



## Uncontrolled eating fuels rise in kidney disease

Experts call for urgent action to address prevalence of chronic renal failure related to obesity.

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# MACC to quiz Ismail Sabri

More witnesses to be called for statements in corruption and money laundering probe over seizure of RM170m cash and 16kg in gold bars from safe house linked to ex-PM, says commission chief.

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E-hailing drivers have lamented that fare hikes have not translated into better earnings due to the rise in operational costs. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

## Uphill task to diagnose surging ADHD cases

Without urgent reforms in healthcare system, many will go undetected and be deprived of support: Experts

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## E-hailing services hit speed bump

Adjustments to fare structures, regulatory changes cause number of drivers to drop, leading to increase in charges.

## Be peacemakers, not instigators of conflict, Pahang Sultan tells leaders

**KUANTAN:** The Sultan of Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah has called on leaders, especially political figures, to serve as a bridge to unite the people and not ignite fire to the long-standing peaceful coexistence of the people.

His Royal Highness said they should stop being "clowns" by fuelling polemics on 3R (religion, race and royalty) issues, which could incite conflict in the community.

"Let this stage remain calm, free from unnecessary drama. Engage in dialogue with reason and sincerity

rather than resorting to monologues filled with insults and hatred.

"I welcome the recent statement by Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail, who stressed that it is the responsibility of leaders to be peacemakers, not instigators of conflict."

He was speaking at the opening of the new Rahman Ibn Auf Mosque in Kampung Durian Hijau in Jerantut on Tuesday.

His speech was uploaded on the Facebook page of the Sultanate of Pahang.

Also in attendance were the

Tengku Ampuan of Pahang Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah and the Tengku Mahkota of Pahang Tengku Hassan Ibrahim Alam Shah.

Al-Sultan Abdullah said history has shown how racial and religious conflicts, if not handled wisely, could lead to disastrous consequences.

"We must not allow history's darkest moments to repeat themselves due to our failure to manage these sensitive issues with wisdom and prudence. Respect one another and be mindful of religious sensitivities.

"Let us not allow ignorance and arrogance to destroy what we have long safeguarded."

He expressed sadness that certain parties continue to undermine and challenge the sanctity of Islam, disregarding the boundaries of respectful speech and conduct.

In this regard, he urged Muslims in the state to stand united in defending and upholding the sanctity of Islam, ensuring that it is not arbitrarily disparaged by irresponsible parties.

"Is this what we call an independent country? Or is our independence merely in numbers,

not in the minds of our people? As Muslims, we are taught that the more abundant the harvest, the more the rice stalks bow – a reminder to remain humble in knowledge, respectful in speech and wise in action.

"However, let not our gentleness and politeness embolden others to disparage our religion as they please. Islam does not teach us to submit to humiliation or oppression."

He said under a just and wise government, people of other faiths are given the freedom to practise their religions in peace as long as they do not threaten public order. – Bernama

## 13MP expected to be tabled in Parliament in July

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Economy Ministry is finalising the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP), which is expected to be tabled in Parliament in July, said its deputy minister Datuk Hanifah Hajaj Taib.

She said the 13MP, which serves as the country's socioeconomic development plan from 2026 to 2030, is formulated based on the Madani Economy goals.

"The 13MP is crucial to ensuring that Malaysia successfully transitions to a high-income economy within the plan's timeframe," she said while winding up the debate on the Royal Address Motion in the Dewan Negara on Tuesday.

Hanifah said the government would continue to focus on three main areas – strengthening the country's fiscal position through increased revenue and expenditure rationalisation, identifying new sources of growth and implementing structural economic reforms.

"Emphasis will be placed on reforming the economic structure towards higher value-added activities to realise Malaysia's aspiration of becoming a high-income country."

Hanifah said to address the impact of the global trade conflict between the United States and China on the national economy, the government would focus on several key strategies, including enhancing strategic trade with existing and new trading partners.

"Another key strategy is positioning Malaysia as an alternative investment destination for multinational companies to diversify trade, mitigate risks from global market instability and enhance integration into the dynamic global value chain.

"A third strategy is leveraging Malaysia's participation in free trade agreements to boost trade, gain preferential access to global markets and reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers." – Bernama

## US ambassador calls on Anwar

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim received a courtesy call from United States Ambassador to Malaysia Edgard D. Kagan in Putrajaya yesterday evening.

Anwar in a post on his Facebook page said they discussed long-standing bilateral relations as well as economic and technological cooperation, particularly in areas of mutual interest, including *halal* certification.

He added that they also talked about Malaysia's Asean chairmanship, including the Asean-United States Special Summit.

Anwar said he also extended an invitation to United States President Donald Trump to attend the East Asia Summit, scheduled to take place later this year. – Bernama

# MACC to record statement from Ismail Sabri today

➤ Former prime minister required to be present at Putrajaya headquarters to facilitate ongoing investigation into corruption and money laundering cases

**KOTA KINABALU:** The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will record a statement from former prime minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today, said its chief commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki.

He said the Bera MP is expected to appear at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya to provide his statement at 10am as part of an ongoing investigation into corruption and money laundering cases linked to him.

He added that Ismail Sabri's medical certificate expired yesterday.

He said additional witnesses would also be called gradually to the MACC office in the near future to provide their statements.

Azam was speaking at a media conference after the signing of an MoU between the MACC and Kota Kinabalu City Hall on Tuesday.

At the signing ceremony, the MACC was represented by Sabah

MACC director Datuk S. Karunanithy while Kota Kinabalu City Hall was represented by Mayor Datuk Seri Dr Sabin Samitah, with Azam as a witness.

MACC sources reported that statements from 36 witnesses had been recorded to assist in the corruption and money laundering investigation involving Ismail Sabri, with an additional 23 witnesses set to be called soon.

Four of the 36 witnesses are believed to be Ismail Sabri's former officers who were previously detained and had their statements recorded on Monday.

Ismail Sabri was previously reported to have been admitted to a private medical centre after collapsing at his home on Feb 21. He was scheduled to appear at the MACC headquarters last Friday but did not attend due to

health issues.

On March 3, Azam said Ismail Sabri is a suspect in the investigation following the discovery of about RM170 million in cash at a safe house during a raid, Bernama reported.

The cash seized was of various international currencies, including Baht, Riyal, Pound Sterling, Won, Euro, Swiss Franc and Yuan. Also seized was 16kg of gold bullion estimated to be worth RM7 million.

The MACC has also reportedly frozen 13 bank accounts with over RM2 million as part of its ongoing investigation.

The case is being probed under the MACC Act 2009 and the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001.

## Book on collection of speeches by PM launched



Anwar talking to a guest during a breaking of fast event with media representatives at Angkasapuri in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. – BERNAMAPIIC

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Institute of Integrity (IIM) in collaboration with the Policy and Economic Affairs Centre of Malaysia launched a book, *Mandate for Integrity and Governance: Malaysia Madani*.

The book, containing a collection of 30 speeches by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on matters related to integrity and governance, was launched by Anwar at a ceremony in Angkasapuri.

IIM said in a statement that the book is seen as a driving force in the Madani Government's efforts to improve the country's position in the Corruption Perception Index, with a target of reaching the 25th position by 2033.

"This goal requires a collective effort from the government, the private sector and the community through legal reforms, administrative transparency as well as continuing education on integrity."

"This book can be an important reference in efforts to shape Malaysia as a corruption-free country as well as a catalyst to create a transparent society which practises the values of integrity." – Bernama



## Monthly allowance for MPs could reach RM40,000, says PMO

**KUALA LUMPUR:** An MP is entitled to a fixed allowance of RM25,700 monthly, as well as other allowances and claims depending on their eligibility, according to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

In a statement, it clarified the matter following allegations by certain parties, including opposition MPs, that their monthly income is so low to the extent of having to go into debt.

According to the statement, the allowances and claims that the MPs are entitled to for official duties in the country are parliamentary session allowance (RM400 per day), Public Accounts Committee (PAC)/Select Committee meeting allowance (RM300 per day – apart from parliamentary sessions), PAC member meeting allowance (RM250 per day – during parliamentary sessions), official briefing allowance (RM300 per day), daily living allowance (RM100 per day – based on attendance in Parliament or official trip exceeding 32km from residence), travel claims (for self-driving, public or land transport) and accommodation claims (hotel, lodging and laundry service).

For official duties overseas, the allowances and claims the MPs are entitled to are meal allowance (RM340 per night), daily living allowance (RM170 per day), accommodation claim (hotel and laundry service), transport expenses claim (land and air transport), currency exchange losses claim and tip allowance based on meal allowance.

"When combined, the total income of an MP could reach RM30,000 to RM40,000 per month, such as previously stated by the prime minister (Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim)," the statement read.

As such, it said the prime minister also advised all MPs to manage their finances wisely and to always prioritise the interests of the people, particularly low-income groups who are in much greater need of assistance.

On Monday, Anwar rapped opposition MPs for exploiting the issue to gain public attention, with some even claiming that they were financially burdened and in debt, despite earning up to RM40,000 per month.

He also stressed that allocations for all parliamentary constituencies, including those held by the Opposition, were still channelled to the people regardless of political affiliation. – Bernama

# Addressing surge in ADHD cases an uphill battle

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** As Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) cases surge, Malaysia's healthcare system grapples with long waits, high costs and a specialist shortage.

Experts warn that without urgent reforms, many cases will go undiagnosed, leaving individuals without the support they need.

Malaysian Psychiatric Association president Dr Mohd Fadzli Mohamad Isa told *theSun*: "The healthcare system is ill-equipped to handle the increasing number of ADHD cases."

"We need a more inclusive and adaptable approach, with greater financial and human resource support."

Mohd Fadzli also said diagnosing ADHD remains an uphill battle, adding that many general practitioners lack awareness, and families often

↗ Experts say lack of public awareness, specialist shortage, persistent misconceptions and fear of stigma hinder early diagnosis

hesitate to seek psychiatric assessments due to stigma.

"There is a misconception that ADHD is just about hyperactivity or bad parenting."

"Some believe children will simply outgrow it, which delays critical intervention."

He said the public should not wait for mild symptoms to escalate.

"Early screening and regular follow-ups are crucial to managing the condition before it significantly impacts daily life," said Mohd Fadzli.

According to ADHD Malaysia, global statistics show that approximately 3.4% of the population experience ADHD.

Applying this prevalence to Malaysia's 32.7 million people, this translates to roughly one million

individuals, many of whom are undiagnosed due to lack of awareness and accessible screening.

Government data highlights a sharp rise in diagnoses among children.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad reported that cases had jumped from 79 in 2013 to 268 in 2023, a number experts said was still far below the actual prevalence rate.

International Islamic University Malaysia child and adolescent psychiatrist Dr Rozanizam Zakaria said ADHD diagnoses in Malaysia have increased due to greater awareness, improved screening tools and better detection of previously undiagnosed cases.

Yet, many remain hesitant to seek help, fearing medication or assuming treatment offers little benefit, he added.

Rozanizam said these misconceptions persist due to lack of public education.

"We need nationwide awareness campaigns, professional training and community support programmes," he said.

He added that Malaysia's mental health system is overstretched, with long waiting lists and a shortage of specialists.

While government hospitals offer subsidised treatment, the demand far exceeds capacity.

"We need more trained professionals, including general practitioners who can handle ADHD cases at the primary care level," Rozanizam said.

He also shared Mohd Fadzli's view on persistent misconceptions about ADHD.

"Some also fear medication and see no need for intervention."

"The key signs of ADHD include persistent difficulty focusing, easy distractibility, forgetfulness and struggling to complete tasks."

In adults, Rozanizam said ADHD often manifests in ways beyond childhood hyperactivity.

"Difficulty focusing, chronic procrastination, poor time management and emotional dysregulation are common symptoms. Without treatment, ADHD can disrupt careers, relationships and mental health."

