverage of total short-term external debt at 1.0 times.

The research firm said the marginal increase in BNM international reserves was driven by a slight uptick in foreign exchange holdings, gold, and other reserve assets.

Foreign currency reserves rose by US\$0.1 billion to US\$103.8 billion, edging higher despite sustained capital outflows, likely supported by a strong trade surplus and robust FDI inflows.

BNM's net FX reserves remained steady at US\$63.9 billion in December, though short positions widened to US\$29.3 billion from US\$27.7 billion in November.

Other reserve assets and gold recorded modest gains of US\$0.1 billion and US\$0.05 billion, while special drawing rights and the IMF reserve position remained largely unchanged.

Kenanga IB said the US-ringgit year-end forecast is 4.45, slightly down from 4.47 in 2024.

## Ringgit slips on concerns over US tariffs on steel, aluminium

**THE** ringgit closed lower against the US dollar for the third consecutive day yesterday amid concerns over the impact of the US import tariffs on steel and aluminium.

At 6pm, the ringgit slid to 4.4680/4730 against the greenback from last Friday's close of 4.4375/4420.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid noted that US President Donald Trump's administration will impose 25% tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from all countries.

"The move will certainly result in greater uncertainties in the currency market, with the US dollar continuing to be in high demand," he told Bernama.

Additionally, he said the stable US labour market conditions also lent strong support to the greenback.

Meanwhile, the ringgit was traded lower against other major currencies.

It fell against the Japanese yen to 2.9352/9387 from 2.9217/9249 at the close last Friday, slipped against the euro to 4.6128/6179 from 4.6101/6148 last week, and depreciated against the British pound to 5.5430/5492 from 5.5278/5334 previously.

The local note was almost weaker against Asean currencies.

It was lower against the Singapore dollar to 3.3006/3048 from 3.2866/2901 at the close last Friday, declined against the Indonesian rupiah to 273.1/273.5 from 272.4/272.9 last week and eased against the Philippines' peso to 7.69/7.70 from last Friday's close of 7.65/7.66.

However, the ringgit strengthened against the Thai baht to 13.1768/1986 from 13.1853/2041 previously.

## Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.5215	4.3855	4.3755
1 Australian Dollar	2.8480	2.7320	2.7160
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3330	3.2340	3.2260
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1510	3.0660	3.0540
1 Euro	4.6710	4.5180	4.4980
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5640	2.4700	2.4540
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3330	3.2340	3.2260
1 Sterling Pound	5.6130	5.4320	5.4120
1 Swiss Franc	5.0000	4.7850	4.7700
100 UAE Dirham	124.5500	118.0500	117.8500
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7990	3.5360	3.3360
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.4500	59.7900	N/A
100 Danish Krone	64.1700	59.0400	58.8400
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.6500	55.7100	55.5100
100 Indian Rupee	5.2500	4.9200	4.7200
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0287	0.0260	0.0210
100 Japanese Yen	2.9830	2.8860	2.8760
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	41.2500	37.8800	37.6800
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6500	1.5400	1.3400
100 Philippine Peso	7.8900	7.4400	7.2400
100 Qatar Riyal	125.3700	119.0200	118.8200
100 Saudi Riyal	121.8700	115.6900	115.4900
100 South Africa Rand	25.3000	22.8400	22.6400
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5600	1.4400	1.2400
100 Swedish Krona	42.5500	38.7000	38.5000
100 Thai Baht	13.9400	12.3600	11.9600

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

## Mega First Corporation Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM5.60



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

**MEGA** First Corporation Bhd is a diversified group of companies with three main divisions — Renewable Energy, Resources and Packaging. The Renewable Energy Division builds and operates a 260 MW run-of-river hydropower plant in Laos (Don Sahong Hydropower Project) as well as undertakes solar photovoltaic investment business activities.

With share price having corrected by 7% YTD, we believe investors have yet to appreciate the potential accretion from Don Sahong's revised concession terms. Water levels have remained healthy, we thus expect earnings to be intact.

The revised concession to incorporate the 5th turbine takes effect in Jan 1, and extends the concession tenure by >4 years. Despite a slight initial reduction in tariff (to US\$0.06/kWh), the upfront payment of the royalty (US\$82.5 million for 2,140GWh of annual generation, implied IRR of 13%) both accretes and smoothens Don Sahong's earnings profile over the concession tenure of 25 years in total.

Don Sahong has entered into its dry season (December to May). Despite various headlines on a possible dryer-than-expected weather along the Mekong River, the water level at Don Sahong has so far remained similar to 2024 (Don Sahong's availability was 79% in Q1'24), and comfortably above the historical minimum. With earnings being generation-dependent, we thus expect earnings to remain intact for both Q4'24 and Q1'25.

In the pipeline are non-RE ventures into: 1) modern farming and 2) hospitals. On the RE front, Mega First continues to work towards progressively raising its solar capacity in an accretive manner.

BUY with RM5.60 TP. — **Maybank Investment Bank, Feb 10**

## Kelington Group Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM4.12



Source: Bloomberg

**KGB** is slated to release its Q4'24 earnings on Feb 26. We see a seasonally stronger Q4'24 with FY24 Patami likely up 20-30% YoY to a record high. Management's focus on profitability alongside the shift in product mix (higher margin UHP jobs and the ramp-up in the industrial gas business) should see NP margin improving to 8-9% in FY24 vs 6.5% in FY23. With a healthy orderbook estimated at >RM1 billion at end-Dec 2024 and >RM2 billion in prospect, 2025 is shaping up to be another stellar year. We project FY24 DPS at 6 sen (30% DPR) with 1H DPR at 52%, above its stated DPR of 25%.

2024 orders wins (YTD-Oct 2024: RM1.1 billion) should surpass the RM1.3 billion posted in FY23, in our view, with the additional UHP jobs inked in Q4'24 from Singapore. Notable projects in the island-state include the US\$7.8 billion 12-inch fab by Vanguard (affiliate of Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing (TSMC)) and a high bandwidth memory (HBM) facility by a major US-based memory producer — an existing customer of the group — which broke ground in January.

We believe KGB stands a good chance of securing its maiden UHP job in Europe with tender outcomes likely to be known by mid-year. Projects vied for include a new fab in Dresden, Germany (JV between TSMC and NXP) potentially valued at RM900m (35% of RM2.6 billion tenderbook at Q3'24) and fabs to be constructed by Infineon and Siltronic. Singapore UHP projects made up the second largest portion of KGB's tenderbook after Germany at RM517m (20% of tenderbook) as at Q3'24.

BUY with RM4.12 TP. — **RHB Research, Feb 10**

## Banking

Overweight



Source: BNM, TA Research

**WE** see the establishment of the Forest City Special Financial Zone (SFZ) as a significant step toward becoming a regional financial hub, thanks to its strategic location in Southeast Asia. Its proximity to Singapore, a leading financial hub both regionally and globally, positions the SFZ as a natural complement to Singapore's well-established financial sector. This could drive a spillover in demand for investments and financial services. Additionally, its location within the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) strengthens its potential for economic integration and allows it to capitalise on the JS-SEZ's potential growth.

We note that the SFZ offers several strategic benefits that make it an attractive financial hub. One of its standout features is foreign exchange flexibility, which allows unrestricted offshore borrowing in foreign currencies and investments in foreign currency assets. It also provides strong incentives for sustainability-driven activities and appealing tax packages, creating a supportive environment for diverse financial services, including fintech firms and family offices.

From a banking perspective, all banks under our coverage are well-positioned to capitalise on Johor's economic expansion. According to Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), total loans and advances in Johor grew by 9.7% YoY in 2024 vs overall Malaysia's loan growth of 5.4%. We note that Johor has outpaced the industry average since the second half of 2023, driven by rising economic activity in the state. We see this trend as a signal of strong demand. — **TA Research, Feb 10**





# the Sun **LYFE**

TUESDAY | FEB 11, 2025

**Editorial**  
T: 03-7784 6688  
F: 03-7785 2625  
E: [lifestyle@thesundaily.com](mailto:lifestyle@thesundaily.com)

**Advertising**  
T: 03-7784 8888  
E: [advertise@thesundaily.com](mailto:advertise@thesundaily.com)

## WEEKLY FOCUS

### MONDAY

Technology and  
social media

### TUESDAY

Travel  
and leisure

### WEDNESDAY

Fashion  
and beauty

### THURSDAY

Home  
and living

### FRIDAY

Food  
and beverage

# Thaipusam splendour

*Places to catch festivities - P22*



— AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

**INSIDE**

**P23**

Coldplay premieres music  
video filmed in Singapore

**P24**

Roast duck recipe  
inspires young chef

**P25**

Langsur to hit  
tour trail



BY THASHINE SELVAKUMARAN

**T**HAIPUSAM, one of the most significant festivals for Hindus, will be celebrated today with grandeur across Malaysia. The festival honours Lord Murugan, the Hindu god of war, commemorating the day when goddess Parvati handed him a divine spear to vanquish the demon Soorapadman. It is a time for devotees to express gratitude, seek blessings and fulfil vows through rituals such as carrying *kavadis* (decorative frames) or milk pots and engaging in acts of penance. In Malaysia, Thaipusam is marked with elaborate celebrations, attracting millions of devotees and visitors to temples across the country. Among these, six temples stand out as centres of devotion and cultural heritage.

#### Batu Caves, Selangor

The Batu Caves is synonymous with Thaipusam celebrations in Malaysia. Located just 13km north of KL, this limestone hill is home to the Arulmigu Sri Subramaniam Swamy Temple, one of the most revered Hindu temples in the world. The festival begins with the Silver Chariot Procession, which travels from the Sri Mahamariamman Temple in KL to Batu Caves. Devotees gather to carry *kavadis*, milk pots and perform acts of penance as they ascend 272 steps to reach the cave temple. The towering 42.7-metre golden statue of Lord Murugan, standing at the entrance, is an awe-inspiring sight. The vibrant energy, traditional music and sheer devotion of millions create an unforgettable experience.

#### Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Hilltop Temple, Penang

Known as the Waterfall Hill Temple, this Penang landmark is another major site for Thaipusam celebrations. The temple, located on a hill overlooking George Town, offers breathtaking views and spiritual tranquility. Devotees climb 513 steps to reach the temple, carrying their offerings and fulfilling vows. The highlight of Penang's Thaipusam is the golden chariot procession, which begins at the Sri Mahamariamman Temple in George Town and makes its way to the hill temple.

#### Sri Mahamariamman Temple, KL

As KL's oldest Hindu temple, the Sri Mahamariamman Temple is steeped in history and tradition. Founded in 1873, this temple is not only a spiritual sanctuary but also the starting point of the iconic Thaipusam procession to Batu Caves. The temple's intricate architecture, adorned with colourful sculptures of deities, creates a stunning backdrop for Thaipusam rituals. Devotees gather here to prepare for the Silver Chariot Procession, which carries the statue of Lord Murugan to Batu Caves.

#### Sri Subramaniam Temple, Kedah

Located in Northern Malaysia, the Sri Subramaniam Temple in Sungai Petani offers a more intimate yet equally vibrant setting for Thaipusam celebrations. The temple attracts devotees from Kedah and nearby states, making it a regional hub for the festival. It is known for its colourful *kavadis*, traditional music and heartfelt rituals. The chariot procession, accompanied by prayers and offerings, is the highlight. This temple provides a

# Temples to visit on Thaipusam

▶ Celebrating significant Hindu festival today

Batu Caves, Selangor.  
— PEXELSPIC



Sri Subramaniam Temple, Kedah.



Kallumalai Arulmigu Subramaniyar Temple, Perak.

close-knit community atmosphere, making it a spot for devotees who seek a spiritual and cultural experience without the overwhelming crowds of larger temples.

#### Kallumalai Arulmigu Subramaniyar Temple, Perak

Nestled near Ipoh's famous limestone hills, the Kallumalai Arulmigu Subramaniyar Temple is a serene site for Thaipusam celebrations. The temple is renowned for its unique location, surrounded by lush greenery and dramatic cliffs. The festival rituals at this temple are steeped in tradition, with devotees carrying milk pots and fulfilling vows as acts of devotion. The tranquil setting and the temple's historic significance make it a must-visit destination for those looking to experience the spiritual essence of Thaipusam in a peaceful environment.

#### Sri Marathandavar Aalayam Temple, Pahang

This temple in Maran holds a special place in the hearts of devotees due to its spiritual significance and serene location surrounded by nature. It is believed the temple was established after a cow herder who discovered a statue of Lord Murugan beneath a tree, which is now preserved in the temple grounds. The temple draws thousands of devotees during Thaipusam, who come to fulfil their vows and offer prayers.

Besides the ones mentioned above, many other temples dedicated to Lord Murugan across Malaysia will also hold special prayers and rituals to mark Thaipusam. Devotees and visitors are encouraged to participate respectfully and observe the festival's sacred customs. It is important to follow the temple rules, such as adhering to dress codes, refraining from bringing prohibited items and maintaining cleanliness within the temple grounds.

Additionally, safety is paramount, if you are part of large crowds, stay hydrated, avoid pushing and follow the guidance of temple authorities. By honouring these traditions and staying mindful, you can fully experience the spiritual essence and vibrant culture of this significant festival.



Sri Marathandavar Aalayam Temple, Pahang. — PIC FROM FACEBOOK



Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Hilltop Temple, Penang.  
— PICS FROM PINTERST





Medallist has premiered on Disney+ and Hulu.

## J-pop star Kenshi Yonezu releases latest track

J-POP star Kenshi Yonezu has released a new song *Bow and Arrow*, in conjunction with the release of the latest anime series *Medallist*.

The track serves as the anime's theme song, which was penned by Yonezu upon learning of the adaptation.

"I have been an avid fan of the original *manga*. When I saw the *manga* was going to be made into an *anime*, I could not resist reaching out to offer my music.

"That is how it led to the creation of *Bow and Arrow*. It is a great *manga*, I urge (everyone) to read this *manga*. I am also anticipating the *anime* as a viewer. Wait for the song as well," Yonezu shared.

The series tells the story of figure skating coach Tsukasa, who is a man haunted by his past failures and works tirelessly to push his latest student to become a championship medalist.

The story is based on Japanese author Tsurumaiakada's award-winning *manga* of the same name, which won first place in the Next Manga Awards 2022 and the 48th annual Manga Awards.

Japanese director Yasutaka Yamamoto is the man behind the series, creating it at the animation studio ENGI. Its stars include Natsumi Haruse, Takeo Otsuka, Kana Ichinose, Yuna Uchida and Makoto Koichi.

Fans can catch the series on Disney+ and Hulu. As for Yonezu's track, fans can listen to it across all streaming platforms.

Yonezu, who debuted in 2009, rose to fame under his stage name Hachi. Upon gaining traction, the Japanese singer then began producing music under his real name.

As Yonezu, he has since released over six studio albums and produced several theme songs for shows such as *Unnatural*, *Shin Ultraman*, *Final Fantasy XVI* and *Last Mile*.

He is gearing up for his world tour Kenshi Yonezu 2025 Tour/Junk. The hitmaker will perform an extensive 20-date run across the US, Asia and Europe.

# Coldplay's new music video celebrates diversity



Singapore's Marina Bay is showcased in the video.

## Latest clip is collaboration between Singapore Tourism Board, band's label

**C**OLDPLAY has released the music video for its track *Man in The Moon*, which was filmed in Singapore, from the extended *Full Moon Edition* of the band's latest album *Moon Music*.

*Man in The Moon* is one of three additional original songs on *Moon Music* (Full Moon Edition).

"While we were in Singapore, we shot the video and captured some of the amazing, young, vibrant people that we had met. We are interested in shooting things in places we have never filmed before and mixing people up as much as possible. It was really fun to have a kind of dance party out in the middle of the water, just us and the others," the band said in a statement.

Set against Singapore's unique cityscape, the video spotlights the country's iconic spots and hidden gems, from the



Coldplay's frontman Chris Martin speaking to talents featured in the *Man in The Moon* music video.

breathtaking Marina Bay to the historic Fort Canning Park and vibrant neighbourhoods. The music video features youths of diverse backgrounds and identities portrayed by Singapore talents — from striking cosplay artists to daring creatives.

Singapore's multi-cultural environment provides a fitting backdrop, where people with different backgrounds and stories converge, embodying the song's theme of unity and shared experiences transcending individual differences. The finale sees the youths coming together at Marina Bay joining Coldplay on a

floating stage built specifically for the music video, as they belt out the chorus.

The latest music video is brought to life by director Ben Mor, known for his work on Coldplay's *Hymn For The Weekend* music video. It is filmed in partnership with Warner Music Singapore and Singapore Tourism Board.

*Man in The Moon* was filmed in January 2024 during the band's Music of the Spheres World Tour stop in Singapore. The music video premiered during an exclusive Coldplay fan party last Wednesday at Marina Bay Sands.

# Cristiano Ronaldo Life Museum set to open in Hong Kong

**THE** Cristiano Ronaldo Life Museum is set to open its doors in July 2025 at K11 Musea in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hong Kong.

The opening will feature several international celebrities, marking a monumental celebration of the football legend's illustrious career.

This museum celebrates Cristiano Ronaldo's career and the power of ambition, passion, perseverance and hard work — a beacon of inspiration for fans and visitors.

Featuring interactive exhibits, rare memorabilia and motivational storytelling, the Cristiano Ronaldo Museum offers an immersive experience designed to inspire greatness.

The museum is designed to be a place where visitors not only celebrate the accomplishments of a global icon but also reflect on their own aspirations.

Aimed at empowering youth and dreamers, the museum features motivational content and inspiring quotes to encourage visitors to unlock their full potential.

The museum will be the first of its kind in Asia and aims to attract over 12 million visitors to Hong Kong, providing exposure for the city as a global tourist destination.

The CR7 Life Museum will naturally inspire collaborations across Hong Kong's hospitality sector: food and beverage outlets, retail businesses, tourism agencies and the Mass Transit Railway.

These synergies are expected to foster a collective movement called "Hong Kong United", encouraging all sectors to embrace and welcome tourists from around the globe.

This organic connection aims to create a positive ripple effect, benefiting the entire city.

Tickets for the museum went on sale last Wednesday, coinciding with Ronaldo's birthday (Feb 5), allowing fans worldwide to partake in this historic opening.

Early bird ticket buyers will unlock exclusive benefits at merchandise stores, offering unique opportunities to enhance their CR7 Life Museum experience.

In addition to the museum, two flagship merchandise stores will open in Tsim Sha Tsui and on Hong Kong Island between March and April 2025.

Spanning over 3,000 sq ft each, these stores will be the first of their kind in the world, offering exclusive Ronaldo signed merchandise and memorabilia.

The opening of the Cristiano Ronaldo Museum promises to be a landmark event in Hong Kong's cultural landscape, offering an experience for fans and visitors alike.



Ronaldo is known not only for his skills and achievements in football, but also for his leadership, entrepreneurial ventures and philanthropic efforts.



BY STAMARAI CHELI

**F**OOD connects people. As families come together during Chinese New Year (CNY), they will feast on a variety of heritage dishes that transcend generational differences in taste.

These dishes will require many hours of painstaking preparation, with many households preferring to order from specialist caterers for certain difficult-to-make delicacies.

This includes roast duck – a dish especially popular during the festive period.

Jorden Lee, 29, is a chef recently highlighted by Maggi. He recounted how he and his family used to roast ducks in Malacca under the tutelage of his Cantonese master chef father – the late Lee Yong Huat.

#### Like father, like son

Apart from roast duck, Yong Huat sold roast chicken and roast pork. He also ran a catering business in Kota Laksamana.

Yong Huat, who started cooking at the mere age of 12, had accumulated four decades of experience working in bustling kitchens the world over, including in China (Shanghai and Macau) and Australia.

Upon his return to Malaysia, Yong Huat established a hugely popular roast duck business.

He along with Jorden and his elder sister worked tirelessly around the clock to complete orders in the kitchen. This meant they did not have a chance to hold their own family reunion dinner.

Instead of a lavish dinner, they marked the occasion together with a simple lunch before they started cooking dishes to meet the festive demand.

"We usually buy all the ingredients a day or two before CNY Eve and start preparing in advance as many shops close during this period," explained Jorden.

#### Taste of memory

Though the senior Lee passed away in 2021 at age 56, Jorden keeps his father's legacy alive by preserving the art of roasting duck, but with his own twist.

However, he humbly admitted he could never fully replicate the same delicious taste.

"Perhaps 60% to 70% of his dish," confessed Jorden.

"My father always advises, if you cook food, do not follow the method step-by-step," said Jorden, now a professional chef and member of the Kusu Association of Malaysia.

"It is like an art. You can get creative by adding herbs or seasoning or sauce to invent your



Roast duck is a popular dish during CNY. – FREEPIK/PIG

## Roast duck master's recipe for success

➤ Jorden Lee reminisces about cooking with his late father, shares secret behind roasting duck, seasoning

own recipe," said Jorden, quoting his father.

"As competition was very high, our dish had to stand out and make a difference in terms of taste. We needed to be creative to enhance or add secret seasoning for taste,"

added Jorden.

Since his father's passing, Jorden, who also learned the culinary arts in Sarawak, Kuala Lumpur and Penang, reflecting the richness of our culture and cuisine," he said.

What makes Teo's culinary artistry unique is that he does not limit himself to the hotel where he works but also seizes opportunities to introduce Malaysian food at official events.

He was entrusted with preparing the dishes for a special event in September last year celebrating the 50th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic ties.

At this special event, Teo and his fellow chefs curated a menu that

"I have improved it. My father's roast duck was unique because he incorporated traditional Chinese medicinal herbs such as angelica (*dang gui*), cloves and star anise into the seasoning.

"For my version, I refined the process by blending all the ingredients into a paste before applying it to the duck for marination and air-drying. Paying attention to small details makes a significant difference, ensuring that the roast duck turns out flavourful and visually appealing,"

Jorden said.

#### Family-favourite ingredients

Jorden has plenty of memories cooking with his father and shared how he was taught to make the sauce.

He said his father was very strict in the kitchen and had once used a ladle to tap on his hands when he made a mistake while cooking.

The senior Lee's favourite seasonings were vegetable ones. Jorden said his father's tip was to add vegetable stock instead of a chicken one to any meat dish, as this results in a fresh and balanced taste. Chicken stock, on the other hand, can be overpowering.

His father gave many similar tips, but the most precious thing that Jorden received from his father was a handwritten recipe book. It contains 150 recipes noted down by his father.

"I found this book during the lockdown and I took it back to Kuala Lumpur. For three months, my father called me every day just to ask me to give back the book," he said.

#### Cooking for loved ones

The one person whose advice or tips Jorden cherishes is missing in his life. Nevertheless, whenever he remembers his father, he will prepare and place a small bowl of food in front of the senior Lee's photo as a gesture of love and respect.

As the family no longer sells roast duck in his hometown, Jorden was able to cook for his family this year.

He hopes to follow in his father's footsteps and open a restaurant within the next two years.



Jorden hopes to open a restaurant within the next two years.

## Chef promotes Malaysian cuisine at five-star hotel in Beijing

**HAVING** spent 17 years abroad, Stephen Teo has not only stayed connected to his cultural roots but has also found his own way to introduce Malaysia to the world.

Working as a chef at a five-star hotel in the bustling capital of China, Beijing, Teo has seized the opportunity to use his culinary skills as a "bridge" to connect the two countries through the flavours and uniqueness of traditional Malaysian cuisine.

Hailing from Kuching, Sarawak, Teo has not only showcased the richness of Malaysia's diverse culinary heritage but also how food brings people of various ethnic backgrounds together.

What delights him most is the warm reception for his signature dishes *laksa* and *nasi lemak*, two of Malaysia's most popular food items. These dishes have been well-received by the people of Beijing, including those who have never visited Malaysia.

"When the food I prepare receives praise, it makes me extremely proud. At the very least, this small effort helps promote my country, which is rich in all types of delicious food. I also introduced them to chicken rice, *char kuey teow*, *rendang*, chicken curry, *Johor laksa* and *satay*.