Beyond healthcare, Rozanizam said the education system also fell short in supporting students with ADHD.

He also stressed that the government should introduce nationwide screening, particularly for high-risk groups including children with literacy challenges or severe behavioural issues.

"Government hospitals offer subsidised care, but long wait times remain a challenge."

"Some NGOs provide affordable therapy, and schools could implement behavioural interventions at minimal cost."



**FESTIVE WARES ...** A trader selling *chappal* sandals and other items for the upcoming Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration at the Jalan Tunku Abdul Rahman bazaar in Kuala Lumpur. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

## EPF reforms enhance economic competitiveness, says MEF

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Industry leaders welcomed the passing of the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) (Amendment) Bill 2025, hailing it as a balanced approach that strengthens social security while ensuring business sustainability.

The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) lauded the move, emphasising that it provides financial relief to businesses and enhances Malaysia's economic competitiveness under the Malaysia Madani Economy Framework.

MEF president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said the policy provides financial relief for employers, ensuring business continuity while supporting the long term financial security of foreign workers.

"MEF views the EPF contribution

for non-citizen employees as a balanced approach to enhancing industrial resilience, employee productivity and economic growth over time.

"It is critical to control cost increases to ensure business sustainability and enhance Malaysia's competitiveness in line with the goal of placing Malaysia among the top 12 most competitive countries in the world, as envisioned under the Malaysia Madani Economy Framework," he told Bernama.

Syed Hussain also stressed the importance of continuous stakeholder engagement before implementing future changes to EPF contribution rates, to ensure that both employer and employee interests are protected.

He said MEF believes the structured savings mechanism for non-citizen employees will lead to better retention rates, workforce stability and improved productivity in key industries such as manufacturing, plantations, construction and services.

"With resilient businesses and a more productive workforce contributing to higher GDP, this would lead to increased investments, both local and foreign direct investment, and strengthened competitiveness in the global market," he said.

Meanwhile, Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers president Tan Sri Soh Thian Lai said in the long run, ensuring equal social protection access for all workers could support

Malaysia's industrial resilience by improving worker retention, reducing turnover and fostering a more engaged workforce.

He said EPF savings accumulated under the scheme could incentivise foreign workers to return home upon completing their contracts rather than seeking to stay on legally or illegally.

"The government should also make it a strict condition that foreign workers must be in legal status at the time of withdrawal. This would prevent undocumented workers from accessing the funds and further reinforce the objective of ensuring that only those who comply with immigration and employment laws benefit from the scheme," he said.

Soh stressed that the impact on business competitiveness and cost

structures must be closely monitored to ensure Malaysia remains an attractive investment destination.

On March 6, the EPF (Amendment) Bill 2025 was passed with a majority of votes in favour after being debated by eight MPs from both the government and opposition blocs. It involves amendments to 11 clauses to include provisions on the liability to pay contributions and the applicable contribution rate for non-citizen workers.

On Feb 3, the government announced that the contribution rate for foreign workers would be set at 2% for both employees and employers, lower than the mandatory rate for workers and permanent residents, which stands at 11% for employees and 12% or 13% for employers.



# Rising obesity rates fuel surge in kidney disease

► Physician warns lifestyle changes and early intervention crucial to preserving renal function

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Food is central to life in Malaysia, but excessive consumption of unhealthy food is fuelling a worrying rise in kidney failure cases.

In conjunction with World Kidney Day today, experts are calling for urgent action to address the increasing prevalence of obesity-related chronic kidney disease (CKD) in Malaysia.

Sunway Medical Centre consultant nephrologist and kidney transplant physician Prof Dr Wong Hin Seng warned that obesity alone – even in the absence of diabetes or hypertension – can cause irreversible kidney damage.

“The National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) 2023 reports that 54.4% of Malaysians are overweight or obese, with over two million affected by non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and hypertension.

“In Malaysia, 56% of new dialysis cases are caused by diabetes, followed by hypertension at 30%, according to the Malaysian Dialysis and Transplant Registry 2023, highlighting a serious kidney disease concern,” he said.

Wong explained that obesity strains the kidneys through chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, increased blood pressure and insulin resistance, leading to protein leakage in urine, an early sign of kidney damage.

For those already struggling with obesity, kidney disease can go undetected for years, especially among young people.

The NHMS study also revealed that 84% of adults aged 18 to 24 are unaware they have diabetes.

“Obesity increases the risk of CKD and accelerates its progression. When the kidneys



Wong said obesity strains the kidneys through chronic inflammation, oxidative stress, increased blood pressure and insulin resistance, leading to protein leakage in urine, an early sign of kidney damage.

– SYED AZAHAR SYED OSMAN/THESUN

are under constant stress, they fail faster,” he said.

“If you’ve been obese since childhood or your teenage years, the negative impact on your kidneys may already have started. You could be facing CKD by your 30s or 40s,” he said.

Wong attributed Malaysia’s rising obesity rates to major shifts in dietary habits and lifestyle choices.

He noted that traditional diets have increasingly been replaced by processed foods and sugary drinks, coinciding with a decline in physical activity.

“Kids used to play outside, but now screens dominate their lives. Adults are also leading more sedentary lifestyles, spending hours in

front of computers or TVs,” he said.

Wong advised that early intervention against obesity, along with regular health screenings, can help prevent kidney disease.

Kidney function and urine protein tests can detect problems early, especially in those who are overweight or diabetic.

“By addressing obesity and prioritising kidney health, Malaysians can build stronger, healthier futures.

“Obesity isn’t just about weight – it’s about what it does to our organs, especially the kidneys.

“Our kidneys work 24/7, and it’s time we gave them the care and attention they deserve,” he said.

## Six coastal projects expected to be completed this year

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Six out of 21 projects aimed at addressing high tides and coastal erosion are expected to be completed this year, said Energy Transition and Water Transformation Deputy Minister Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir.

He said the projects, implemented by the ministry through the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID), cover eight states along the west coast of the peninsula – Perlis, Kedah, Penang, Perak, Selangor, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan and Johor – at a total cost of RM200 million.

“The main scope of the project includes constructing and upgrading embankments as well as coastal erosion control structures. A total of 21 projects are under implementation, with six set for completion this year while the rest will be completed by 2027,” he said.

He was speaking during the winding-up debate on the motion of thanks for the Yang di-Pertuan Agong’s Royal Address in the Dewan Negara on Tuesday.

He said the ministry, through the DID, had also implemented a coastal flood mitigation project costing RM419 million in Sabah and Sarawak to reduce the risk of coastal flooding in residential areas and protect property and agricultural land.

On the issue of dam safety, Akmal Nasrullah said 10 physical and non-physical projects costing RM501 million had been approved under the 12th Malaysia Plan to ensure the safety of 16 DID dams nationwide.

“The main scope of these projects includes upgrading dam safety facilities and equipment, maintaining volume to improve flood control functions and conducting safety and management studies,” he said. – Bernama

## Ministry open to new housing proposals

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Housing and Local Government Ministry remains open to new housing proposals for the People’s Residential Programme (PRP) from state governments or the private sector.

Housing and Local Government Deputy Minister Datuk Aiman Athirah Sabu said state governments must ensure that proposed sites for PRP projects are suitable and strategic, with all land ownership matters settled, whether the land is provided free of charge or at a nominal fee.

“The approval for these projects is subject to government consideration and financial position, taking into account the site assessment report.

“These efforts reflect the *Madani* government’s commitment to ensuring that the people have access to quality and affordable housing, with no one left behind, especially low-income individuals, in the nation’s development,” she said during the winding-up debate on the motion of thanks for the Royal Address on behalf of the ministry in the Dewan Negara on Tuesday. – Bernama

## New ferry to begin operations before Aidilfitri

**TUMPAT:** The new Sri Tanjung 1 ferry is set to begin operations before *Aidilfitri*, pending the issuance of its passenger certificate from the Marine Department.

State Public Works Department director Nik Soh Yaacoub said the Roll-on/Roll-off (RoRo) ferry, valued at about RM8 million, arrived at the JKR Jetty in Pengkalan Kubor on March 4.

He said the new vessel would provide a more reliable service on the key route between Pengkalan Kubor and Takbai in Thailand.

The vessel will replace the ageing Sri Tanjung ferry, which has been in service for over 37 years and frequently suffers breakdowns due to wear and tear.

With a capacity to carry 58 passengers and

eight to 10 light vehicles, or a bus with 44 passengers, four five-tonne trucks or two 10-tonne trucks, the new ferry is expected to enhance service efficiency.

“The Sri Tanjung 1 ferry will bring significant benefits to both the Malaysia-Thailand tourism sector and the local community, particularly in Kelantan,” Nik Soh said. – Bernama

## Selangor women workforce participation hits 70%

**SHAH ALAM:** Selangor has exceeded the international benchmark of 30% women’s workforce participation, with 69.7% of the state’s female population now actively employed.

Most of them work in human resources, manufacturing and services, said Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari.

He noted that the rise in female workforce participation aligns with the Selangor Women’s Policy and Action Plan 2024 to 2026, which aims to expand job opportunities for women and foster an inclusive work environment across the state.

“The participation rate of women in the

workforce reaching 69.7% has set a benchmark, indicating that it is no longer a dogma or taboo subject,” he said.

“Now, we need to further boost women’s involvement in critical sectors such as engineering and leadership, which remains low, as well as improve workplace treatment of women,” he said.

He was speaking at a press conference on Tuesday night after witnessing the signing of a memorandum of understanding for the Jelajah Wanita MyWira initiative between Wanita Berdaya Selangor and TalentCorp.

Amirudin said apart from necessity and talent,

the rising number of women in the workforce was also driven by economic pressures requiring both husbands and wives to work.

On the Jelajah Wanita MyWira initiative, he said collaboration with the Human Resources Ministry and TalentCorp was crucial to ensuring that women in Selangor, particularly those from low- and middle-income groups, received the support, skills and opportunities needed to progress.

The programme, scheduled to run from April to November, will cover all 56 state constituencies in Selangor, serving as a platform to connect women with job opportunities and

workforce integration support at all levels.

Meanwhile, Human Resources Minister Steven Sim said the initiative aimed to empower 1.4 million women aged 20 to 44 in Selangor by providing direct access to empowerment opportunities and employment incentives under the *Madani* government.

“We will also expand this programme to other states. Besides encouraging more women to return to work, it serves as a platform to promote various government incentives, such as tax relief for career returnees and flexible work arrangements that benefit both women and men,” he said. – Bernama



# Rising costs putting brakes on e-hailing services

► Adjustments to fare structures and regulatory changes impacting public affordability and fairness to drivers

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
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**PETALING JAYA:** E-hailing services have significantly reshaped public transport in Malaysia over the past decade, offering passengers flexible and convenient travel alternatives.

However, recent fare hikes and regulatory changes have sparked debates over the affordability for passengers and fairness for drivers.

Universiti Teknologi Mara Institute of Transport (Legal Services and Quality) head Dr Siti Ayu Jalil said rising operational costs, particularly petrol prices, are key factors driving fare increases.

"Due to rising fuel costs and adjustments to fare structures, such as increases in base charges and surcharges, have been necessary. This has led to a decline in the number of e-hailing drivers since the Covid-19 pandemic, which has affected service availability and further pushed up fares."

She said globally, price hikes often align with increases in crude oil prices, adding that government regulations introduced in 2019, which require drivers to secure a Public Service

Vehicle (PSV) licence, insurance, annual vehicle inspections and medical checkups have further contributed to the declining number of drivers.

She also said other factors include distance, traffic congestion and weather.

"Despite the challenges, e-hailing remains a popular choice due to its convenience and seamless booking experience. Shared ride options, which allow passengers to split costs, have also contributed to the demand."