"These dishes represent the culinary heritage of various races of Malaysia. For

example, *char kuey teow* has multiple variations from different states such as Sarawak, Kuala Lumpur and Penang, reflecting the richness of our culture and cuisine," he said.

What makes Teo's culinary artistry unique is that he does not limit himself to the hotel where he works but also seizes opportunities to introduce Malaysian food at official events.

He was entrusted with preparing the dishes for a special event in September last year celebrating the 50th anniversary of Malaysia-China diplomatic ties.

At this special event, Teo and his fellow chefs curated a menu that

reflected the strength of Malaysia and China's bilateral relations by blending the cuisines of both countries.

"Official events like this serve as the perfect platform to introduce Malaysian culture. Through this approach, I not only present the unique flavours of Malaysian cuisine but also explain the history and significance behind each dish.

"This method is highly effective and impactful, allowing foreigners to appreciate and understand Malaysia's diversity on a deeper level," said Teo, who has 30 years of culinary experience and also serves as the hotel's resident manager in the executive office.

Coming from a multiracial country, Teo fully understands the importance of *halal* food for Muslim communities and travellers, so he makes it a point to ensure only *halal* ingredients are used at the hotel where he works.

"The use of *halal* ingredients not only meets the needs of our Muslim guests from various countries but also aligns with the high standards of the global hospitality industry. As a Malaysian, I am already accustomed to this practice.

"We should respect religious and cultural requirements while delivering an authentic and high-quality dining experience," he added. – Bernama



# Langsuir to go on tour

► Veteran band's guitarist says it wants experience of working musicians

■ BY R.BALA

**W**ITH a career spanning three decades and an ever evolving line-up, it is somewhat surprising that Langsuir has never embarked on a full-scale tour. Attending intermittent gigs was the only way fans got to experience Langsuir live. But this is about to change as the band said it will be hitting the tour trail beginning with a show in Kuala Lumpur this Saturday.

With a new singer and a returning drummer on board, the band is set to bring its unique brand of occult mysticism-tinged metal to a wider audience.

In an exclusive interview, guitarist and chief lyricist Ibrsam Akbar told *theSun* what fans can expect from this long-awaited tour.

**With everyone holding full-time jobs, how do you go about scheduling a tour?**

You could say we are at the stage of our careers in which we are sort of stable. Same goes with family commitments whereby we are a bit more on a plateau, with kids having grown up. While we are not just going to abandon our duties and commitments, we found a way to juggle our schedules to make this work.

This tour is the band's first and it has been a long time coming. We needed to make this happen to experience what it is like to be professional, working musicians.

**Is the trend to now release quick-fire EPs rather than**

**full-blown LPs that maybe take longer to complete? Explain the reasoning.**

Typically, a full-length album would take between three to five years to complete. It is a very time-consuming process. Upon releasing an album, we would find maybe two or three tracks are on playlists, when we have spent an equal amount of time on all the songs.

It thus made sense for us to concentrate on putting out an EP with four or five songs, which would take maybe a year to complete. Fans can fully absorb and enjoy the songs. The band will not have prolonged silence in between albums. Plus the ROI (return on investment) is better with EPs, so it is a win-win situation for fans as well as Langsuir.

**You once said you are not going to get rich playing this form of music in Malaysia. So, what drives you, especially as a live unit?**

We want to experience being in a band that is measured to higher standards. This tour only has a handful of dates spread over a few months. Yet, we are already feeling the stress. Compare this to other bands such as XPDC, who have at least one gig per week throughout the year. International acts, such as In Flames, play many more gigs than that when they go on tour. We want to experience that and see what it is like to be working musicians.

**You mention Absu as a major influence. Any new bands have had a similar influence?**

Yes, Absu was a major influence in the early days. But as Langsuir has



Ibrsam (left) will take on the stage persona of a bangsawan for this tour.

matured, I safely say we have developed our own unique sound and style. No one else sounds like Langsuir!

**How is the recording going and when can we expect new Langsuir material?**

We have actually completed the recording and we are now at the mixing stage. The new EP will probably be released middle of the year. This is to allow for proper promo and reviews to happen.

This is what I have learned from international acts' *modus operandi*. For instance, Anthrax has announced that it will be releasing a new album in October this year. The announcement means they have already completed the recording. The delay in release date is to allow the necessary magazines and influential review sites to do the necessary promo.

I have found out major platforms and publications will need to receive a new album at least three months in advance of release date, otherwise it will be ignored.

Langsuir is trying to work along those lines to reach a wider audience.

**The band has been wrongly labelled**

Goatlorth Records Invokes

**melayu mystic**  
peninsular tour 2025

15.02.2025	PETAI BELALANG, KL
10.05.2025	LADYBOSS STUDIO, IPOH
14.06.2025	RUAS STORE, PENANG
12.07.2025	ROCKIN JAMZ, JOHOR BAHRU
13.07.2025	PHIL STUDIO, SINGAPORE
16.08.2025	WARMROOM, KUANTAN

for updates : [facebook.com/langsuirband](https://facebook.com/langsuirband) in alliance with :

**ayuh berbanda!**

The Melayu Mistik tour kicks off with a show at Petai Belalang, KL this Saturday.

**as having nationalist leanings in the past. Would the title of this tour - Melayu Mistik - further fuel that misconception?**

Ok. Let us clear this up once and for all. The whole neo-Nazi misunderstanding came about with a former member who was seen wearing a Nazi Iron Cross. That was merely his way of expressing anger at the Palestine issue.

As for the tour title, all the members are Malay. We are proud of our heritage and wish it to be part of our musical identity. It is nothing to do with Malay supremacy or that we are in any way better than others.

**This tour includes a date in Singapore. What are you expecting?**  
It is not easy to capture the attention of Singaporean fans as they are privy to loads of live shows by well-known international acts. The fact the organiser invited us to do a show instils confidence in the band. It

reflects the organiser's belief in Langsuir to attract an audience, otherwise the gig will be a bust.

**What about the support acts? Were they picked by you?**

No. The bands were picked by the label - Goatlord Records. Both Apocalyptic Carnage and Pendita Gila have new music out, so it will be good for them to reach out to more fans. There will also be additional bands at each gig from each locality.

**What can fans expect from Langsuir on this tour?**

Previously, it was just a cycle of record album, release it and play intermittent gigs. For this tour, we will be taking on different stage personas. For instance, I will be the *bangsawan* while the vocalist will be the *bomoh*. The bassist is the *pendekar* and so forth. This is to keep things fresh and exciting. We hope the fans will dig these new stage personas.



This will be the band's first proper tour since forming three decades ago.



# Developing resilience

► MSU produces graduates who can take on challenges

**A**S the founder of Speed Bake Bakery, Anthony Heng Lean Chin looks back with pride on the time spent at Management and Science University (MSU) completing his degree in international business (Hons) in 2004, while developing the skills needed to eventually become an entrepreneur.

During his student years at MSU Heng was actively involved in the university's Chinese culture society, where he served as chairman.

"My role as chairman of the society made me more people-orientated," said Heng, while reflecting on his experience. "It was not just about running activities; it also involved learning how to connect with others, which is crucial in business."

His journey into entrepreneurship was far from conventional. Before founding Speed Bake, he worked in a completely different field. As an executive in a manufacturing

industry, his focus was on producing precision gears for medical equipment, aerospace, and the automotive industry.

Unfortunately, things drastically changed in 2020, when the movement control order (MCO) came into force, as it affected his business, leaving Anthony and his partners in an unexpected situation.

"The pandemic forced us to rethink our future," he said.

"We were sitting at home with nothing to do and started thinking about what our retirement might look like. That's when the idea of starting a bakery supply business came about."

One major obstacle was securing the necessary funding from business partners. "Managing finances was tough," Heng admitted.

"It's always a challenge when funds come from shared business partners, especially during uncertain times."

Another significant hurdle was dealing with suppliers.

"Suppliers often require a minimum order quantity (MOQ) before they can deliver," he explained.

"If we could not meet that



Heng shared that being a graduate in a particular field is no barrier to opening up a new business.

threshold, they would not send the products. It was a tough lesson in managing supply chains."

Despite these challenges, Heng credits his time at MSU for giving him the skills to persevere.

"MSU helped build my confidence to interact with people from all walks of life," he said. "As chairman of the Chinese cultural society, I learnt how to lead a team and plan activities from start to finish. These are the same skills I use today in my business."

His involvement at MSU also provided him with the opportunity to network with high-level

stakeholders, including government ministers and foreign delegates.

This provided a valuable opportunity to develop leadership skills and cultural diversity, while overcoming difficult challenges.

"That experience was invaluable," he reflected.

"The diversity of experiences with people in positions of authority and across various industries provided the confidence I needed to also deal with various stakeholders in my bakery," said Heng.

He exemplifies the principles of fostering sustainable economic growth, creating opportunities for

productive employment, and ensuring decent work for all.

"I never expected to be in the bakery business," he said with a smile. "But I have learnt through experience, the unexpected can lead to your greatest achievements."

For the full range and information of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes at MSU, please contact 03-5521 6868 or email at [info@msu.edu.my](mailto:info@msu.edu.my). Any additional information can also be obtained by viewing the website at [www.msu.edu.my](http://www.msu.edu.my).

**#129**  
@ Asia

**#28**  
@ South-Eastern Asia



**msu**  
management & science university



**WORLD UNIVERSITY RANKINGS**  
2025

**THE PATH TO PURSUING YOUR AMBITIONS**

*Field of Studies :*

- International Business
- Industrial Management
- Human Capital Management
- Retail Management
- Marketing with Psychology
- Law with Commerce

- Islamic Management
- Entrepreneurship
- Office Management Technology
- Logistic Management
- Management

*Let's #go2msu*




The Employers' Choice of Universities in 2024 by Talentbank's

*Contact us :* Email : [enquiry@msu.edu.my](mailto:enquiry@msu.edu.my)

Tel : 03 5521 6868  
f @ X ▶ MSUMalaysia  
[www.msu.edu.my](http://www.msu.edu.my)

**MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE UNIVERSITY (MSU)** DU019(B)  
University Drive, Off Persiaran Olahraga, Section 13, 40100 Shah Alam,  
Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia.

 **Yayasan msu**





302 Jobs

**theSun WE ARE HIRING!**  
Malaysian Paper

**HR & ADMIN POSITIONS :**  
(Executive / Senior / Assistant Manager)

**Job Description:**

- Maintain HR records, including employee files, salaries and benefits information.
- Handle employee attendance records, payroll and claims.
- Handle employee relations and resolve any workplace conflicts or issues.
- Provide HR support and guidance to managers and employees.
- Ensure compliance with all employment laws and regulations.
- Stay updated on changes in work legislation and industry standards.
- Handle employee training and development programs.
- Manage employee benefits programs and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Stay updated on current industry trends and best practices in HR management.
- For Senior / Assistant Manager with supervisory skills.
- Handle Recruitment matters.
- Experience in payroll system will be advantages.
- Handle General Admin and other HR works.

**Requirement:**

- Diploma / Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management or related field.
- Executive : 1+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field
- Senior : 3+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field
- Asst Manager : 5+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field
- Fresh graduates are encourage to apply for Assistant Executive Post.
- Basic HR knowledge and proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

**Send in your CV with your photo via email to: thesun.hr2@gmail.com**  
(Closing Date: 28th February 2025)

302 Jobs

**theSun WE ARE HIRING!**  
Malaysian Paper

**1 MEDIA SALES**  
Executive / Specialist

**Job Description:**

- Building and sustaining strong working relationship with advertising agencies and clients.
- New business development and business retention.
- Conceptualize, plan, and execute creative and innovative marketing campaigns to enhance brand visibility and engagement.
- Create, develop and continuously improve marketing material, presentations and proposals that showcase our products/services effectively.

**Requirement:**

- SPM Level with at least 2 years of experience.
- Diploma or Bachelor's degree in business, marketing or other related fields.
- Fresh graduates are encourage to apply, training will be provided.
- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing
- Possess own transport and willing to travel.
- Able to start work immediately.

**Office based in Petaling Jaya (5 days a week)**

**2 MEDIA SALES**  
Representative / Agent (Freelance)

**Requirement:**

- Minimum 1 year sales experience in classified ad, print and digital advertising
- Those without sales experience but with media advertising knowledge can apply.
- Attractive commission package and incentive.
- Able to start immediately.
- Central, Northern, Southern, East Coast and Sabah/Sarawak.

**Send in your CV with your photo via email to: thesun.hr2@gmail.com**

**PERISTIHARAN JUALAN**  
PERINTAH JUALAN ATAS PERMITTAN PEMEGANG GADAIAN  
FISIKAL/2025/24  
Dalam Perkara Mengenal Saikyan 257 dan 263 Kawan Tanah Negeri (Disekam 2020) Akta 628  
DI ANTARA

**MAYBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD**  
(No. SIVARIAT : 20070102941)

DAN

**PEMANGSA GADAIAN**

**MANSOR BIN ABDULLAH**  
(No. K/P : 730105-07-5223)

**PENGADAI**  
Memorandum Perintah Penjualan Tanah Sebarang Perak Utara yang diperbuat pada 25 November 2024 adalah diijazahkan bahawa Penjual Tanah Sebarang Perak Utara dengan dibantu oleh Penolong Berlesen akan menjual secara :

**LELONGAN AWAM**  
PADA 19 FEBRUARI 2025 (BARIK) AM 10.00 PAGI  
DI PERKARANGAN PELABAT DAERAH DAN TANAH,  
SEBERANG PERAK UTARA.

**NOTA:** Bahai-bahai pembeli adalah diijazahkan agar membuat kajian sendiri terhadap Peta Tanah dan memeriksa teras tanah tersebut sebelum membeli tanah tersebut.

**BUTIR-BUTIR MAHKAMAH**  
No. MAHKAMAH : GM 3427  
No. LOT : Lot 20141  
MUKAH : 12  
DAERAH / NEGERI : Negeri Sembilan Perak Utara / Pulau Pinang  
CIRAN TANAH : RM 141.00  
PELANGKAN : Selama-lamanya  
KELUARAN TANAH : 130 meter persegi  
FOMULA BERDASAR : (No. K/P : 730105-07-5223) - 1/1 bahagian  
KATEGORI KEDUAHAN TANAH : SYARAT-SYARAT NYATA  
Syarat-Syarat Nyata : Tanah yang diberikan ini hendaklah digunakan untuk tujuan pertanian sahaja  
Syarat yang diberikan ini tidak boleh dipindahtanah, capai, capai, pengalihan keada atau apa-apa urusan tanpa kebenaran Pihak Berkuasa Negeri.  
Syarat-Syarat : Digedilkan kepada Maybank Islamic Berhad melalui Penjualan No. 07052020120137, ditandatangani pada 13.09.2012. Sarafahua Wakil : 01725206000009

**LOKASI DAN PERALIH HARTANAH:**  
Hartanah tersebut merupakan sebuah kedai pejabat dua (2) tingkat teratas yang berlandas di No. 55, Jalan Komersial 2, Pusat Komersial Tasek Gelugor, 13300 Tasek Gelugor, Pulau Pinang. Keluasan tanah adalah seluas 260 meter persegi.

**HARGA RIJAZ:**  
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual terhadap kepada satu harga riib sebanyak RM 560,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: LIMA RATUS ENAM PULUH RIBU SARAJAJ) dan syarat-syarat jualan yang ditetapkan di dalam perjanjian jualan. Bagi pemegang-pemegang yang berminat hendaklah membuat permohonan kepada pihak yang menjual tanah tersebut Bank Draft di atas nama MAYBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD sebelum jam 10.00 pagi pada hari perdagangan sebelum hari perdagangan dengan oleh pembeli dalam tempoh satu bulan dari pada jualan (120 hari dari tarikh jualan kepada MAYBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD).

**UNTUK BUTIR-BUTIR SELAKUTIA, SILA BERHUBUNG DENGAN PENJUAL TANAH SEBERANG PERAK UTARA, PULAU PINANG ATAU TETUAN MOHY ANWAR & CO. PEGUAMCARA BAGI PLATINIS DI ALAMAT NO. 7 JALAN SARAKI, SEBERANG JARA, 13700 PERAK, PULAU PINANG. TEL: 04-3979737 FAX: 04-3979731 (WAJ) MAC - 4888-888-888-888) ATAU KEPADA PELELONGAN YANG BERKUALITI DI BUKU PROJEK MANAGEMENT (LAKSANA KECANTIKAN)**

**ABDUL CHAFAR BIN MOHD NOOR**  
PELELONGAN BERKUALITI  
TEL: 04-5752687

**322 Notices**

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLIS TREH DI SEPANG**  
DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR  
DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA  
WHIT SAMAN -  
BK-A72M2C-96-11/2024

ANTARA

**OLYMPIC ELECTRONIC SALES AND SERVICE SDN BHD**  
(No. SIVARIAT : 974390-W) ... PLAINTIFF

DAN

**VEIYA LETCHUMY A/P MUTHU**  
(No. K/P : 840707-05-5622)  
(merupakan pemilik tunggal dan berniaga di bawah nama dan gaya SUN STAR ELECTRONICS SALES R SERVICES (No. PENDAFTARAN PERMAGAN : 2023020302 (003520677-M) dan SUN STAR ARCOND SERVICES (No. PENDAFTARAN PERMAGAN : 20180205043 (00285358-P) ... DEFENDAN

**NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN GANTI**  
Kepada :  
VEIYA LETCHUMY A/P MUTHU  
(No. K/P : 840707-05-5622)  
(merupakan pemilik tunggal dan berniaga di bawah nama dan gaya SUN STAR ELECTRONICS SALES R SERVICES (No. PENDAFTARAN PERMAGAN : 2023020302 (003520677-M) dan SUN STAR ARCOND SERVICES (No. PENDAFTARAN PERMAGAN : 20180205043 (00285358-P)

Penyampaian sesalinan Wit Saman bertarikh 22/11/2024 dan Penyampaian Tuntutan bertarikh 19/11/2024 (sesepas ini diijazahkan oleh pihak SUN STAR ELECTRONICS SALES R SERVICES "dokumen-dokumen tersebut") terhadap Defendan dilakukan secara penyampaian ganti iaitu dengan cara pengiklanan di dalam akhbar "The Sun", penyampaian di alamat kedudukan terakhir Defendan menurut carian cubatan daftar alamat dari Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara bertarikh 06/04/2025 iaitu di No. 32, Jalan Sajana KUA 1/1A, Taman Sajana KUA, Kota Warisan, 43000 Sepang, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan di papan kenyataan Mahkamah Majlis Treh Sepang menurut Perintah Mahkamah yang akan dikeluarkan nanti. Pengiklanan dan penyampaian tersebut akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan sempurna bagi dokumen-dokumen tersebut kepada Defendan dalam masa empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh penyampaian tersebut dilakukan.

DAN SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa Wit Saman ini diletakkan untuk Pengurusan Kes pada 27/02/2025 jam 9.00 pagi secara e-review dan kamu dikehendaki memasukkan kehadiran dalam masa empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh penyampaian tersebut kamu.

Notis ini dipaparkan oleh kamu atas permintaan di Mahkamah Majlis Treh Sepang, Negeri Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Bertarikh 07 Februari 2025

T.T.

Pendengar Pendengar Mahkamah Majlis Treh Sepang

**NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN GANTI** ini dilakukan oleh Tetuan Sharif & Khoo, Peguam bagi Plaintiff yang berlandas di No. 6, Jalan Tuanku Hassan, 70000 Seremban, Negeri Sembilan Darul Khusus.

No. Tel: 06-761 1257  
Email: sharifkhoo.legal@gmail.com  
No. Ruj: SKCA/1363/24

**322 Notices**

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLIS TREH DI KUALA LUMPUR**  
DALAM NEGERI WILAYAH PERSEKUTUTAN MALAYSIA (Bahagian Sivili)  
SAMAN PEMULA  
No : WA-31NOVC-3872-11/2024

Dalam Perkara Harta Pustaka AMOTHEVALI @ FATIMAH (No. K/P : 540406-06-5698) samati

Dan

Dalam Perkara Petisyen dibawah Akta Probet dan Pentadbiran, 1959;

Dan

Dalam Perkara Aturan 71 Kaedah-Kaedah Mahkamah/Tinggi 2012

**ABIDAH UMA BINTI KAMAL SHEEVAN**  
(No. K/P : 760722-14-5490) ... Pemohon

**PENYAMPAIAN GANTI-BENTUK IKLAN**  
Kepada:-  
AMIR RAJA BIN KAMAL SHEEVAN (No. K/P : 741210-14-5063/A2954319) 14302 Ruzek Masjid (No. K/P : 540406-06-5698) dan sekiranya kamu enggan menandatangani Affidavit persetujuan bagi penarikan Pemohon sebagai Petitioner maka Mahkamah memberikan perintah bagi pemohon untuk menyerahkan Saman Pemula (Ex-Parte) ini dilaksanakan terhadap kamu dengan melalui iklan ini.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah memasukkan Memorandum Kehadiran samada secara sendiri atau melalui Peguambela kamu dalam masa 7 (tujuh) hari dari tarikh ini dan Saman Pemula ini kini telah diletakkan untuk pendengaran di Mahkamah Tinggi Kuala Lumpur pada 05.03.2025 pada pukul 9.00 pagi. Jika kamu ingkar hadir sedemikian, pengiklanan boleh diberikan oleh Mahkamah.

Bertarikh pada 27 Februari 2025

T.T.

**TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY**  
Peguamcara Plaintiff

Notis ini dilakukan oleh Dewi & Company, Peguambela & Peguamcara Plaintiff yang berlandas di No. 15-8, Menara Mutiara Sentral, No. 2, Jalan Duta Aman 1, Cheras Business Centre, 56000 Kuala Lumpur, Peguam bagi Pemohon.

No. Tel: 03-9134188  
HP: 012-2051175  
Ruj: DCD/Abdullah1258/Harta Pustaka/24

# Rohit hundred flattens England

**INDIA** claimed an unassailable 2-0 lead over England after captain Rohit Sharma's rapid hundred secured a four-wicket win in the second one-day international yesterday.

Not even a floodlight failure that stopped play for half an hour during India's innings could affect Rohit, who hit seven sixes and 12 fours in his 119 off 90 balls as the hosts chased down a 305-run target in 44.3 overs.

Earlier, England's 304 all out, with one delivery left in their innings, appeared a strong total and seemed to vindicate their decision to bat first at Barabati Stadium.

Ben Duckett (65) and Joe Root (69) smashed half-centuries and England looked poised for a big total when cruising at 219-3 in the 39th over.

"It was good and (I) really enjoyed being out there, scoring some runs for the team," Rohit said after collecting the player-of-the-match award.

"Obviously it was an important game with the series on the line but I broke it down into pieces about how I wanted to bat."

England had got off to a flying start after Duckett and Phil Salt

(26) combined in a rollicking 81-run opening stand.

Duckett raced to a 36-ball fifty but Ravindra Jadeja struck in his first over to dismiss the opener.

Harry Brook (31) could not capitalise on the start but with Root and skipper Jos Buttler (34) in the middle, England looked primed to launch a late assault.

India, however, fought back with the ball, removing both the set batters and England suddenly slumped to 272-7 in the 48th over.

Liam Livingstone (41) produced a 32-ball cameo to take England past the 300-mark before he and Mark Wood were run out in successive deliveries.

For India, Jadeja claimed 3-35, took a catch and fired a throw from the deep that led to Adil Rashid being run out.

Shubman Gill (60) took the aerial route only once and hit nine fours in his fluent knock while Shreyas Iyer scored a fluent 44 but his run-out, followed by the dismissals of KL Rahul and Hardik Pandya, meant India could not take anything for granted.