Siti Ayu said the increasing traffic congestion has further reinforced dependence on e-hailing services. She emphasised the need for government oversight to prevent excessive fare hikes and ensure fairness, adding that hikes could harm urban mobility and pointed out that Budget 2025 includes plans to enhance public transport as a long-term solution.

E-hailing drivers have also voiced concerns that fare hikes have not translated into better earnings.

Malaysian eHailing Alliances chief activist Jose Rizal said many drivers are struggling due to escalating operational costs.

"Between fuel prices, vehicle

maintenance, insurance and licensing fees, a significant portion of our income is spent before we even start making a profit. Despite higher fares, our earnings continue to shrink."

He said although drivers receive up to 80% of passenger fares, commissions, unpaid waiting times and repositioning costs eat into their actual earnings.

Jose Rizal called for stronger government enforcement and greater transparency from ride-hailing companies.

"We are advocating for a gig or platform workers act to ensure fair rights for drivers, including protection against unfair deactivation and access to social security."

Maxim e-hailing service provider director Mohd Hazwan Musley said the company adjusts fares based on market analysis to balance affordability, passenger demand and driver availability.

"Maxim only applies peak rates when ride requests exceed the number of available drivers. This encourages more drivers to work during peak periods and in high-demand areas, minimising prolonged waiting times for users," he said, adding that internal data revealed that the average ride cost in 2024 increased by less than RM1, aligning with annual inflation and rising living costs.

Mohd Hazwan also said as part of its corporate governance, Maxim always displayed estimated fares upfront, calculated based on optimal route mileage.

## Ex-navy officer discharged in CBT case

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Sessions Court yesterday discharged not amounting to an acquittal (DNAA) former Boustead Naval Shipyard Sdn Bhd (BNS) managing director Tan Sri Ahmad Ramli Mohd Nor of three counts of criminal breach of trust (CBT) involving RM21.08 million related to the Royal Malaysian Navy's Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) project.

Judge Suzana Hussin made the order after allowing an application by lawyer Datuk Mohd Yusof Zainal Abiden, who represented Ahmad Ramli, 81, who is also a former navy commander, for his client to be released without bail following a report on his client's mental condition, Bernama reported.

The lawyer told the court that a psychiatrist from the Kuala Lumpur Hospital found Ahmad Ramli unfit to stand trial due to his mental condition.

"Taking into account the submissions of the parties and the medical report on the mental condition of the accused, the assessment is that the accused is unfit to stand trial."

"Therefore, the accused is discharged without being acquitted of all charges," said Suzana during the mention of the case.

Ramli was charged on Aug 16, 2022, with being BNS managing director entrusted with the company's funds, to have committed CBT by approving a payment amounting to RM13,541,140 to the account of Syarikat Setia Holding Limited, Standard Chartered Bank, 6 Battery RD, Singapore 049909, without the approval of the BNS Board of Directors.

## SIM card scalping syndicate busted

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Immigration Department busted a SIM card scalping syndicate operated by Bangladeshi nationals at the KL International Airport during a special operation. Immigration director general Datuk Zakaria Shaaban said nine Bangladeshi men, aged 22 and 50, were caught on Monday following a public tip-off.

Zakaria said the syndicate targeted newly arrived Bangladeshi tourists by selling the SIM cards directly to them.

"Preliminary interrogation revealed that the sale of the cards could generate up to RM1,500 to RM2,000 per day. It is believed that they have been operating for the past two months."

Zakaria said the team also seized four Bangladeshi passports, 10 mobile phones, 121 SIM cards from various telcos, eight SIM card ejector pins and RM1,555 in cash.

He said the SIM cards were registered under different names and sold at RM25 each, adding that checks found five of the detainees did not possess valid travel documents and two of them had overstayed. - Bernama

## Court blocks access to seized jewellery

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The High Court yesterday allowed the government's application for a restraining order against PetroSaudi International Ltd director Tarek Obaid and two companies from accessing 41 pieces of jewellery worth £9 million (RM51.5 million) allegedly linked to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) funds.

Judge K. Muniandy issued the restraining order following an application by DPP Mahadi Abdul Jumaat under Section 53 of the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001.

The application was to stop Obaid, jewellery company SJ Philips Limited and valuables logistics services company Malca-Amit Far East Limited Hong Kong from carrying out any business including transferring, selling or disposing of the properties involved. The properties are 41 pieces of jewellery worth £9 million allegedly derived from 1MDB funds. - Bernama



**CONTRABAND HAUL ...** Penang Customs director Rohaizad Ali showing fireworks, cigarettes and alcoholic beverages worth over RM200,000 that were seized during two raids in Seberang Jaya and Simpang Ampat recently. - MASRY CHE ANI/THESUN

## MACC arrests 16 suspects, including 'Datuk Seri'

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has arrested 16 individuals on suspicion of corruption involving the late registration of births of non-citizens to citizens and birth registration using false supporting documents.

MACC deputy chief commissioner (operations) Datuk Seri Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya said all the suspects, aged between 20 and 70, were arrested through Op Outlander and Op Birth starting at 11am on Tuesday, involving raids at several premises including clinics and law firms around the Klang Valley and Johor.

For Op Outlander, the main suspect is a civil servant suspected of committing the act by assisting applications for late birth

registration, which is for those who are more than 60 days after birth.

"It is believed the activity was also masterminded by a medical practitioner with the title Datuk Seri who owns several clinics and maternity centres and whose role is to issue false birth verification documents."

He said through Op Birth, the three main suspects were believed to be acting as agents who committed the act by offering and giving a bribe of about RM18,000 to a civil servant.

"This was to assist in the application for birth registration using supporting documents such as hospital birth confirmation letters which were found to be fake."

"Meanwhile, six members of the public suspected of using the services of the agents were also arrested as applicants who submitted the birth registration forms. Also arrested was a legal practitioner suspected of being an intermediary between the agents and applicants."

Ahmad Khusairi said all suspects were brought to the MACC headquarters and the Selangor MACC to assist in investigations and will be brought before the Shah Alam Magistrate's Court in Selangor for remand.

"The two suspects, including the Datuk Seri who has health problems, were released on MACC bail after their statements were recorded." - Bernama

# Trader spreads Ramadan goodwill with charity drive

➤ Part of revenue from sale of *roti john* and *laksa* channelled to free hearse service and aid for poor

**BATU PAHAT:** Since 2017, Roti John Muafakat has been spreading the Ramadan spirit by donating a portion of its *roti john* and *laksa* sales revenue to charity.

Its owner Wahyu Hidayat Jaapar said RM1.50 from each *roti john* and RM1 from every pack of *laksa* sold would be channelled to charity.

He said the donations would go to Pertubuhan Unit Amal Van Jenazah Muafakat Daerah Batu Pahat, which he founded, and would also be used to assist the *asnaf* and those in need.

"Alhamdulillah, in more than a week of sales this Ramadan, the response has been great. We are selling over 80 *roti john* and around 70 packs of *laksa* every day."

"For *roti john*, we have four varieties, namely chicken, beef, lamb and *roti john kahwin* (a mix of chicken and beef). As for *laksa*, we sell Penang *laksa*," he said at his stall in Taman Bistari, Tongkang Pechah here on Tuesday.

Wahyu said he has never raised the price of his *roti john* since he started selling it,



Wahyu (left) showing a serving of *roti john* at his stall. — BERNAMAPIC

keeping it at RM7 per piece, while his *laksa*, introduced this Ramadan, is also priced at RM7 per packet.

"I am so thankful to those who buy *roti john* and *laksa* from us. It is great to see people enjoying their meals while also contributing to charity and helping those in need."

"I have been doing this for eight years and as long as I can, *InshaAllah*, I will keep it going every Ramadan," he said.

Pertubuhan Unit Amal Van Jenazah Muafakat Daerah Batu Pahat provides a free service to transport remains from the

Sultanah Nora Ismail Hospital in Batu Pahat and nearby hospitals to locations requested by the family of the deceased to anywhere in Peninsular Malaysia.

The organisation also offers free funeral management services to ease the burden on families, particularly the *asnaf* group and the less fortunate, Bernama reported.

Even after Ramadan, those who wish to contribute may do so by purchasing Burger Muafakat 4 All at the same location, as part of the proceeds from each sale are donated to the same fund.

## Rare delicacy found only in Kuala Kangsar

**KUALA KANGSAR:** Every Ramadan, the traditional treat of *apam pasang* is highly sought after as it is only sold in Kuala Kangsar.

Known locally as *apam kuale*, the round and soft white *kuih* is becoming increasingly hard to find due to its tedious preparation process.

Traditional *kuih* maker Fairus Isa, 55, said the lengthy preparation time is one reason not many entrepreneurs want to produce the delicacy for sale.

Fairus, who learned the skill from her late mother-in-law, has been in the *apam pasang* business for 34 years.

"At first, it was difficult because making the base ingredient, fermented rice (*tapai nasi*), takes time. But now I am used to it."

She said the preparation of *tapai nasi* takes about two days to achieve the right balance of sweet and sour flavours.

"Only after that can we mix it with rice flour and sugar to make the perfect *apam pasang*."

During Ramadan, she starts preparing the mixture as early as 8am before letting it set.

"It takes five hours before it is ready for steaming. By 2pm, I can deliver the *apam pasang* to vendors at the Arena Kuala Kangsar Ramadan Bazaar," she said, adding that sourcing wild banana leaves for the wrapping is another challenge.

She said the *kuih* is called *apam pasang* because two pieces are placed together after being wrapped in banana leaves and are often enjoyed with grated coconut or curry.

For Ramadan, she produces about 100 pieces of *apam pasang* from Monday to Friday, increasing the quantity to around 200 on weekends. — Bernama

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# Duterte to face murder charges for drug war killings

## Ex-president receives medical attention in Dubai

**ROTTERDAM:** A plane carrying former Philippine leader Rodrigo Duterte to the International Criminal Court to face charges over his bloody "war on drugs" took off after being delayed by a few hours in Dubai.

Duterte, who led the Philippines from 2016 to 2022, was arrested on Tuesday in Manila, marking the biggest step yet in the ICC's investigation into alleged crimes against humanity during an anti-drugs crackdown that killed thousands.

Duterte, 79, could become the first Asian former head of state to go on trial at the ICC in The Hague.

The ICC's warrant for his arrest says that as president, Duterte created, funded and armed "death squads" in his war on drugs that carried out murders of purported drug users and dealers.

In coming days, he will be brought before a judge and will have the allegations read out in

court. Prosecutors accuse him of crimes against humanity for systematic attacks that led to dozens of murders.

A source at the ICC, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the plane carrying the former president to Rotterdam, the airport serving The Hague, had taken off from Dubai.

Duterte received medical attention during the layover in Dubai. Philippine broadcaster ABS-CBN News showed on its website pictures of what it said were police doctors checking on Duterte as he lay on an airplane bed.

A spokesperson for the Philippine National Police said the medical checks were routine "regular vital signs and monitoring".

About 20 anti-Duterte protesters gathered yesterday outside the ICC with banners and a mask depicting him as a vampire. A handful of pro-Duterte protesters also gathered at the court building in The Hague.

Back home, for families of Philippine drug war victims, Duterte's arrest revived hopes for justice.

"I was surprised and felt as if I had been brought back to life because what we have been fighting for is finally coming to fruition – we are finally getting justice for our loved ones who

were taken from us," said Jerica Ann Pico, the widow of a man who was killed during the war on drugs.

His daughter Sara Duterte, the country's vice president, boarded a morning flight to Amsterdam, her office said in a statement, but it did not say what she intended to do or how long she planned to stay in the Netherlands.

The ICC's press office declined to comment. One of Duterte's lawyers did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Officials in Dubai also did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Silvestre Bello, a former labour minister and one of the former president's lawyers, said a legal team would meet to assess options and seek clarity on where Duterte would be taken and whether they would be granted access to him.