Akar Patel, who made 41 not out, dashed any English hopes of a series-leveleving victory. - Reuters

**322 Notices**

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLIS TREH DI KUALA LUMPUR**  
DALAM NEGERI PERSEKUTUTAN MALAYSIA  
DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUTAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA  
SIAMAN CIVIL NO. WA-A72M-24040-11/2024

ANTARA

**YAYASAN DEWAN PERMAGAN MELAYU BERHAD**  
(No. Syarikat: 199201018259 (249763-U)) ... PLAINTIFF

DAN

**ZULKIFLI BIN WAHAB**  
(No. K/P : 780219-02-6177) ... DEFENDAN

**NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI)**  
Kepada:-  
1. ZULKIFLI BIN WAHAB

**SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa suatu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majlis Treh Kuala Lumpur dalam Guesman No. WA-A72M-24040-11/2024 oleh Yayasan Dewan Permaghan Melayu Perlis Berhad ("Plaintiff") yang berlandas di Tingkat 20, Menara Teo Chew, No. 1, Jalan Lumut, 50400 Kuala Lumpur di mana Plaintiff menuntut terhadap kamu antara lain untuk membayar semula pinjaman, faedah dan kos.

**DAN TELAH DIPERINTAHKAN** bahawa Wit Saman bertarikh 29.11.2024 dan Penyampaian Tuntutan Terjadi bertarikh 26.12.2024 dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti terhadap kamu melalui penyampaian pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majlis Treh Kuala Lumpur, penyampaian di alamat terakhir kamu yang diketahui Plaintiff dan pengiklanan sekali di suatu penerbitan akhbar "The Sun", dan penyampaian Wit Saman dan Penyampaian Tuntutan Terjadi sedemikian akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa tujuh hari (7) hari selepas tarikh penyampaian atau pengiklanan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut, kamu mestilah memasukkan kehadiran sama secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu ingkar hadir sedemikian, pengiklanan boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 27 Februari 2025

T.T.

**TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY**  
Peguamcara Plaintiff

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI) ini telah dilakukan oleh TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY, peguamcara pihak Plaintiff yang berlandas di C-10-28, Block C, Lobby 2, Century Oasis Corporate Park, No. 2, Jalan PJU 1A/2, Ara Damansara, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel No : +603 2714 5456  
E-mail : genetan@gmtan.biz  
Faks No : +603 2714 5457  
Ruj Kami : GMT/YYPRCE/01043/2024

**322 Notices**

**MALAYSIA**  
IN THE HIGH COURT IN SARAWAK AND SARAWAK AT SANDAKAN  
DIVORCE PETITION NO. SDK-33-11-10 OF 2024 (HC)

IN THE MATTER OF THE MARRIAGE BETWEEN GANESAN AL MACHAPPOO (NIC 690524-04-0041) AND NAN SAN HOM (BURMA PASSPORT NO. 709311)

AND

IN THE MATTER OF A PETITION FOR DISSOLUTION OF MARRIAGE UNDER SECTION 53 AND SECTION 54 (1) (c) AND (d) OF THE LAW REFORM (MARRIAGE & DIVORCE) ACT, 1976

AND

IN THE MATTER OF SECTION 106 (1) (i) AND (vi) OF THE LAW REFORM (MARRIAGE & DIVORCE) ACT, 1976

BETWEEN

**GANESAN AL MACHAPPOO (NIC 690524-04-0041)** ... Petitioner

AND

**NAN SAN HOM (BURMA PASSPORT NO. 709311)** ... Respondent

**NOTICE EFFECTING SUBSTITUTED SERVICE OF DIVORCE PETITION**  
To: NAN SAN HOM (BURMA PASSPORT NO. 709311) Serdang, Selangor.

TAKE NOTICE that the above case has been set down for hearing at the High Court of Sandakan on Thursday on the 27th February 2025 at 9.00 a.m. and that you are required to attend the said hearing on the said date. If you fail to attend the said hearing, the Court may proceed to hear the Petition in your absence and make the order as the Court deems fit.

Dated the day 11th February 2025

Senior Assistant Registrar High Court SANDAKAN

This Notice is taken out by M/s Margaret Hon & Co., Advocates for the Petitioner whose address for service is at 1st Floor, Lot 12, Block D, Bandar Kim Fung, Mile 4, North Road, PPM 579, Elopura, 93000 Sandakan, Sabah.

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYSIA AT KUALA LUMPUR**  
IN THE WILAYAH PERSEKUTUTAN MALAYSIA  
COMPANIES WINDING-UP  
No. WA-2386C-36-31/2023

In the Matter of Section 455(1)(a) & 466(1) (a) of the Companies Act 2016

And

In the Matter of CR SEA (MALAYSIA) SDN BHD [COMPANY NO. 201701022023 (1238189-T)]

Between

**HI-TECH MIX SDN BHD** [COMPANY NO. 200101002889 (538645-D)] ... PETITIONER

And

**CR SEA (MALAYSIA) SDN BHD** [COMPANY NO. 201701022023 (1238189-T)] ... RESPONDENT

**ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION**  
NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for Winding-up of the above-named Company by the High Court of Kuala Lumpur was on the 8th January 2025 presented to the said Court by HI-TECH MIX SDN BHD [COMPANY NO. 200101002889 (538645-D)], a company incorporated in Malaysia under the Companies Act 2016 and having its principal place of business at Lot 1560, Kampung Stesen, Sungai Choh, 48000 Rawang, Selangor Darul Ehsan and that the said Petition is to be heard before the Court sitting at Kuala Lumpur on the 8th May 2025 at 9.00 a.m. in the morning and any Creditor or Contributor of the said Company desirous to support or oppose the making of an Order on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named Messrs Aaron K Ng & Partners, notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or a firm, who is his solicitor (if any) and must be served (if or posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named later than twelve o'clock in the forenoon of the 7th May 2025.

This Advertisement of Petition is filed by Messrs Aaron K Ng & Partners, Solicitors for the Petitioner herein and whose address for service is at A-3-02, Kalana Square, No. 17, Jalan SS7/26, Kelana Jaya, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

No. Tel: 03-7880 2388 / 7880 2388/7825 2388  
No. Faks: 03-7625 5388  
[Ref: ACHT-CRSEA/11986/2024/ALP]

## Giant-killer Shapovalov downs Ruud in Dallas

**CANADA'S** Denis Shapovalov completed a giant-killing run to the Dallas Open title yesterday, defeating Norway's fifth-ranked Casper Ruud 7-6 (7-5), 6-3 for his third career ATP crown.

Unseeded Shapovalov became only the fifth player since 2020 to knock out the three top seeds on the way to an ATP title and just the fourth player since 2009 to beat three top-10 rivals on the way to a 250- or 500-level title.

Shapovalov ousted two home soil favourites earlier, dispatching world No. 4 Taylor Fritz in the second round and ousting ninth-ranked defending champion Tommy Paul in the semifinals.

The 500-level trophy was the biggest of Shapovalov's career after victories at Stockholm in 2018 and last

November in Belgrade and comes after an injury fightback since mid-2023.

"I've been facing some difficult injuries with the knee. It has been a long road back," Shapovalov said.

"Struggles to get some titles, to get that momentum going back on the court but my team and the people close to me have kept lifting me up, kept putting me back on the right pathway whenever I've been down and these titles, Belgrade and this one, would definitely not be possible without them."

Shapovalov will jump 22 spots to 32nd in the ATP rankings next week. He was 127th at this point last year.

"Incredible effort all week," Ruud said of Shapovalov. "Great to see you back playing so well. Little bit annoying today but really great." — AFP

## Detry earns first PGA win

IT was going so well for Belgium's Thomas Detry that there was no reason to back off as he was winding down the WM Phoenix Open.

Detry was strong all the way to the finish, shooting a 6-under 65 to collect his first PGA Tour victory yesterday at TPC Scottsdale in Scottsdale, Arizona.

"It's what dreams are made of," he said.

Detry kept improving on his way to a 24-under 260 total and a seven-shot victory, becoming the first Belgian to win a PGA Tour event.

He put on a dazzling final-round show, playing the last eight holes in a combined 5-under with four consecutive birdies to complete the tournament. He dropped his

last putt from almost 10 feet away.

"This is where I want to be and it's pretty incredible to play golf the way I've been," Detry said.

A 32-year-old former University of Illinois golfer, Detry stayed in control throughout most of yesterday.

Then he stuck his tee shot about a foot from the cup to birdie the famed par-3 No. 16 Stadium Hole, building his advantage to five strokes.

"Considering the circumstances, one of the best shots of the week and of my life, definitely," Detry said.

Detry was in his 68th PGA Tour event, with two previous runner-up finishes.

"I've given myself plenty of chances in the past and never been able to put a statement out like

that," Detry said.

Michael Kim and Daniel Berger, who both shot 67 yesterday, were runners-up at 17-under.

"It was a fun last two days," said Kim, who had only one bogey during the tournament.

There was just no catching Detry.

"I drove it well all week and I tried to just do my best to put pressure on him, but every time I felt like I made a birdie, he made one back," Berger said. "He was playing really great golf today, and he was deserving to win this."

Jordan Spieth (68), who began the round tied for second, couldn't keep up and finished at 16-under, tied for fourth with South Africa's Christiaan Bezuidenhou (66). — Field Level Media

# No Sinner, no sweat, says Alcaraz

**CARLOS** ALCARAZ said yesterday that he had not missed Jannik Sinner at the Rotterdam Open, seizing on the world No. 1's absence to clinch his first indoor title.

Sinner pulled out at the last moment from the Rotterdam draw after triumphing at last month's Australian Open.

Asked if he had missed his Italian rival after overpowering Australia's Alex de Minaur 6-4, 3-6, 6-2 in yesterday's final, Alcaraz quipped: "Not really!"

"Now that I'm holding the trophy, I'm going to say that I didn't miss him in the tournament," he added.

"It could have been great having him and me in the same tournament. Probably we could have played a great final," said the 21-year-old.

In the actual final, world No. 3 Alcaraz had too much weight on his shots off both flanks for De Minaur, who retrieved valiantly but lacked the weapons to topple the top seed.

"This week has been a really good week," said Alcaraz. "I came here not feeling 100% well with a cold but every day I felt better and better," added the Spaniard, who wore a nose-clip all week to help him breathe easier.

Alcaraz was first to seize the initiative, breaking De Minaur's serve in the third game, helped by a double-fault and some ferocious groundstrokes.

The Spaniard secured the opener at the first time of asking, De Minaur netting a forehand return and giving himself an uphill battle to get back

*Spaniard overpowers De Minaur to clinch first indoor title*



Carlos Alcaraz poses with the winner's trophy after winning his final match against Alex de Minaur (left). — REUTERS/SPIC

into the match.

The second set saw a shift in momentum as De Minaur managed an early break of his own and raced into a 3-0 lead.

De Minaur squandered two chances at a second break but clung on to his serve to give himself an opportunity to close out the set.

He levelled up the match, as Alcaraz dumped a backhand into the net, having smashed two wild forehands long out of court earlier in the game.

The decisive set went with serve until the sixth game when Alcaraz got his nose in front, breaking the Australian's serve with a drop shot that De Minaur pushed wide.

De Minaur served to stay in the match at 5-2 down but hit a catastrophic double-fault to give Alcaraz two match points.

He then pushed a tired-looking backhand into the net to give Alcaraz victory and a 17th tour title, the Spaniard roaring *vamos* as the crowd rose to its feet.

For De Minaur, it was a case of *deja vu*, as he lost in the final last year as well to Sinner.

"It's been two years with this runner-up trophy. I'm hoping I'll get my hand on the winners' one day," said the Australian.

Speaking to reporters after the match, De Minaur revealed he had also been struggling with illness.

"I'm just looking forward to getting into bed and hopefully getting some rest," he said.

"I don't need excuses, I go out there, compete, I tried my best, wasn't enough today." — AFP

## American Noh captures Founders Cup for maiden LPGA victory

**YEALIMI** NOH captured her first LPGA title yesterday, outduelling South Korean Ko Jin-young down the final holes to win the Founders Cup by four strokes.

Noh, a 23-year-old American, fired a 3-under 68 to finish on 21-under 263 after 72 holes at Florida's Bradenton Country Club.

"This means so much to me," Noh said. "I've worked really hard the past few years and I went through a lot of struggles."

"I really told myself that 2025 is going to be my year so this is the best way to start it."

Three-time Founders Cup winner Ko, a two-time major champion, stumbled with three bogeys in the last six holes to shoot 71 and settle for second on 267 with American Megan Khang third on 268 after firing 68.

Noh's best prior LPGA finishes in six seasons were runner-up efforts in 2019 at Portland and 2020 at the Volunteers of America Classic.

"I've been in contention a couple of times and told myself I could do it but this is the first time I got it done," Noh said. "This is a really big confidence booster for me for the rest of the year."

Noh credited her improved game to a change last year to a broomstick putter.

"Switching to the broomstick helped me so much," Noh said. "I was really struggling with my putting. Switching to the broomstick, that just gave me back my confidence."

Noh birdied the par-4 second and followed with 10 consecutive pars before making back-to-back birdies at 13 and 14.

World No. 11 Ko, meanwhile, had grabbed a one-stroke lead with birdies at the fourth and par-5 sixth and eighth holes.

But Ko made bogeys on 13, 14 and 16 to fall four adrift of Noh.

Noh found a greenside bunker at the par-5 17th but saved par and tapped in to par 18 to close the triumph.

Australia's Hannah Green shared fourth on 271 with South Korean Im Jin-hee and Japan's Miyu Yamashita.

Top-ranked Nelly Korda, who won last year here on her hometown course, shared seventh on 272 with France's Celine Boutier and Japan's Minami Katsu. — AFP



## SIDENETTING

## Rangers stunned by Queen's Park

**RANGERS** suffered a humiliating Scottish Cup exit at the hands of Queen's Park after James Tavernier missed a stoppage-time penalty in yesterday's shock 1-0 defeat against the second tier minnows. Philippe Clement's side paid the price for a dismal display in the fifth-round tie at Ibrox, with Seb Drodz's second-half strike putting Queen's Park ahead before Calum Ferrie saved Tavernier's spot-kick. One of the biggest upsets in Scottish Cup history could be the final straw for the Rangers board as they ponder the future of the beleaguered Clement. Asked if he would consider quitting in the aftermath of the disastrous loss, Clement said: "No, totally not. I don't expect this because you can put another manager in this game and would it be different in that sense? Of course it's unacceptable, this result. But top eight in Europe and more consistency in the league and all these things, they don't change in 90 minutes. If you make decisions in that way, then you make only decisions out of emotions and not out of what's been going on. So I don't expect this now."

## Galatasaray opponents storm off

**ADANA DEMIRSPOR** players stormed off the pitch in the first half of their away match against Super Lig leaders Galatasaray yesterday after the referee awarded a penalty against them, Turkey's state news agency reported. The team walked off in the 30th minute after Galatasaray took a 1-0 lead with Alvaro Morata scoring from a penalty kick, Anadolu said. After they left, the referee's team went to speak with them in the dressing room, which prompted an announcement that the match at Rams Park stadium had been abandoned. Turkish media reports said the team, who are bottom of the table, had stormed off in protest over what they claimed was "referee corruption".

## Youth match ends in stabbing

A brawl at a Sunday youth football match near Paris ended with one person airlifted to hospital with stab wounds and France's football federation saying it would file a legal complaint. Fighting broke out after a gang of armed youths attacked a stadium where Dammarie-les-Lys's U-20s team were hosting suburban Paris rivals Meaux. The players were breaking for halftime when locals from Dammarie-les-Lys assaulted Meaux's players. "It seems that in the scuffle, one of the attacked players stabbed an assailant," a police source told AFP. "As a result, the others were out to get them and two players jumped into the Seine." Police arriving at the scene had to rescue one of the two, who could not swim. The stabbing victim was flown to a Paris hospital by helicopter in a serious condition.

## Napoli miss chance to extend lead

**NAPOLI** missed the chance to extend their lead over Inter Milan at the top of Serie A to six points as Antonio Conte's men were held to a 1-1 draw by Udinese yesterday.

Scott McTominay put the hosts ahead in the first half at the Stadio Diego Armando Maradona, but Jurgen Ekkelenkamp equalised shortly afterwards and Napoli could not find a winner.

"We must not confuse reality with what we are doing now, which is truly extraordinary. Trust me, it's extraordinary," coach Conte told DAZN when asked about his team's bid for a second title in three seasons.

"The lads left the field drained tonight, they gave everything to get the victory. It was our ninth game unbeaten, so trust me from the heart when I say this is extraordinary."

Napoli were given the opportunity to stretch their advantage at the top of the table by Inter's 3-0 loss at Fiorentina in midweek – a game which was originally stopped in December after home midfielder Edoardo Bove suffered a heart attack.

Atalanta are also still in the hunt for their first-ever Scudetto, sitting just five points behind Napoli after their 5-0 thrashing of Verona on Saturday.

In an earlier match, Lazio crushed last-placed Monza 5-1 in Rome to climb back into the top four.

Adam Marusic nodded the home team in front on 31 minutes and they ran away with the game after halftime.

Pedro scored twice and Taty Castellanos

once, before Stefano Sensi converted an 86th-minute penalty for the visitors.

Two minutes later, Fisayo Dele-Bashiru restored Lazio's four-goal lead.

Italian media reported that Monza had sacked coach Salvatore Bocchetti after the game and were lining up Alessandro Nesta to replace him.

Roma had a tougher time away to second-bottom Venezia, winning 1-0 with a 57th-minute penalty by Paulo Dybala, a pre-match doubt.

"I didn't want him to play at all, but he told me 'I want to play,'" said Roma coach Claudio Ranieri. "I didn't want to risk him."

The win lifted Roma to ninth in the table. – AFP

## Barca maintain title charge

Catalans hit Sevilla for four to cut gap on La Liga top two

**BARCELONA** cut the gap on La Liga's top two with an entertaining 4-1 win over Sevilla yesterday, despite playing out the final half-hour with 10 men after Fermin Lopez's red card.

Robert Lewandowski, Lopez, Raphinha and Eric Garcia struck for the Catalans, who were able to capitalise on leaders Real Madrid's 1-1 draw with second-placed Atletico Madrid yesterday.

Hansi Flick's Barca climbed within two points of Los Blancos and moved one behind Atletico to crank up the tension in the title race.

"I really appreciate our performance, we did well in the first half and in the second half we fought for these three points," Flick told DAZN.

"We pressed high, the intensity was really good from us... and in the end it was a good lesson to play in a 4-4-1 and defend like that."

Lewandowski's early strike was cancelled out by Sevilla's Ruben Vargas, with Lopez and Raphinha pouncing early in the second half.

Lopez was sent off for a high tackle but Barcelona held out and extended their lead when Garcia nodded home late on.

"Today we had to win to stay in the title race and now we're putting the pressure on," Barca defender Inigo Martinez told DAZN.

"I think the team played a brilliant match and this is the way forward. If we stay secure and solid at the back, up front we all know what our forwards are capable of."

The match at Sevilla's Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan stadium got off to an

explosive start with teenage winger Lamine Yamal forcing Sevilla goalkeeper Orjan Nyland into a superb save with a curling effort.

Barcelona took the lead after seven minutes after Martinez nodded the ball across goal for Lewandowski to prod home from close range.

Sevilla were level almost instantly, with Ronald Araujo playing Saul Niguez inside and the Spaniard crossed for Vargas to turn home in the eighth minute.

Flick sent on Lopez at halftime for Gavi and the midfielder scored and got sent off within the space of 15 minutes.

Lopez netted at the start of the second half, heading home from playmaker Pedri's inviting cross.

Vargas netted from an offside position at the other end before Raphinha extended Barcelona's lead with a vicious effort from distance in the 55th minute.

Garcia nodded home at the far post in the final stages as Raphinha's deflected cross fell kindly to him to wrap up Barcelona's emphatic victory.

Earlier Valencia earned an important 2-0 win over Leganes to give Los Che hope in their bid to avoid relegation.

Mouctar Diakhaby scored Valencia's second goal, his first after returning from a severe knee injury in January, nearly a year since he last played.

"After everything I've been through, it was very special," said the centreback.

"I thought about the moment of the injury, how hard I've worked and my family who were very affected by it." – AFP



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski (left) celebrates with Lamine Yamal after scoring the opening goal against Sevilla. – AFP/PC

## Marseille cement grip on second place

**MARSEILLE** strengthened their hold on second place in Ligue 1 behind runaway leaders Paris Saint-Germain with a dominant 2-0 win away at Angers yesterday.

Roberto De Zerbi's team were on top throughout at the Stade Raymond Kopa but had to wait until the 69th minute to take the lead when Adrien Rabiot headed in Amine Gouiri's corner.

They scored their second five minutes later as substitute Neal Maupay played a one-two with Gouiri before finishing for his fourth goal since signing from Everton at the start of the season.

Rabiot's contribution is more remarkable, with the French international midfielder suddenly becoming a serious goal threat and scoring his third header in the last five matches.

Gouiri, meanwhile, made a decisive impact on his first start since signing from Rennes in the January transfer window, while Algeria midfielder Ismael Bennacer also

impressed on his debut after joining on loan from AC Milan.

Marseille have won nine of their 11 away matches this season and this result sees them move six points clear of both Nice and Monaco, who lead the chasing pack.

The gap to PSG, however, remains a daunting 10 points, with the reigning champions looking unstoppable now after an impressive 4-1 win over Monaco on Saturday.

In an earlier match, Paulo Fonseca oversaw his first win as Lyon coach as his new side thrashed Reims 4-0 to climb back into the European places.

Nicolas Tagliafico put Lyon in front late in the first half from an assist by Corentin Tolisso, who doubled their lead from a Rayan Cherki freekick midway through the second half.

Cherki got the third goal and Georgian international Georges Mikautadze completed the scoring in stoppage time after Reims had been reduced to 10 men with the sending-off of Patrick Zabi. – AFP

## Sesko, Simons score as Leipzig rise to fourth

**BENJAMIN SESKO** and Xavi Simons scored first half goals as RB Leipzig beat St Pauli 2-0 yesterday to climb to fourth in the Bundesliga table.

The duo assisted each other's goals as Leipzig secured their first league win in almost a month.

Simons put Sesko into space on the counter-attack, before the latter calmly cut inside a defender and slotted the ball into the bottom corner to give the hosts a 16th-minute lead.

The Slovenian has now scored in six of his past eight league matches.

Sesko returned the favour 10 minutes before halftime, pulling the ball back for Simons to fire home from inside the area.

Xavi, who missed two months with an ankle injury, now has three goals and three assists in six Bundesliga games since his return.

The hosts were able to close out the win despite the 69th-minute sending off of captain Willi Orban for a last-man foul on St Pauli's Elias Saad.

Leipzig now sit one point clear of fifth-placed Stuttgart, with Freiburg two points further adrift in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League.

"Very dominant first half," Leipzig coach Marco Rose said. "Things developed a bit differently after the red card."

"A decent performance and a deserved victory."

Promoted St Pauli still sit

seven points clear of the relegation playoff place with 13 games remaining.

In an earlier match, two goals in three first-half minutes from Myron Boadu took Bochum to a 2-2 draw at Holstein Kiel in a basement clash.

Kiel took the lead after less than three minutes, Steven Skrzybski converting a penalty awarded for a handball.

Boadu, who scored a second half hattrick against Leipzig in January, dragged bottom club Bochum back into the match, scoring in the 37th and 39th minutes.

The hosts hit back five minutes into the second half thanks to a David Zec header. – AFP

## Modern Champions League classic

**THE** champions of England Manchester City will take on the kings of Europe in Real Madrid for the fourth consecutive season in the Champions League. Here's a look at five ties between the clubs over the past decade that have turned the clash into European football's modern classic.

### 2015-16 Semifinals: Real Madrid 1 Man City 0 (agg)

Manuel Pellegrini's Manchester City were hoping to reach their first Champions League final but a deflected Gareth Bale cross cut their bid short. After a dull goalless first leg draw in Manchester, Welsh winger Bale's cross hit City defender Fernando and flew over Joe Hart as Cristiano Ronaldo's *Los Blancos* reached a record 14th final. The Spanish giants, coached by Zinedine Zidane, went on to beat rivals Atletico Madrid in Milan in a repeat of the 2014 final, claiming their 11th European Cup.