Duterte's youngest daughter, Veronica, plans to file a habeas corpus request with the Philippine Supreme Court to compel the government to bring him back, said his former chief legal counsel Salvador Panelo.

The arrest marks a stunning change of fortunes for the influential Duterte family. – Reuters

## Indonesia debates allowing soldiers to take civilian posts

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia's government on Tuesday introduced at parliamentary committee stage a watered down version of contentious legislation that would enable President Prabowo Subianto to appoint military personnel to civilian posts.

Prabowo, a former military officer, has quickly expanded the role of the armed forces, triggering alarm in a country that was once dominated by the military.

A new draft of the law, first proposed earlier this year, added a proviso that soldiers filling civilian posts must first resign from service, Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin told reporters.

This changes a previous draft by which Prabowo could appoint active officers anywhere in the government, said lawmaker T. B. Hasanuddin, a member of the country's largest party.

That draft caused concerns among activists and students that expanded military roles in civilian functions would bring back a Suharto-era doctrine called *dwifungsi* (dual function) that allowed the armed forces to crush dissent and dominate public life.

Active soldiers are allowed to fill civilian posts in the Defence Ministry, state intelligence agency, anti-narcotics, and search and rescue agencies under the existing law.

The proposal would add five state agencies to the list, including the Attorney-General's Office, the Fishery Ministry and the counter-terrorism agency, said Hasanuddin.

Sjafrie said the government expects the new legislation to be passed this month.

The Bill, which amends the country's military laws, would also extend the retirement age for active soldiers by two to five years.

Indonesian rights group Imparsial director Ardi Manto Adiputra said the proposal means the government took into account public criticism about the expanded role for the military. – Reuters

## Baby elephant separated from mother rescued

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian authorities rescued a critically endangered baby Sumatran elephant after it became separated from its mother at an oil palm plantation.

Sumatran elephants are on the brink of extinction with only about 2,400-2,800 left in the world, according to the World Wide Fund for Nature.

The two-month-old male calf was found at a plantation in Riau province, Sumatra on Monday after residents alerted authorities, said conservation agency official Ujang Hollisudin.

"We suspect this elephant was left behind by his group or his mother," Ujang said, adding that the calf was alone when authorities found him.

The baby elephant is in good health and was brought to the agency's elephant training centre near the provincial capital Pekanbaru, he said.

Authorities were monitoring for elephant herds near the area to see if the calf could be reunited with its family.

"It is our hope that the group can be found and we can reunite (the calf). That is our hope," Ujang said.

Elephant populations are threatened by rampant poaching for their tusks, which are prized in the wildlife trade.

The Southeast Asian nation is battling wildlife crime and several cases of elephant poisoning have been reported in recent years.

Deforestation has also reduced their natural habitat and brought them into increasing conflict with humans. – AFP



The rescued elephant responds to an officer at the Minas Elephant Training Centre in Riau. – AFP/PPIC

## Vietnam, Singapore agree to boost ties

**HANOI:** Singapore and Vietnam yesterday have agreed to enhance cooperation over subsea cables, finance, and energy, marking an upgrade in their relations to Vietnam's highest level, during a visit by its Communist Party Chief To Lam to the city-state.

Singapore is the third Southeast Asian nation, after Malaysia and Indonesia, with which Vietnam has established a "comprehensive strategic relationship".

In a joint statement released following the upgrade, Lam and Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong witnessed the exchange of six agreements and discussed cooperation in undersea cable development, digital

connectivity, and cross-border data flows.

Southeast Asian countries, a major junction for cables connecting Asia to Europe, aim to expand their networks to meet the surging demand for AI services and data centres. Vietnam alone plans to launch 10 new submarine cables by 2030.

In December, Reuters reported that Singaporean asset manager Keppel and Vietnamese conglomerate Sovico Group were discussing plans for new undersea fibre-optic cables to boost the region's data centre industry, according to sources familiar with the matter.

In April last year, Vietnam's state-owned telecom company Viettel and Singapore's

Singtel announced a preliminary agreement to develop an undersea cable linking Vietnam directly to Singapore, although no construction contract has been announced yet.

The two leaders also discussed green development, industrial parks expansion, and peace and stability in the region. Singapore pledged to support Vietnam in developing international financial centres, the joint statement said.

Singapore ranks among Vietnam's top foreign investors, having invested US\$10.21 billion (RM45 billion) last year, which accounted for 27% of Vietnam's total foreign investment, official data showed. – Reuters

## Aid cuts could be paid in Rohingya children's lives: UN

**GENEVA:** The United Nations warned on Tuesday that the global aid funding crisis could be paid in children's lives in Rohingya refugee camps in Bangladesh, unless sustainable funds emerge fast.

Successive aid cuts have already caused severe hardship among Rohingya in the overcrowded settlements, who are reliant on aid and suffer from rampant malnutrition.

The UN children's agency Unicef said youngsters in the camps were experiencing the worst levels of malnutrition since 2017, with admissions for severe malnutrition treatment up 27% in February compared with the same months last year.

Following the foreign aid review, Secretary of State Marco Rubio announced on Monday that Washington was cancelling 83% of programmes at the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

"An aid funding crisis risks becoming a child survival crisis," said Unicef representative in Bangladesh Rana Flowers.

"More than 500,000 children live in the camps of Cox's Bazar. Over 15% are now malnourished – an emergency threshold," she said.

"Any further reductions in humanitarian support risk pushing families into extreme desperation."

She said Unicef had received a US waiver for its programme for treating children with severe acute malnutrition but needed funding to make it work, and it is on course to run out of money in June. – AFP



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# Suicide bombers complicate train hostage rescue

## ► Pakistan launches 'full-scale' operation

**SIBI:** Pakistan forces launched a "full-scale" operation yesterday to rescue train passengers taken hostage by gunmen in the mountainous southwest, with security sources saying 155 had been freed.

More than 450 passengers were on board when gunmen captured the train at the entrance of a tunnel in a remote district, with an unknown number still being held.

"Information suggests that some gunmen have fled, taking an unknown number of hostages," said a security official.

Gunmen bombed a section of the railway track and stormed the train on Tuesday in southwest Balochistan province, which borders Iran and Afghanistan, where attacks have been on the rise.

According to security sources, the "terrorists have positioned suicide bombers right next to hostage passengers".

Three people have been killed, including the train driver.

A security official said "a full-scale operation" would aim to free the rest of the captives.

"Security forces have safely rescued 155 passengers ... 27 terrorists have been eliminated," a security source said. An earlier count included at least "31 women and 15 children".

It was not immediately clear how many people remained onboard.

Muhammad Kashif, a senior railway official in the provincial capital Quetta, said on Tuesday the 450 passengers on board had been taken hostage.

Passengers freed on Tuesday described walking for hours through mountainous terrain to reach safety.

"I can't find the words to describe how we managed to escape. It was terrifying," said Muhammad Bilal, who had been travelling with his mother on the Jafar Express train.

The assault was claimed by the Baloch Liberation Army (BLA), a separatist group that has staged attacks against security forces

and groups from outside the province.

The group has demanded an exchange with security forces for its imprisoned members.

Authorities restrict access to some areas of Balochistan, where many energy and infrastructure projects are backed by China, which has invested billions in the region, including in a major port and airport.

The driver of the train, a police officer and a soldier were killed in the assault, according to paramedic Nazim Farooq and railway official Muhammad Aslam.

One passenger described gunmen sorting through identity cards to confirm who was from outside the province.

"They came and checked IDs and service cards and shot two soldiers in front of me and took away the other four" said one passenger who asked not to be identified, after walking four hours to the nearest train station.

"Those who were Punjabis were taken away by the terrorists," he said.

Around 80 of the released passengers were taken to the provincial capital Quetta, said a police official. - AFP

## Trove of dinosaur footprints found at Australian school

**SYDNEY:** A trove of fossilised dinosaur footprints has been found on a slab of rock gathering dust at an Australian school.

The rock went largely unnoticed for 20 years until the school, in Queensland's rural Banana shire, asked paleontologist Anthony Romilio to examine a cluster of three-toed track marks.

Romilio said yesterday the slab was stamped with dozens of fossilised footprints dating to the early Jurassic period some 200 million years ago.

It showed "one of the highest concentrations of dinosaur footprints" ever documented in Australia, he said.

"It's an unprecedented snapshot of dinosaur abundance, movement and behaviour from a time when no fossilised dinosaur bones have been found in Australia," said Romilio, from the University of Queensland.

"Significant fossils like this can sit unnoticed for years, even in plain sight."

"It's incredible to think that a piece of history this rich was resting in a schoolyard all this time." Coal miners dug up the slab in 2002 and, noticing the unusual footprints, gifted it to a school in the small town of Biloela, where it was eventually displayed in the foyer.

The rock sat there until researchers started asking around for any dinosaur fossils discovered in the area.

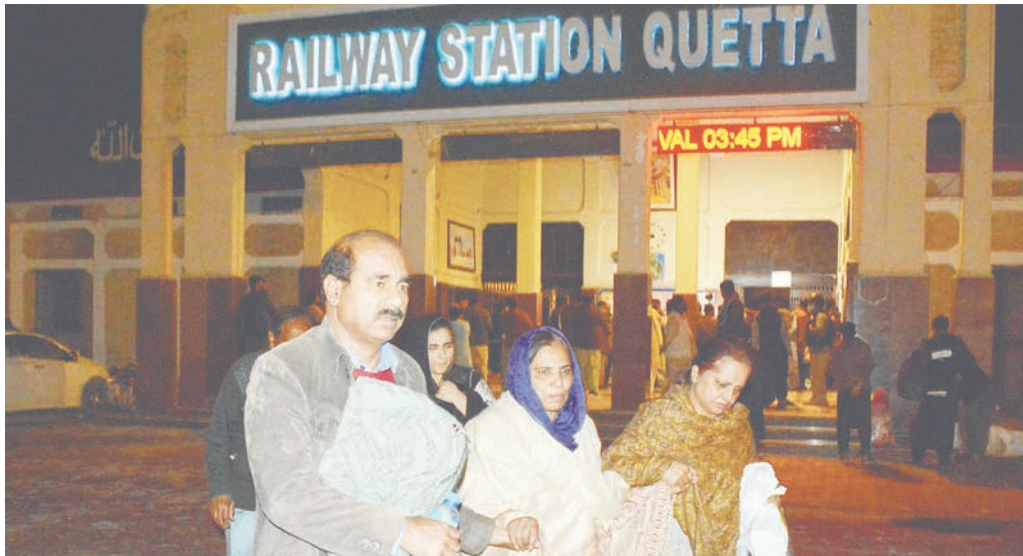
"Some of the teachers thought this was a replica rather than the real thing," Romilio said.

"Everyone didn't quite realise what they actually had."

"They definitely knew it was a dinosaur footprint. But not the level of detail that a researcher like myself would go into."

Romilio said 66 separate track impressions were found on the slab, which had a surface area of less than one square metre.

They belonged to a dinosaur called *Anomoepus scambus* - a small and chunky plant eater that walked on two legs, he said. - AFP



Rescued passengers with their belongings in Quetta yesterday. - REUTERS/PC

## HK social worker convicted over 2019 riot

**HONG KONG:** A social worker was found guilty of rioting during the city's 2019 democracy protests, with the court on Tuesday rejecting her claim of being a mediator and ruling that she encouraged people to resist police.

Following a massive protest movement in 2019, Hong Kong authorities launched a crackdown on dissent and have taken nearly 3,000 people to court.

More than 800 have been charged with rioting, a crime broadly interpreted by local courts to cover many of those present at scenes of violence.

Jackie Chen, 48, was part of a small group of social workers who appeared on tense street standoffs in 2019 carrying loudhailers, urging police to stay calm and to allow time for protesters to leave.