### 2019-20 Last 16: City 4 Madrid 2

With Pep Guardiola at the helm Man City got the better of Madrid with 2-1 victories in both legs of their last 16 tie – which were played six months apart because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Guardiola's side reached the one-game final eight format in Lisbon but were dealt a shock 3-1 quarterfinal defeat by Lyon.

### 2021-22 Semifinals: Madrid 6 City 5

Madrid produced one of the all-time great Champions League fightbacks to stun City despite the English team's domination for the first 180 minutes of the tie. City were left to rue letting the visitors escape the Etihad only 4-3 behind having twice led by two goals in the first leg. Riyad Mahrez's strike to open the scoring 17 minutes from time in the Bernabeu looked to have sealed the deal. But Madrid's powers of recovery were a theme of their run to a 14th European Cup. Rodrygo struck twice in stoppage time to send the game into extra-time before Benzema's penalty sent Carlo Ancelotti's men to Paris, where they beat Liverpool 1-0 in the final.

### 2022-23 Semifinals: City 5 Madrid 1

City learned their lesson and this time were ruthless on their way to finally conquering Europe. De Bruyne's blistering strike cancelled out Vinicius Junior's opener as the first leg ended 1-1 in the Bernabeu. On home turf, City were unstoppable. City completed their quest to win the Champions League with a 1-0 win over Inter Milan in the Istanbul final.

### 2023-24 Quarterfinals: Madrid 4 City 4 (Madrid win 4-3 on pens)

Madrid exacted revenge for their humbling at the Etihad 12 months previously by withstanding a City onslaught before prevailing on penalties. A 3-3 thriller in the Bernabeu left the tie tantalisingly poised for the second leg. Rodrygo's early strike gave the visitors something to defend in Manchester, which they did until De Bruyne fired in a 76th minute equaliser. Mateo Kovacic and Bernardo Silva missed from the spot in what many saw as a de facto final before Madrid beat Bayern Munich and Borussia Dortmund to lift the trophy once more.

AFF

**RECORD** 15-time Champions League winners Real Madrid face Pep Guardiola's Manchester City tomorrow (4am Malaysian time) wondering how to keep powerhouse striker Erling Haaland at bay.

The Norwegian juggernaut is back in form with seven goals in his last eight games across all competitions and will be aiming to capitalise on Madrid's crumbling defence.

Dani Carvajal and Eder Militao's long-term injury absences have been compounded by new injuries for Antonio Rudiger, David Alaba and Lucas Vazquez.

Along with veteran Nacho's departure last summer, Madrid are short at the back heading into the playoff round tie against City.

Madrid did not reinforce in the winter transfer window and Ancelotti said his team must "bear out" the tough spot they are in.

The coach is also still seeking the perfect balance between defence and attack after superstar French striker Kylian Mbappe's arrival last summer.



## Real ripe for Haaland onslaught

The holders have often struggled defensively when using Mbappe, Vinicius Junior, Jude Bellingham and Rodrygo Goes together as starters.

However Ancelotti deployed his "fantastic four" in a 1-1 La Liga draw against Atletico on Sunday and they worked hard when called upon to track back for the leaders.

Ancelotti heralded his team's commitment against Atletico, ahead of the visit to the Etihad Stadium.

"Everyone sacrificed, battled, fought and retrieved a tricky game," said the coach, with Mbappe scoring in the second half after Julian Alvarez put Atletico ahead.

"Mbappe and Vinicius made an effort to be closer to the rest of the team... it was a good performance in terms of the

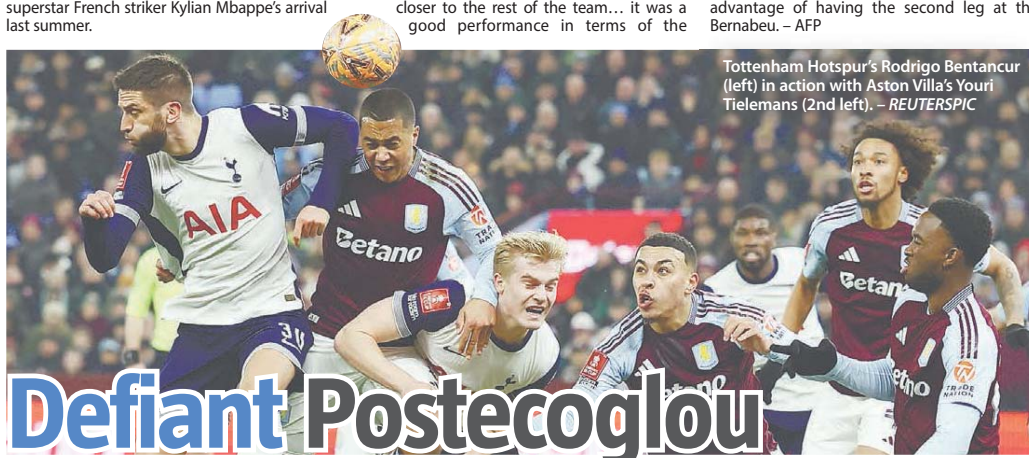
players' commitment."

Ancelotti highlighted that his team is thriving despite their various absentees at the back.

"Before the (derby) I saw an image in which Carvajal, Alaba, Militao and Rudiger greeted their teammates before they took the field," the Italian coach pointed out. "Despite the difficulties, we are doing very well."

Even though Guardiola's side have been far below their best this season, Madrid's makeshift defence is an appealing prospect for City's attacking stars.

Ancelotti will hope his team can compete well enough to avoid a thrashing like those they have suffered against Barcelona this season, shipping nine goals in two matches, and take advantage of having the second leg at the Bernabeu. – AFF



Tottenham Hotspur's Rodrigo Bentancur (left) in action with Aston Villa's Youri Tielemans (2nd left). – REUTERS/SPIC

## Defiant Postecoglou

Tottenham boss says calls for his dismissal 'agenda driven' after Villa defeat

BY JONATHAN VEAL

**E**MBATTLED Tottenham boss Ange Postecoglou says people who are calling for him to be sacked are "agenda driven" and no other side would be able to cope with the amount of injuries his side have had.

Postecoglou's position was plunged into more uncertainty after Spurs were knocked out of their second cup competition in four days following a 2-1 FA Cup defeat at Aston Villa.

Less than 72 hours after losing the Carabao Cup semifinal to Liverpool, a depleted Spurs went down to goals from Jacob Ramsey and Morgan Rogers at Villa Park with Mathys Tel bagging a late consolation.

Postecoglou is happy for people to say what they want about him, but insists no other team could have coped with the injuries he has had to deal with over the last few months.

"I'm not talking about me. People can judge me. They can say I've done a bad job, I'm not up to it or whatever," he said.

"That's fine. What I'm saying is you can't be critical of players or players' performances at

this time.

"Because if you do, then do that with everyone else. Be as critical of other clubs when they've got nine or 10 or 11 players out. And none of them have. And have to play every week. And not for one game.

"How did Liverpool go today? And they just did that for one game. Do that for two and a half months. Any team. Do that for two and a half months in multiple competitions.

"I don't care about me. People will judge me. But you can't judge this group of players on what's happened.

"Me, that's not of interest to me. My responsibility at this football club is this group of players and this team, to get them to play in the manner I want them to and bring us success.

"Whether people think I can do that or not, that's for others to judge. But there's got to be a better appreciation for what a very small group of players have been doing for the last two and a half months.

"It can't be that people think that's an excuse. That's just not anywhere near close to objective analysis. That's just agenda driven stuff.

"If it's to get rid of me that's fine. Good on ya. Go for it a million times. But in terms of this group of players, I can't speak highly enough of them."

Villa were worthy of their victory, which sees them book their place in the fifth round of the FA Cup for the first time since the 2014-15 campaign.

Marcus Rashford made his debut as a second-half substitute, while Marco Asensio also came on and both showed glimpses of what they will add to the Villa team.

Boss Unai Emery said: "We watched the skill, how they helped us and how they will help us again for the next month in different competitions we're going to face and being demanding like we are.

"We are in a new way, for some changes we did, but being demanding, because we will need improve.

"Improving in different tactical issues and as well how we want to compete in the Premier League for the next month, and we have to be now very demanding in our hard work." – The Independent

## New coach Kovac plots Dortmund revival

**FRESH** from defeat on his Borussia Dortmund debut, coach Niko Kovac was confident his struggling side were closer to a return to form than many think.

Dortmund play the first leg of their knockout playoff at Sporting Lisbon tomorrow (4am), having won just three of their past 13 games.

Already out of the German Cup, Dortmund sit 11th in the Bundesliga, seven points outside the top four and a whopping 25 behind league leaders Bayern Munich with 21 games played.

Aided by a manageable draw, they ended up a respectable 10th in the 36-team tournament.

The placing drew Dortmund up against Portuguese champions Sporting, who have had their own struggles in the competition since the

departure of coach Ruben Amorim to Manchester United.

Former Bayern Munich, Eintracht Frankfurt and Monaco coach Kovac replaced Nuri Sahin who was sacked in January, just seven months after taking over the top job.

Kovac has not been afforded the luxury of time. After a 2-1 home loss to top-four rivals Stuttgart on Saturday, Kovac said his side was close to a turnaround.

"We couldn't have been unlucky. The team gave it their all. The defeat hurts because it was unnecessary," he said.

For tomorrow's trip to Portugal, Kovac added "we just need to do a little something here and there, small tweaks. Otherwise we

need to stay true to what we've shown."

While Kovac's intensity has often meant relatively short spells in charge – he has never coached more than 100 games at any one club – his style has been particularly suited to cup competitions.

He won the German Cup with Eintracht Frankfurt and then Bayern in consecutive seasons.

In his first year in France, he took Monaco to the French Cup final, where they lost to Paris Saint-Germain.

In his only season in the Champions League, Kovac's Bayern were eliminated by Jurgen Klopp's title-bound Liverpool in 2018-19. – AFF



## RESULTS & STANDINGS

**ENGLISH FA CUP** (4th round): **Aston Villa 2** (Ramsey 1, Rogers 64) **Tottenham 1** (Tel 90+1), **Blackburn 0 Wolves 2** (Gomes 33, Cunha 34), **Plymouth 1 (Hardie 53-pen) Liverpool 0.**

**LA LIGA:** **Alaves 0 Getafe 1** (Arambarri 44-pen), **Valencia 2** (Mosquera 30, Diakhaby 41) **Leganes 0**, **Real Sociedad 2** (Becker 1, Mendez 84) **Espanyol 1** (Puado 53-pen), **Sevilla 1** (Vargas 8) **Barcelona 4** (Lewandowski 7, Lopez 46, Raphinha 55, Garcia 89).  
TOP 6 P W D L F A Pts  
Real Madrid 23 15 5 3 51 22 50  
A. Madrid 23 14 7 2 38 15 49  
Barcelona 23 15 3 5 64 25 48  
A. Bilbao 23 12 8 3 36 20 44  
Villarreal 23 11 7 5 46 34 40  
R. Vallecano 23 9 8 6 27 24 35

**SERIE A:** **Venezia 0 Roma 1** (Dybala 57-pen), **Lazio 5** (Marusic 31, Pedro 57, 77, Castellanos 63, Dele-Bashiru 88) **Monza 1** (Sensi 86), **Cagliari 2** (Vogliacco 57-og, Coman 70) **Parma 1** (Leoni 78), **Lecce 0 Bologna 0**, **Napoli 1** (McTomlinay 37) **Udinese 1** (Ekkelenkamp 40).