After being arrested in August 2019, she pleaded not guilty and argued that she was trying to de-escalate clashes and did not intend to take part in riots.

She was acquitted in 2020 but her case went to a retrial after prosecutors appealed.

Deputy district judge May Chung ruled on Tuesday that Chen had shouted "provocative" words that wrongly implied police had used excessive force.

"Through her words and acts, (Chen) expressed her support of the protesters ... which bolstered their determination and confidence to resist the police," the judge wrote.

Chung said Chen brought a gas mask and wore a T-shirt that read "We are social workers defending justice", which showed she had prepared for the protests.

Circumstantial evidence led to the overriding conclusion that Chen intended to take part in the riot, the judge wrote.

Those found guilty of rioting in the district court face a maximum prison term of seven years.

After the verdict, Chen told supporters in the public gallery to "take care".

"Just because (the government) disagrees with us, that doesn't mean we did anything wrong," she said before the hearing, adding that she would face the outcome with equanimity.

Chen was remanded in custody for sentencing on April 9.

She previously criticised the decision to push for a retrial, saying younger defendants were kept from moving on with their lives. - AFP

## Detained tycoon turns to White House

**WASHINGTON:** Hopes for the release of detained Hong Kong media tycoon Jimmy Lai are higher following President Donald Trump's return to office, Lai's son said on Tuesday in Washington, where he and advocates plan to meet Trump administration officials.

Lai, the founder of the *Apple Daily* newspaper that was forced to close after a police raid and asset freeze in June 2021, has pleaded not guilty to two charges of conspiracy to collude with foreign forces, and a charge of conspiracy to publish seditious material.

National security legislation in Hong Kong has been used to jail activists after street protests there in 2019. The United States and other foreign governments have criticised the law as a tool for authorities to clamp down on dissent.

Lai's case is a source of friction between Washington and Beijing, with Trump having said last year during his campaign for the presidency that he would "100%" get Lai out of China.

Sebastien Lai told reporters that even as his father's health declines in harsh, solitary confinement in Hong Kong, the pro-democracy advocate is still fighting for his beliefs at 77.

"President Trump was the first president of the United States who mentioned my father by name," he said, adding that his father's cause had always received bipartisan support in the US.

"The short of it is, yes, we're a lot more hopeful," he said, when asked if his confidence had grown with Trump in the White House.

He said Lai's advocates had already met this week with State Department officials, and would meet officials at the White House National Security Council. - Reuters



# Arrest of student prompts federal court showdown

## ➤ Demonstrators march through Manhattan

**NEW YORK:** A legal battle over a detained Columbia University student that has become a flashpoint of the Trump administration's immigration policy will play out in federal court, with the US government indicating on Tuesday it would oppose the Palestinian activist's bid for release.

US District Judge Jesse Furman in Manhattan temporarily blocked authorities on Monday from deporting Mahmoud Khalil, 29.

Lawyers for the government plan to argue Furman did not have authority to resolve the case, and that the judge should decide on whether he has such authority before considering the merits of Khalil's arguments, according to a joint filing submitted on Tuesday evening by Khalil's lawyers on behalf of both parties.

They said the hearing today would focus mostly on scheduling.

The case could test where immigration courts draw the line

between protected free speech and alleged support for groups the United States calls terrorists, as President Donald Trump seeks to fulfil his promise to deport foreign students involved in the pro-Palestinian protest movement.

While Trump has alleged on social media that Khalil supported Hamas, his administration has not charged Khalil with a crime and not provided any evidence to show the alleged support for the group.

Khalil was a prominent activist at Columbia, which experienced some of the biggest protests against Israel's military assault on Gaza. Washington has designated Hamas a foreign terrorist organisation.

White House spokeswoman Karoline Leavitt said Secretary of State Marco Rubio had the right to revoke permanent residency status for adversaries of US foreign policy and national security interests.

"This administration is not going to tolerate individuals having the

privilege of studying in our country and then siding with pro-terrorist organisations," Leavitt told reporters.

Leavitt said flyers with Hamas' logo were distributed at "group protests" she said Khalil had organised, but did not present evidence of Khalil's involvement.

In court papers, Khalil's lawyers have described him as a "mediator and negotiator" and said his advocacy for Palestinians was protected speech under the US Constitution's First Amendment.

Columbia's administration has said Khalil was one of the lead negotiators with the school on behalf of the protesters about their demands to end investments of Columbia's US\$14.8 billion (RM65.6 billion) endowment in weapons manufacturers and other companies that support Israel.

Khalil's lawyers have asserted his arrest on Saturday by Department of Homeland Security agents outside Columbia student housing was illegal.

While Furman has the authority to order Khalil released from

detention if he finds his rights were violated, deportation proceedings could nonetheless continue in a separate immigration court, said Daniel Kanstroom, a professor at Boston College Law School.

Demonstrators on the streets of New York City, Democratic lawmakers, and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Occupied Palestinian territories condemned the arrest.

"This lawless abuse of power and political repression is a threat to all Americans," 14 Democratic members of Congress, including Palestinian American US Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, wrote in a letter on Tuesday to Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem.

A crowd of a few hundred people chanted "Free Palestine" and anti-police slogans at a protest in lower Manhattan. Shortly before the evening rush hour, at least six protesters were arrested after police asked them to get out of the street.

Demonstrators also gathered at college campuses throughout Manhattan. – Reuters

## Kremlin waiting for ceasefire proposal details

**MOSCOW:** The Kremlin said yesterday it was waiting for the US to inform it about the details of a proposed ceasefire in Ukraine that Kyiv agreed to after talks in Saudi Arabia.

Washington said the "ball is now" in Moscow's court after Ukraine backed its suggestion of a 30-day ceasefire and agreed to immediate negotiations.

The US lifted a freeze on military aid to Ukraine after the Jeddah talks.

Asked if Moscow would agree to a ceasefire, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: "You are running ahead of yourselves ... We have planned contacts with the Americans in the coming days, during which we count on (getting) the whole information."

"We assume that Secretary of State (Marco) Rubio and Adviser (Michael) Walz will inform us on the negotiations that took place and the understandings reached," he said.

He also did not "rule out" a "high-level" phone call with the US.

Peskov said that Moscow was "attentively studying all the statements" made in Jeddah. – AFP

## Syria determined to prevent revenge attacks

**DAMASCUS:** A committee formed by Syria's new authorities to investigate a wave of deadly violence said on Tuesday the country was determined to prevent revenge attacks.

A wave of violence broke out last Thursday, mainly in the Mediterranean heartland of the Alawite minority, the deadliest since Bashar al-Assad was ousted in December.

Security forces and allied groups have killed at least 1,225 civilians since Thursday, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor.

The UN Human Rights Office said it had documented "summary executions" that appeared "to have been carried out on a sectarian basis".

"In a number of instances, entire families – including women and children – were killed, with predominantly Alawite cities and villages targeted," it said.

Committee spokesman Yasser al-Farhan said: "The new Syria is determined to enshrine justice and the rule of law, protect the rights and freedoms of its citizens, prevent revenge attacks and guarantee that there is no impunity."

Farhan said the committee was working on "gathering and reviewing evidence" related to the wave of violence.

He said the committee would "listen to the eyewitnesses" and establish mechanisms for people to contact the investigators, as well as gather and verify video evidence.

The findings will be submitted to the presidency and the judiciary, Farhan said.

In the coastal town of Jableh, a resident told AFP he had been terrorised by armed groups.



A man assists a Syrian with children, who fled the violence in western Syria, at the Nahr El Kabir River in Akkar, Lebanon on Tuesday. – REUTERS/SPIC

"More than 50 people from among my family and friends have been killed. They gathered bodies with bulldozers and buried them in mass graves," he said, speaking anonymously for his safety.

The Observatory said that thousands of Alawite civilians from Jableh and the surrounding area

had fled to Russia's Hmeimim airbase, since Friday.

Jableh Mayor Amjad Sultan said he had visited the civilians to tell them that security forces were restoring control and "outside is now safe".

An AFP photographer saw groups of Alawites fleeing across a

river into northern Lebanon.

The presidency announced on Sunday it was forming a committee to "investigate the violations and identify those responsible".

It said it would present its findings within 30 days and that those found responsible would be referred to the courts. – AFP

## BRIEFS

### PRO-BUSINESS PARTY WINS GREENLAND VOTE

**NUUK:** Greenland's pro-business opposition Demokraatit party won Tuesday's parliamentary election, beating the incumbent left-wing coalition in a vote dominated by US President Donald Trump's pledge to take control of the island. Demokraatit, which favours a slow approach to independence from Denmark, secured 29.9% of the votes with all ballots counted, up from 9.1% in 2021, ahead of the opposition Naleraq party, which favours rapid independence, at 24.5%. Jens-Frederik Nielsen, Demokraatit's leader and a former minister of industry and minerals, said: "We don't want independence tomorrow, we want a good foundation." – Reuters

### GEORGIA EX-PRESIDENT JAIL TERM EXTENDED

**TBILISI:** A Georgia court yesterday sentenced ex-president Mikheil Saakashvili to nine years in prison for mispending public funds, adding three years to the jail term he is serving. Saakashvili, 57, was sentenced in absentia in 2018 to six years behind bars for abuse of office. He began serving the term in 2021, when he returned to the country. The European Parliament has called for his release and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has demanded that Saakashvili, a Ukrainian national since 2019, be transferred to Kyiv. – AFP

### MOZAMBIQUE LEADER GRILLED FOR 10 HOURS

**MAPUTO:** Mozambique's main opposition figure Venancio Mondlane said on Tuesday he was questioned for 10 hours by prosecutors without being informed of what accusation lay behind the interrogation. Mondlane, who claimed victory in October's contested election, said he had been placed under judicial supervision. "We spent all those hours without me being able to say what I was accused of. I can't move without notifying the prosecutor's office, I can't leave my house for more than five days," he said. – AFP



SCAN ME

# Who will win 2025 Nobel Peace prize?

**S**HORTLY now, if not already taking place, the Norwegian Nobel Peace Prize selection committee will be examining nominations for this year's winner.

The result of this coveted and highly sought-after prize is expected to be announced in early October. This year's winner will hold special significance amid hopes for the possible end of two of the most bloodiest wars waged in recent times – that in Gaza and Ukraine.

Should a temporary truce, if not a definitive and sustainable peace settlement, be negotiated to stop the casualties and deaths in these two killing fields – with the threat of expansion beyond their current territories and the possibility of nuclear weapons being brought into the fray – a contender, if not the favourite to win the prize, is US President Donald Trump.

This is due to his undeniable leading role in bringing together the key combatants and his pressure on them to arrive at whatever peace agreement is finally put in place – even if the agreement may be controversial and may not last long.

According to the Norwegian Nobel Institute, over 300 individuals and organisations have been nominated for this year's prize. By convention, the identities of nominees are not publicly announced. However, nominating bodies such as academic organisations, scientists, lawmakers and former laureates are permitted to disclose their submissions.

Nominations are selected according to their achievements in relation to the following:

➔ **Promoting peace agreements:** Facilitating or brokering significant peace agreements between conflicting parties.

➔ **Reducing international tensions:** Working towards reducing tensions and potential conflicts between nations. This could involve diplomatic efforts, treaties or other forms of negotiation.

➔ **Humanitarian efforts:** Leading or supporting large-scale humanitarian efforts that alleviate suffering and promote peace. This could include addressing issues like poverty, disease and displacement.

➔ **Disarmament:** Advocating for and achieving significant progress in global disarmament, particularly in the reduction of nuclear weapons.

➔ **Promoting democracy and human rights:** Supporting and promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law in regions where these

are under threat.

➔ **Environmental peace-building:** Engaging in efforts that link environmental sustainability with peace-building, as environmental issues can be a source of conflict.

➔ **Public advocacy:** Using public platforms to advocate for peace and non-violence, influencing public opinion and policy.



BY LIM TECK GHEE

Trump's supporters will argue that he is the most outstanding leader working to end the current military conflicts in both war-torn regions, and that his work for peace surpasses that of Pope Francis – an early favourite, in part – owing to the Western media's coverage on his ailing health condition.

Another early favourite is former Nato secretary-general, Jens Stoltenberg, whose nomination by his fellow Norwegian colleagues in Norway's parliament is shocking as he has been a consistent war hawk in Europe and elsewhere in the world, including the Asia Pacific region.

For now, Trump has one nomination from US Republican congressman Darrell Issa, who said on platform X that he had nominated Trump as "no one deserves it more".

According to Issa's office, the nomination was based on Trump's diplomatic efforts in the Middle East. However, the nomination was submitted after the official deadline and may not be accepted.

## What will influence the award?

No one should have any doubt that the peace prize selection is heavily and decisively influenced by the ideological positioning of the Norwegian government.

Winners have included the European Union (EU) in 2012, whose selection was unprecedented, unexpected and undeserving. They have also included former US president, Barack Obama, who was awarded the prize just months into his presidency, with the committee citing his "extraordinary efforts to strengthen international diplomacy and cooperation between peoples".

Obama subsequently, with other Nato



Trump has one nomination for the Nobel Peace Prize due to his leading role in trying to reach a peace agreement between the key combatants.

– AFPIC

member countries, organised the overthrow of Muammar Gaddafi's legitimate Libyan government and was instrumental in enhancing the US military commitment to Afghanistan as well as launching numerous air strikes in Syria and Yemen that killed close to 4,000 people.

The secretary of the Norwegian committee subsequently indicated that the award to Obama was a mistake whilst Obama himself in a television programme confessed that he did not know why he received the award.

Likely to be against awarding the prize to Trump is the Norwegian government, especially if the peace agreement results in Russia taking control of the Crimean region and Ukraine is unable to become a Nato member.

The selection committee itself is appointed by the Norwegian parliament and is supposed to be independent although with members representing the various political parties of Norway, the claim of independence and neutrality appears baseless and has little merit.

As a Nato member country and closely aligned with the EU on foreign policy issues, Norway has not only been committed to supporting President Volodymyr Zelensky but it has also provided Ukraine with substantial military and financial assistance,

especially since Russia's military incursion into Ukraine in 2022.

Trump has argued that Zelensky is gambling with World War III but this possible scenario appears lost to the Norwegian government and other Nato countries determined to win the peace through more war. Their strategy – backed by Nato and the EU – appears focused on securing Vladimir Putin's and Russia's capitulation, regardless of how long the conflict must continue rather than through Trump's transactional diplomacy aimed at stopping the massive loss of lives and destruction of infrastructure.

Trump's stated concern – "I want the bloodshed to stop" – is clearly not a priority for the EU and Nato since they have no boots on the ground in what Russia regards as a proxy war instigated by Nato.

## Surprise winner

Should the prize committee be looking out for a global political figure to surprise the world with this year's award, they may want to consider Chinese President Xi Jinping. His contributions to global security and development, especially through his Belt and Road Initiative and leadership role in the BRICS grouping, which now comprise 55% of the world's population and 46% of global GDP, meets most, if not all, of the selection criteria publicly listed for the award.

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

*"This year's winner will hold special significance amid hopes for the possible end of two of the most bloodiest wars waged in recent times – that in Gaza and Ukraine."*

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# Finding the treasure within

**I**N a world saturated with digital noises, finding moments of genuine connection with ourselves can feel like a rare treasure.

I recently rediscovered that treasure within the pages of Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist*, a book that, in its simplicity, offers profound insights into navigating our lives.

It has been a while since a book has held my attention so completely, a testament to how easily our minds can be scattered by the constant barrage of digital distractions.

The story follows Santiago, a young shepherd driven by a recurring dream of hidden treasure near the Egyptian pyramids. His decision to pursue this dream sets him on a transformative journey, one that takes him far beyond the familiar landscapes of his homeland.

This journey, however, is not merely a physical voyage; it is an exploration of the self and a quest to uncover the hidden depths of his potential.

Santiago's story serves as a mirror, reflecting our innate desire to find meaning and purpose. We often find ourselves searching for fulfilment in

external achievements, believing that happiness lies in some distant, idealised future.

We chase after material possessions, societal approval and the elusive sense of "having it all", often overlooking the treasures that lie within.

Coelho introduces the concept of the "personal legend" – a unique path that each of us is destined to follow. It is the calling that resonates deep within our souls, guiding us towards our true purpose. Yet, we often silence this inner voice, dismissing our intuitive nudges and gut feelings as mere whims or coincidences.

The book reminds us that the path to our personal legend is rarely smooth. Santiago faces numerous obstacles, from being robbed to enduring the harshness of the desert.

However, these challenges are not setbacks but essential lessons that shape his character and deepen his understanding of the world.

How often do we perceive adversity as a failure rather than an opportunity for growth? Perhaps the detours and disappointments we encounter are

simply life's way of redirecting us towards our true path.

One of the most insightful aspects of Santiago's journey is his encounter with an Englishman, a scholar who has dedicated his life to studying alchemy.

This encounter highlights the crucial distinction between knowledge and wisdom. The Englishman possesses a wealth of theoretical knowledge but lacks the practical experience to transform his understanding into reality.

This serves as a powerful reminder that true wisdom is not merely the accumulation of information; it is the integration of knowledge with lived experiences.

How often do we delay pursuing our dreams, waiting for the perfect moment or the ideal circumstances? We become like the Englishman, believing that intellectual preparation is sufficient for success. But life does not reward hesitation. It rewards action, even when that action is imperfect or uncertain.

The culmination of Santiago's journey reveals a profound truth: the treasure he sought was buried beneath a sycamore tree in the very field where his journey began. This revelation is a powerful metaphor for our own lives. We often search for fulfilment in external

achievements only to realise that the things that truly matter have been within reach all along.

This does not diminish the significance of Santiago's journey. On the contrary, his experiences were essential for his transformation.

Without them, he would not have developed the wisdom, resilience and courage necessary to recognise the treasure when he found it. This is the paradox of life: we often need to venture far from home to appreciate the treasures that have always been there.

*The Alchemist* invites us to look inward, to rediscover the treasures that lie within. It reminds us that the journey itself is the destination and that the true wealth of life lies not in material possessions but in the experiences that shape us and the wisdom we gain along the way.

It is a call to embrace our personal legend, to listen to the whispers of our hearts and to trust that the universe will conspire to help us achieve our dreams.

**Dr Praveena Rajendra** is a certified mental health and awareness practitioner specialising in narcissistic abuse recovery. Comments: letters@thesunday.com



MIND THE MIND  
BY DR. PRAVEENA RAJENDRA

*"We chase after material possessions, societal approval and the elusive sense of 'having it all', often overlooking the treasures that lie within."*

## LETTERS letters@thesunday.com

## Protect our children from sugar-coated traps

**MALAYSIA** is facing a chilling reality – candies and toys masquerading as harmless treats but designed to mimic vapes, syringes and cigarettes are infiltrating stores, targeting our most vulnerable: children.

These products are not just a harmless gimmick; they are a gateway to addiction, subtly normalising dangerous habits that could shape a lifetime of dependency and health risks.

### Growing threat in our stores

Shocking reports reveal a surge of candy vapes and toy syringes flooding local markets. The Consumers' Association of Penang has uncovered these products being aggressively marketed to children, with bright, playful packaging cleverly concealing their harmful intent.

Experts warn that these deceptive candies "soften" the image of smoking and drug use, making young minds more susceptible to future addictions.

A tragedy that should never have happened, the devastating consequences of these dangerous sweets became painfully clear when a 10-year-old boy in Penang choked to death after eating a gummy candy designed like an eyeball.

The candy's sticky texture lodged in his airway, leading to his untimely death. Only after this horrific tragedy did authorities move to ban the product – yet another example of Malaysia's reactionary enforcement rather than proactive prevention.

History keeps repeating itself, and this is not the first time Malaysia has faced such a crisis. In 2019, the country battled the "ghost smoke" candy epidemic, where children were seen blowing candy-produced smoke, mimicking cigarette use.

The product had been available for years before a video that went viral finally forced authorities to act.

The pattern is clear: dangerous products reach children long before regulators intervene. Why do these products keep reaching our children despite existing regulations?

Malaysia continues to struggle to keep these deceptive and dangerous products off store shelves. The root causes include regulatory loopholes where there is no specific law banning candies that resemble adult products.

Authorities rely on trade description laws rather than child safety regulations, creating gaps that manufacturers exploit.

Weak enforcement, where many of these candies are cheap imports entering Malaysia with misleading labels or fake *halal* logos, makes it difficult to track them.

Occasional raids are not enough to stop the flow. With strong market demand and children naturally drawn to these products, some shopkeepers secretly stock them, selling them under the counter or via online platforms – making regulation nearly impossible.

A sluggish government response – where authorities often act only after public outrage or a tragic incident – worsens the problem.

Why must we wait for a death or a video shared by many before action is taken? This issue demands more than just national enforcement; it is time for coordinated regional and global efforts to ban these hazardous products.

Many of these candies are produced in China. As the current chair of Asean, Malaysia should seize this opportunity to push for regional alignment in banning these products across Southeast Asia.

Governments must tighten import controls, hold manufacturers accountable through international trade agreements and implement stricter regulations to prevent these



CAP senior education officer N. V. Subbarow with the vape-like sweets. – PIC COURTESY OF CAP

dangerous products from reaching store shelves.

Public awareness and proactive enforcement are crucial in safeguarding our children.

### What must be done now?

These cases highlight the urgent need for stronger laws, stricter market surveillance and proactive enforcement.

We must:

- 🔴 Ban all candies and toys that mimic vapes, syringes or adult products – block them before they enter the market.
- 🔴 Strengthen import checks to ensure dangerous candies do not slip into Malaysia unnoticed.

- 🔴 Increase surprise raids at stores and school zones to stop illicit sales before children get hooked.

- 🔴 Educate parents and children about the risks of these deceptive products – awareness is the strongest defence.

- 🔴 Encourage public reporting – if you see a vape-shaped candy, report it immediately. Every citizen has a role to play in keeping our children safe.

The time to act is now or history will repeat itself. One more child will get hooked. One more innocent life will be lost, all because dangerous and deceptive sweets slipped through before anyone could stop them.

Vape-shaped candies and syringe sweets are sugar-coated traps designed to addict and destroy

children. This is not just a gimmick; it is a calculated assault on our children.

Parents, teachers and the citizens are the first line of defence. The next time you see one of these sinister treats, snap a photo, report it and demand action.

Our children's safety is non-negotiable. Candy should bring joy, not addiction. This dangerous trend must end now. Child safety is everyone's responsibility. Together, we can stop this menace before it steals another innocent life.

**Saral James Maniam**  
Secretary-General  
Malaysian Association of  
Standards Users

# Gamuda Land's The Clove Phase 1 Park Homes sold out

► First-of-its-kind housing typology in Malaysia features cluster-of-eight layouts around a private common garden

**PETALING JAYA:** Gamuda Land announced the success of The Clove, its newly introduced "Park Homes" typology, achieving a 100% take-up rate for the first phase across Gamuda Cove, Gamuda Gardens, and twentyfive7.

This overwhelming response underscores the success of Gamuda Land's customer-centric innovation and digitised home customisation technology, which has enabled the creation of homes that meet the evolving preferences and lifestyle needs of modern homebuyers.