TOP 6 P W D L F A Pts  
Napoli 24 17 4 3 39 17 55  
Inter Milan 23 15 6 2 56 22 51  
Atalanta 24 15 5 4 54 26 50  
Lazio 24 14 3 7 45 32 45  
Juventus 24 10 13 1 41 21 43  
Fiorentina 23 12 6 5 40 23 42

**BUNDESLIGA:** RB Leipzig 2 St Pauli 0, Holstein Kiel 2 Bochum 2.

TOP 6 P W D L F A Pts  
B. Munich 21 17 3 1 65 19 54  
B. Leverkusen 21 13 7 1 49 27 46  
E. Frankfurt 21 11 6 4 46 28 39  
RB Leipzig 21 10 6 5 36 29 36  
Stuttgart 21 10 5 6 39 31 35  
Freiburg 21 10 3 8 28 36 33

**FRENCH LIGUE 1:** Lyon 4 Reims 0, Strasbourg 2 Montpellier 0, Auxerre 2 Toulouse 2, Angers 0 Marseille 2.

TOP 6 P W D L F A Pts  
Paris SG 21 16 5 0 58 20 53  
Marseille 21 13 4 4 45 25 43  
Nice 21 10 7 4 41 26 37  
Monaco 21 11 4 6 37 28 37  
Lille 21 9 8 4 34 22 35  
Lyon 21 9 6 6 36 26 33

## KBS to introduce talent transfer initiative

**THE** Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS) aims to ensure that talent development is not limited to just one sport, especially if they are found to have less potential to represent the national team in that particular sport.

Its Minister, Hannah Yeoh said they will assist in transferring the talent to another sport to ensure the efforts of parents, who send their children to be active in a particular sport, are not wasted.

"Sports require athletes to start training at an early age, with rhythmic gymnastics being one of them, but not all children will grow up to represent Malaysia," Yeoh said after officiating the launch of a new branch of the Rhythmic Excellence Academy in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"I do not want the initial investments made by the parents to go to waste when the children realise they are that good in that particular sport," she said.

She also praised the positive steps implemented between the Rhythmic Excellence Academy, founded by Malaysian Gymnastics Federation vice-president Petrina Low, and the diving academy in Bukit Jalil in collaboration with former national diver Datuk Leong Mun Yee.

"Such collaboration is what we want to see, where athletes can switch to another sport," she said, adding that the National Sports Council, together with the coaches, are studying ways to implement the initiative.

Hannah said that, for example, former national men's singles badminton ace Datuk Lee Chong Wei initially took up basketball while national wushu queen Tan Cheong Min played badminton first. — Bernama

# Great start for Sivasangari

## Squash queen overcomes Sobhy to win Cincinnati Gaynor Cup

**M**ALAYSIA'S Sivasangari Subramaniam earned her first title of the 2024/25 PSA Squash Tour season after defeating No. 2 seed Amanda Sobhy in a five-game thriller at the 2025 Cincinnati Gaynor Cup.

Sivasangari came into the match having taken out top seed and defending champion Olivia Weaver in the semifinals, while US No. 2 Sobhy claimed victory over England's Jasmine Hutton.

The 26-year-old from Sungai Petani was the more aggressive of the two players as the match began, forcing the American onto her backhand and stopping Sobhy from having control of the tempo of the rallies, which was rewarded with an 11-7 win.

The US No. 2 came onto the court for the second game with a point to prove, making less errors and forcing her opponent around the court, ultimately storming to an 8-1 lead.

The No. 3 seed rallied, but it wasn't enough to overcome Sobhy's early advantage as she claimed the game 11-6.

In a closely-contested third game, Sobhy held a narrow lead from 6-6 to take the lead for the



first time in the match.

Sivasangari regrouped in the fourth game, taking the game to the American in a similar manner than in the first game and forcing the match to a fifth game, the first in a Gaynor Cup final since 2017.

From 4-4 in game five, Sivasangari took control, scoring seven successive points to claim her first Silver-level title.

Speaking after the match, Sivasangari said: "I feel great. It's a first title for this year and then my last title was London (Classic) and now to be winning this is a great feeling."

"I think I had a tough couple of months. Being 2-0 up an losing matches, losing close matches and I think that was all the learning process that I had to go through to win today. It came from the experience that I had over the last couple of months."

"Yesterday (beating top seed Olivia Weaver in the semifinals) was a big win for me. I'd never beaten Olivia and that was my first win. I kind of put that aside."

"After that match, I told myself that the job's still not done, I still have one more match. I don't put any pressure on myself, I know Amanda (Sobhy) is a good player."

"I just tried to play point-by-point, focus on what I need to out there and that outcome will come with it and it's great that it went my way." — PSA Squash Tour

Sivasangari poses with the Cincinnati Gaynor Cup trophy yesterday. — PSA SQUASH TOUR

## Turtles maintain fourth spot



Negeri Sembilan's Annas Rahmat (left) competes for the ball with Terengganu's Nelson Wilfredo (centre) during the Super League match in Paroi on Sunday. — BERNAMAPIC

**TERENGGANU FC (TFC)** returned to winning ways and collected three points after beating Negeri Sembilan FC (NSFC) 2-0 in a Super League match at the Tuanku Abdul Rahman Stadium in Paroi, on Sunday night.

TFC who lost to BG Puthum United in their pursuit to qualify for the semifinals of the Asean Club Championship (ACC) last week, came back to score a comfortable win against the home team.

Badrul Afzan Razali's squad started aggressively with several dangerous attempts on the home goal but the NSFC defence managed to keep them at bay.

However, the Turtles' continued efforts paid off through a goal by import Nurillo Tukhtasinov from a 30m freekick which deceived goalkeeper, Muhammad Aqil Abdul Razak in the 25th minute.

TFC remained in control of the match with two dangerous attempts outside the box through Safawi Rashid and Akhyar Abd Rashid in the 39th and 43rd minutes but failed to hit the target before the end of the first half.

The start of the second half saw NSFC continue to increase the intensity of the game and almost equalised in the 58th

minute through an attempt by imported player, Jacques Faye but defender Safwan Mazlan saved a goal-bound effort, managing to clear the ball from the goal line.

The visitors were awarded a penalty via video assistant referee (VAR) after the ball hit the hand of an NSFC player in the penalty box which Nelson Bonilla quickly put away in the 79th minute to put TFC comfortably in front.

The victory puts TFC in fourth place in the league table with 27 points while NSFC is in 12th position with nine points. — Bernama

## No lofty targets for duo in Dubai

**PARIS 2024** Paralympians Eddy Bernard and Muhammad Ammar Aiman Nor Azmi have not been set any lofty targets for the 2025 Dubai World Para Athletics Grand Prix Championships.

Their coach, Hamberi Mahat, said the four-day Dubai championships from yesterday will be their first outing since the 2024 Paris Paralympics, which saw Eddy clinch bronze in the men's 100m (m) T44 (physical impairment) event and Muhammad Ammar Aiman finish fourth in the men's 400m T20 (intellectual impairment) category last September.

"They are still not in the competition mode yet but we are sending them to protect their ranking."

"I feel that they won't be able to achieve the kind of heights they reached in Paris 2024 because they are far from ready to perform at the highest level," he told Bernama.

As such, Hamberi hopes Eddy can achieve the targeted time of 11.90 seconds (s) and Muhammad Ammar Aiman 49.00s at the championships, which will be held at the athletics track of the Dubai Club for People of Determination sports complex.

Although the times set are nowhere new their personal bests (Eddy's 11.58s and Muhammad Ammar Aiman's 47.43s), which are Asian records that they set in Paris 2024, Hamberi said the targets they have set for the duo are reasonable considering they have not been competitive for some time.

Eddy is scheduled to be in action today and Muhammad Ammar Aiman tomorrow.

Hamberi said the championships in Dubai would also be the best platform for the duo to gear up for the 2025 World Para Athletics Championships in New Delhi from Sept 26-Oct 5. — Bernama





# theSun Sports

TUESDAY | FEB 11, 2025

Read **theSun** iPaper at  
**www.thesun.my**  
Free access to iPaper PDF Download  
or download **theSun** app from  
the App Store or Google Play™.

SCAN ME

Download on the App Store | GET IT ON Google Play | EXPLORE IT ON AppGallery



Plymouth's Nikola Katic (centre) dives to head the ball clear under pressure from Liverpool's Diogo Jota (right) during their FA Cup 4th round match yesterday. — AFP/PIC

## 'They deserve it'

**A**RNE SLOT bemoaned a lack of creativity from his Liverpool side after being upset by Championship strugglers Plymouth Argyle in a famous FA Cup shock.

The Reds saw their quadruple hopes dashed in the 1-0 defeat at Home Park after a Ryan Hardie penalty following Harvey Elliott handball.

And while Slot was quick to give credit to Miron Muslic's side, the Dutch coach immediately highlighted just where the Premier League leaders fell short on a rare off day.

"We were not having a very good day, it's the outcome," Slot said. "I can't say that the boys didn't fight, it was a fight. We didn't create many chances.

"Where two teams have hardly any chances, no openings, it's up to a moment, they deserved it. They played a really good game.

"They're able to do better, but it's a system, a way of playing, it's hard to create chances.

"In the lead-up to this game, a lot of long balls, they were really aggressive, it's not always easy to create chances.

"We expected them to play a better game than this. We have to get better.

"It hurts everyone, me, the players... We wanted to be in this competition as long as possible.

"From what I've seen all season, they kept fighting to the last second, it wasn't a workrate problem, they worked really hard and couldn't find chances, we have to keep doing the workrate and be a bit more creative."

Slot added that he was encouraged

## Slot points to lack of creativity for Liverpool's shock FA Cup defeat against Plymouth

by his side's closing phase of play to show character when chasing the equaliser.

He added: "The way we played wasn't a lot to be happy about, but the only thing I was happy about was that the boys kept on fighting for 100 minutes, probably the best part of our game was the last 10 minutes.

"That shows that they kept on fighting. Credit to them, good game plan, they worked incredibly hard, got their penalty, it was deserved because it was a penalty, correct decision, but that had a lot of impact on the game.

"Both teams had hardly any chances, then they

were 1-0 up and kept fighting until the end. The goalkeeper made one or two good saves, but we created hardly anything at all."

Plymouth boss Muslic admitted to being "very emotional" after his side produced a giant-killing act to dump the Liverpool out, but insisted his celebrations would be restricted to "eating some nachos and drinking a Fanta".

"Normally I'm very good in my words and eloquent, but I'm a little bit speechless," said Muslic, the Bosnian who succeeded the sacked Wayne Rooney in the Plymouth dugout last month.

"I'm very

emotional because I realised the task and the opponent. It's the biggest moment so far in my coaching career, no doubt, because it's the FA Cup and Liverpool.

"But the biggest moment will be staying up (in the Championship). This is my goal, this is what I have in my mind and my soul.

"It's a day for Argyle, a day for Plymouth, a day for the 'Green Army'. They deserve it and I want them to give it (celebrations) their all.

"I will go home and re-watch the game, eat some Nachos and drink a Fanta. It's very boring for me."

Following a tight first half of few chances, Hardie converted from the spot after Elliott had handled when Darko Gyabi hooked the ball over his head.

"Part of the game plan was to be structured, organised and brave. We knew we would have a lot of moments to defend and it was a huge task to keep them away from the goal.

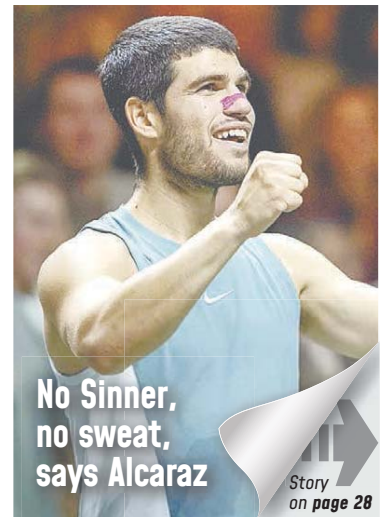
"I watched them a couple of nights ago against Tottenham and the wave of Liverpool was unstoppable.

"(Liverpool made changes) but we had belief (to win) before because we wanted to maximise this game.

"I said to the players there was nothing to be afraid of, nothing to lose and everything to win." — The Independent



Plymouth players celebrate after the match. — REUTERS/PIC



## No Sinner, no sweat, says Alcaraz

Story on page 28



## Barca maintain title charge

Story on page 29



## Great start for Sivasangari

Story on page 31