Park Homes is Malaysia's first-of-its-kind typology, featuring a unique cluster-of-eight layout arranged around a private gated common garden. This configuration blends the best of terrace and semi-detached living, offering spacious homes with flexible layouts, making it ideal for modern families. The typology's design, with a greater proportion of corner units and lower density than conventional terrace homes, means more space for greenery and outdoor areas – a key selling point for those looking to create a safe,

nature-infused living environment for children, pets and seniors.

A standout feature of The Clove is its innovative and flexible design, allowing homebuyers to customise their space through the cutting-edge GL Connect portal, powered by Generative AI (GenAI).

By answering a series of questions on the portal, buyers receive personalised room configuration recommendations – ranging from one to three bedrooms – based on their lifestyle preferences. This customisation comes at no additional cost; buyers pay the same price for their home regardless of their chosen layout. By offering this flexibility upfront, Gamuda Land helps homeowners avoid costly post-renovation expenses such as hacking walls to add or remove rooms, ensuring a seamless and hassle-free homebuying experience.

"The Clove represents the result of extensive research and thoughtful design," said Gamuda Land COO Jess Teng. "We took the time to truly understand the needs and desires

of Malaysians through a nationwide survey, which revealed the key pain points and aspirations that we've addressed in the design of The Clove. This home goes beyond the traditional concept, offering the perfect balance of space, customisation, and connectivity – all while integrating advanced technology. Through our GL Connect platform, we've made it easier for buyers to personalise their homes, ensuring it fits their lifestyle perfectly. The success of The Clove is a testament to how listening to our customers and delivering innovative solutions based on their real needs creates a meaningful, impactful homebuying experience."

"When people could experience the actual space, they truly understood the value and benefits of this innovative home design. It's exciting to see the concept gain such acceptance, and we look forward to seeing this success continue as we launch the next phase," she added.

The Clove show units are open for public viewing at Gamuda Cove and Gamuda Gardens, while the show unit for the Signature Collection at twentyfive7 is set to open in March. With a total GDV of RM1 billion, Park Homes stands as a testament to Gamuda Land's commitment to delivering sustainable and innovative residential solutions.

## Chin Hin unveils Avalton By The Water in Malacca

**MALACCA:** Chin Hin Group Property (CHGP) recently unveiled Avalton By The Water during a special preview event at its new sales gallery located in Jalan Bandar Hilir, Malacca.

This marks CHGP's first development preview of the year.

Avalton By The Water is a resort-themed, luxurious development spanning 6.619 acres of leasehold land, facing Malacca Island. The project features 539 units across seven residential blocks – six low-rise and one mid-rise – and offers two layout types, each with three-bedroom options. Unit sizes range from 760 sq ft to 850 sq ft with prices starting at RM508,000.

With its contemporary design, Avalton By The Water offers an urban sanctuary surrounded by Malacca's rich historical sites and coastal heritage. The development draws inspiration from the elegance and strength of flowing water, reflecting the beauty and energy of its waterfront setting.

Ideally located at Jalan Melaka Raya 35, the development provides convenient access to major roads and is just 4km from Malacca Sentral Bus Terminal and 6.3km from Malacca International Airport. The North-South Highway is approximately 16km away, making Avalton By The Water a prime choice for future commutes. Popular tourist attractions such as A Famosa, Jonker Street, Malacca River Cruise, and Little India, are also within close proximity.

Avalton By The Water ensures exceptional convenience with easy access to healthcare facilities, educational institutions, and leisure spots. It is located near Mahkota Medical Centre, Melaka Hospital, and top schools such as JT International School, SMK Tinggi Melaka, and MMU University Malaysia. For shopping and entertainment, Aeon Mall Bandaraya Melaka, Mahkota Parade, Plaza Hang Tuah, and The Shore Shopping Gallery are all within arm's length.

Avalton By The Water sets a new standard of luxury living with the installation of Signature Kitchen fixtures, a brand renowned for its quality and exquisite design. As a proud home and living company under the Chin Hin Group, Signature Kitchen fixtures seamlessly blend functionality and style, making your home truly one-of-a-kind.

Chin Hin Group Property also announced the renewal of its strategic partnership with Maplehomes, Malaysia's short-stay and long-stay management company. Recognised by the Malaysia Book of Records as the largest short-stay management chain in the country, Maplehomes brings a hotel-style management approach and a passion for hospitality excellence, ensuring travellers' enjoy unforgettable experiences.

Through this partnership, investors in Chin Hin Property developments can leverage Maplehomes' expertise in property management. Maplehomes provides ongoing support and consultation to maximise property profitability, ensuring units are well-maintained through regular inspections. This collaboration enables investors to optimise their returns while having their properties professionally managed by in-house maintenance and housekeeping teams.

Frontiercity aims to enhance travel experience with premium dining and retail, setting a new standard beyond traditional R&R offering.



## Frontiercity @ Ainsdale second phase take-up gathers momentum

**SEREMBAN:** Following the success of Phase 1, Frontiercity @ Ainsdale announced that Phase 2 is now selling fast, reaffirming its position as the premier commercial hub along the North-South Expressway.

Strategically located near the Seremban R&R and adjacent to the Bandar Ainsdale toll plaza, Frontiercity aims to transform the travel experience with premium dining and retail options, setting a new standard beyond the traditional R&R offerings.

Boasting exceptional visibility next to the toll plaza, Frontiercity's prime location makes it a magnet for travellers and businesses.

The potential for high traffic volume further enhances Frontiercity's appeal as a thriving commercial destination. While the Seremban R&R provides a space for rest and relaxation, Frontiercity offers a dynamic, modern alternative alongside essential amenities like EV chargers – catering to

today's travellers who value convenience and a high-quality experience on the go.

WB Land Group managing director Kevin Woon said: "The overwhelming response to Phase 1 and the strong momentum for Phase 2 are a testament to Frontiercity's potential as a future hub of commerce and connectivity. With its strategic location and premium offerings, Frontiercity is perfectly positioned to cater to the growing demand for modern travel and lifestyle experiences. We are proud to deliver a development that not only meets market needs but also contributes to the region's economic growth."

Phase 2 of Frontiercity showcases Western-inspired architecture with 2- and 3-storey shop offices that combine functionality with modern lifestyle appeal. Designed for businesses looking to capitalise on the high traffic along the expressway, these spaces promise an unmatched commercial advantage. By complementing

traditional R&R facilities, Frontiercity aspires to create a vibrant destination that attracts both travellers and local communities.

In line with its commitment to sustainability, Frontiercity has partnered with ChargeSini to establish Seremban's first public-private EV charging infrastructure. This initiative reflects WB Land's forward-thinking approach and supports the government's vision of a robust national EV network.

Strategically placed high-capacity EV charging stations will ensure maximum convenience for electric vehicle users, enhancing Frontiercity's appeal as a forward-thinking, sustainable destination. The integration of smart technology into charging solutions aims to provide a seamless user experience for both travellers and businesses. This collaboration positions Frontiercity as a pioneer in redefining the future of travel along the North-South Expressway.





# 'M'sian SMEs must adapt, innovate'

■ BY **AIMIE SHAZRIE**  
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

**PETALING JAYA:** Small and medium-sized enterprises have long been the backbone of Malaysia's economy, contributing nearly 38% to gross domestic product and employing almost half of the workforce.

Yet, their struggles – from limited internationalisation to talent shortages and slow technology adoption – pose a risk to economic stability.

As Malaysia transitions into a high-income economy, the future of SMEs lies in embracing high-value industries, advanced technologies and global expansion, said Exponasia Growth Asia founder Giuseppe Di Lieto.

He said while many Malaysian SMEs have successfully expanded into regional markets such as Singapore, Asean and China, they struggle to scale beyond these familiar territories.

"One of the key factors holding SMEs back is their limited internationalisation efforts. Despite their strong domestic presence, few have a robust global footprint. The challenge is not just about funding but also about mindset, resources and strategic support," Di Lieto told *SunBiz*.

He noted that a major obstacle is the reluctance to explore overseas acquisitions as a growth strategy.

"Unlike SMEs in Europe or North America, where acquisitions are a common pathway to scaling, Malaysian businesses tend to prioritise organic growth and domestic expansion. This cautious approach limits their

▶ Their future lies in embracing change, high-value industries, advanced technologies and global expansion, says Exponasia Growth Asia founder

potential to diversify revenue streams and compete globally," he explained.

Commenting on talent issues, Di Lieto said a critical barrier to SME internationalisation is the lack of skilled decision-makers with global exposure.

"Many SMEs are led by first- or second-generation entrepreneurs with deep operational knowledge but limited experience in international markets. It is not a lack of decision-making skills, but rather a cautious approach that acts as a bottleneck. Without access to the right networks, investors, industry bodies, and consultants, Malaysian SMEs struggle to build effective international

strategies."

Furthermore, Di Lieto noted that the absence of structured leadership with international



Di Lieto says Malaysian businesses' cautious approach limits their potential to diversify revenue streams and compete globally.

expertise makes it difficult for SMEs to scale efficiently.

"To compete on a global stage, the next generation of SME leaders must possess a strong educational background, international business experience and a forward-thinking vision," he said.

Unlike developed countries with well-established systems and advanced infrastructures, he added, Malaysia's SMEs must rely heavily on human capital to navigate structural inefficiencies and market uncertainties.

"In emerging markets like Malaysia, talent isn't just a growth driver, it is a survival imperative. Without the right talent, SMEs risk stagnation, losing out to more agile competitors. Investing in skilled, adaptable, and globally minded professionals will be key to driving SME growth in the coming years."

Malaysia's SME landscape is dominated by micro and small enterprises, with only 2% qualifying as medium-sized businesses. This lack of scale is a major roadblock to international competitiveness, Di Lieto said.

"Scale enables

access to funding, integration into global supply chains and the adoption of new technologies," he explained, adding that many SMEs remain too small to attract investors or develop the capabilities needed for international expansion.

Additionally, he said product adaptation for foreign markets remains a challenge.

"Despite globalisation, local nuances in demand, regulatory standards and competitive landscapes require SMEs to refine their offerings for each target market. This adaptation process is often overlooked, leading to difficulties in securing a strong foothold abroad."

As Malaysia advances towards high-income status, Di Lieto said, the SME landscape is set for transformation.

"The focus will shift to high-value industries, advanced technologies, digital transformation, green energy and automation," he predicted, saying that these trends will drive business consolidation, with some traditional SMEs exiting while new players emerge.

For those willing to adapt and innovate, the future holds immense opportunities.

"To remain competitive, Malaysian SMEs must embrace change, adopt cutting-edge technologies, and position themselves as global players in an increasingly interconnected world," Di Lieto said.

Exponasia Growth Asia is a consulting firm dedicated to bridging expertise and resource gaps faced by small and medium-sized businesses.

## BAuto posts Q3 PBT of RM34.8m, declares 1.75 sen interim dividend

**PETALING JAYA:** Bermaz Auto Bhd (BAuto) reported lower group revenue and profit before tax (PBT) of RM602.1 million and RM34.8 million respectively in the third quarter ended Jan 31, 2025 compared to the preceding year's corresponding quarter which reported revenue and PBT of RM896.5 million and RM95.1 million respectively.

Group revenue declined by RM294.4 million (32.8%) largely due to drop in sales volume from domestic operations of its Mazda and Kia marques as they were mainly impacted by the continuous influx of Chinese-made vehicles into the market, which are competitively priced.

The higher revenue in the preceding year's corresponding quarter was mainly due to domestic operations of its Mazda marque, especially the CX-30 CKD model which continued to register strong sales since its launch in March 2023.

In line with the decrease in revenue, the group's PBT fell by RM60.2 million (63.4%) compared to the preceding year's corresponding quarter.

The group also accounted for expenses relating to its Employees' Share Scheme amounting to RM1.3 million in the quarter under review. There was none in the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year.

For the nine months period ended Jan 31, 2025, the group reported lower revenue and PBT of RM2.1 billion and RM189.7 million respectively compared to the preceding year's corresponding period which reported revenue and PBT of RM2.99 billion and RM358.6 million respectively.

Group revenue declined by RM897.6 million (30%) largely due

to drop in sales volume from domestic operations of its Mazda and Kia marques.

In line with the lower revenue, the group's PBT decreased by RM168.9 million (47.1%) compared to the preceding year's corresponding period.

The group also accounted for expenses relating to its Employees' Share Scheme of about RM5.3 million in the period under

review compared to RM0.3 million in the preceding financial year's corresponding period.

For the quarter ended Jan 31, 2025, the board has approved and declared a third interim dividend of 1.75 sen single-tier dividend per share in respect of financial year ending April 30, 2025 (preceding year's corresponding quarter ended Jan 31, 2024: 4.25 sen

single-tier dividend per share).

The entitlement date has been fixed on April 22 and payment is on May 7.

This will bring the total dividend declared for the financial period ended Jan 31, 2025 to 15.25 sen single-tier dividend per share (previous financial period ended Jan 31, 2024: 14.25 sen single-tier dividend per share).

On future prospects, BAUTO noted that total industry volume (TIV) in 2024 of 816,747 units was 2.1% higher (16,926 units) than 2023's 799,821 units, mainly due to factors such as a resilient domestic economy, a stable socio-political environment, a low unemployment rate and a surge in battery electric vehicles.

For 2025, the TIV is forecast to be lower at 780,000 units after taking into account factors such as the Malaysian economy continuing to remain resilient and the continued launch of new brands or models in the market.

The TIV in January 2025 of 48,732 units was 40.4% lower (33,003 units) than in December 2024 of 81,735 units mainly due to a shorter working month as a result of the Chinese New Year holidays in January 2025 and higher sales in December 2024 from year-end offers.

BAuto said the local economy and the automotive industry are expected to be impacted by the continuous influx of Chinese-made vehicles as well as the impending petrol subsidy rationalisation exercise and hike in base electricity tariff in mid-2025.

Hence, the launching of new and/or new facelifts models of the group's existing and new vehicle marque is dependent on prevailing market sentiments and economic conditions.

Premised on the foregoing, the board anticipates the performance of the group to be challenging for the financial year ending April 30, 2025.



# Manufacturing sector sales reach RM158.1b in January

► Up 3.5% year-on-year, driven by food and beverage sub-sector

**PETALING JAYA:** The sales value of the manufacturing sector in January 2025 increased 3.5% (December 2024: 5.7%) year-on-year to RM158.1 billion, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) said in its monthly report.

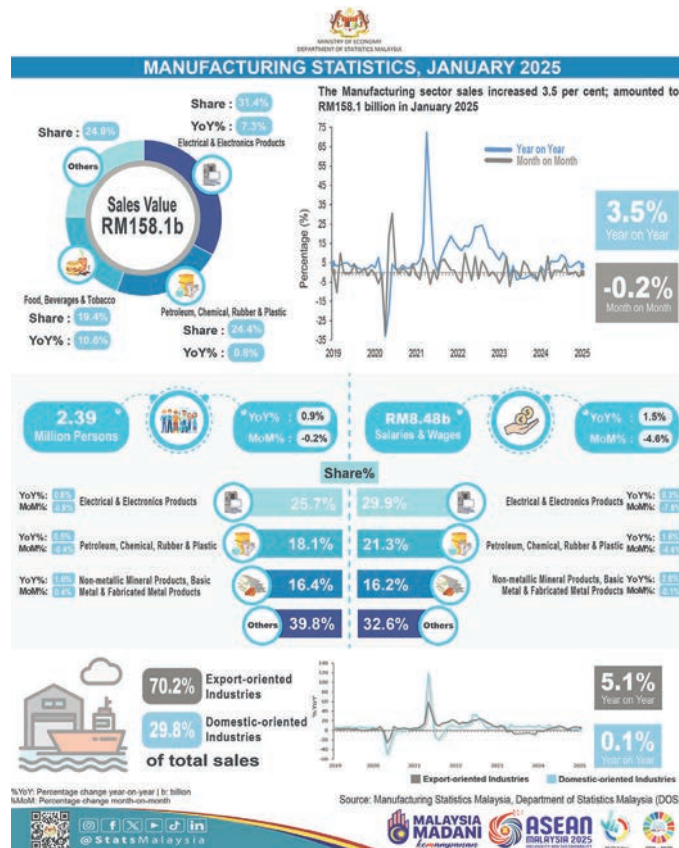
Commenting on the latest manufacturing sales performance, Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said, "The increase of sales value in the manufacturing sector was primarily supported by the food, beverage and tobacco sub-sector which recorded a robust growth of 10.6% in January 2025 (December 2024: 14.6%). This was followed by the electrical & electronics products and non-metallic mineral products, basic metal & fabricated metal products sub-sectors at 7.3% (December 2024: 8.7%) and 2.1% (December 2024: 3.2%), respectively."

Compared with the preceding month, the sales value decreased by 0.2% to RM158.1 billion from RM158.4 billion recorded in December 2024.

The sales value of export-oriented industries, which represented 70.2% of total sales, expanded by 5.1% in January 2025 (December 2024: 7.1%). The expansion was predominantly attributable to the increase in the manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats by 11.1% (December 2024: 17%).

The manufacture of computer, electronics and optical products rose by 7.7% (December 2024: 9.4%), while manufacture of rubber products grew by 8.9% (December 2024: 10.7%).

Domestic-oriented industries grew by 0.1% in January 2025 after registering a 2.5% increase in December 2024. The performance was due to a year-on-year decline in the manufacture of motor vehicles, trailers and semi trailers (-17.6%). However, this was offset by the manufacture of food processing products which maintained double-digit growth at 10.4% (December 2024: 11.2%); manufacture of fabricated metal products industry except machinery and equipment (3.1%); and the manufacture of beverages (9.1%). On a month-on-month basis, both export and domestic-oriented industries dropped by 0.2%.



On the number of employees, Mohd Uzir said, "There were 2.39 million persons engaged in this sector during January 2025, augmented by 0.9% (December 2024: 1%). The augmentation was mainly driven by the food, beverages and tobacco (2%); non-metallic mineral products, basic metal and fabricated metal products (1.6%); and electrical and electronic products (0.6%) sub-sectors. On a month-on-month basis, the number of employees in this sector

decreased 0.2%.

"On the same note, salaries and wages paid in the manufacturing sector posted an increase of 1.5% (December 2024: 1.7%), amounting to RM8.5 billion in January 2025. Comparison by month-on-month, salaries and wages paid dropped by 4.6%. Subsequently, the sales value per employee went up to RM66,011 (2.6%), while the average salaries and wages per employee was RM3,540, rose by 0.6% year-on-year."

## Scientex Q2 revenue rises, thanks to property arm

**PETALING JAYA:** Packaging manufacturer and property developer Scientex Bhd reported revenue of RM1.11 billion for the second quarter ended Jan 31, 2025, a 1.1% increase from RM1.09 billion in the previous year's corresponding quarter.

Net profit stood at RM123.9 million, compared to RM141 million previously, mainly reflecting the impact of increased market competition in the industrial packaging segment. However, the property division's steady revenue growth helped mitigate the overall impact.

The property division remained the key growth driver, with revenue increasing 3.8% to RM474.4 million, up from RM456.9 million previously. This growth was attributed to steady construction progress across all developments and the completion of seven projects across northern, central and southern

Peninsular Malaysia.

Additionally, new launches in Pulau Senai (Johor), Sungai Dua (Penang), Ipoh (Perak), Jenjarom (Selangor) and Jasin (Malacca) received strong market responses, further supporting the division's performance.

Meanwhile, the packaging division registered stable revenue of RM630.7 million, compared to RM635.8 million previously.

CEO Lim Peng Jin said: "Scientex's twin-core business model continues to demonstrate its strength in the current market environment, with our property division benefiting from sustained demand for affordable housing, while our packaging division adapts to evolving industry conditions."

He added that they are expanding their property developments and acquiring land in strategic locations to increase the availability

of affordable homes.

"The stability of the Overnight Policy Rate at 3% ensures continued home loan affordability, supporting buyer confidence and sustained demand for our affordable housing projects," he said.

In the packaging division, Lim said they remain focused on cost management and operational efficiency, while capitalising on their strong manufacturing capabilities to drive innovation.

"By developing customised, value-added packaging solutions, we continue to strengthen our market position. At the same time, we remain committed to supporting the shift towards a plastic circular economy, meeting increasing demand for recyclable and sustainable packaging that aligns with global sustainability goals," he added.

## CelcomDigi and PayNet promote more secure digital financial services

**PETALING JAYA:** CelcomDigi Bhd and Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd (PayNet) have partnered up to provide Malaysians with a more secure and seamless access to digital financial services using the telco's Open Gateway.

By leveraging Open Application Programming Interface (OpenAPI) integration, this collaboration supports Malaysia's push for greater digital security, empowering individuals and businesses with safe and convenient financial transactions while fostering a more interconnected digital ecosystem.

The key focus of this partnership is to proactively address the rising threats of online scams and fraud, which remain a pressing challenge in today's digital financial landscape.

In line with the Open GSMA Initiative, this partnership leverages CelcomDigi's Open Gateway API to enable PayNet to verify DuitNow transactions through secure SIM-based authentication. This security method ensures that the mobile number linked to a DuitNow user ID is active and held by the registered account holder.

Additionally, the partnership strengthens digital security through collaboration with financial institutions and the National Scam Response Centre via the National Fraud Portal. By streamlining scam report handling and sharing real-time fraud intelligence, NFP provides the reports to CelcomDigi for it to take proactive measures to swiftly flag, block, and blacklist scam-linked phone numbers. This approach also prevents fraudsters from misusing flagged numbers to create new accounts, further reinforcing security for all users.

CelcomDigi CEO Datuk Idham Nawawi said, "By enabling SIM-based authentication technology, we are providing financial institutions with a more secure way to authenticate users, making digital financial transactions significantly safer."

PayNet CEO Farhan Ahmad said the partnership builds on the National Fraud Portal by adding real-time account verification through CelcomDigi, providing an extra layer of security for all users.

## Wholesale and retail trade begins 2025 with RM148.9b sales

**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysia's wholesale and retail trade sector began 2025 with total sales of RM148.9 billion in January, recording 4.6% year-on-year growth.

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said, "The increase in sales for January was mainly driven by the retail trade and wholesale trade sub-sectors. Retail trade recorded total sales of RM66.1 billion, an increase of RM5.0 billion, reflecting a year-on-year growth of 8.2%. Meanwhile, wholesale trade registered total sales of RM66.8 billion, increased by RM3.1 billion, with a year-on-year growth of 4.9%. However, the motor vehicles sub-sector saw total sales of RM16 billion, a decline of RM1.6 billion or -9.1% year-on-year, following an exceptional performance in December 2024."

The wholesale trade continued to demonstrate resilience in January, driven by robust demand for essential consumer goods.

"The wholesale of household goods grew by 5.3% to RM13.9 billion, primarily supported by increased sales of clothing and pharmaceutical-related products. The wholesale of food, beverages & tobacco also saw a 5.0% increase to RM13.9 billion, fuelled by the festive season's heightened consumption."

"In addition, this growth was further supported by other specialised wholesale trade, which rose by 2.6%," Mohd Uzir said.



# Solarvest collaborates with A1Health on RE adoption

➤ Clean energy developer will install solar PV systems at four Asia One Healthcare hospitals as part of partnership

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Solarvest Holdings Bhd has partnered with Asia OneHealthcare group (A1Health) to accelerate renewable energy (RE) adoption in Malaysia's healthcare sector.

As part of this collaboration, the clean energy infrastructure developer will install solar photovoltaic (PV) systems across Ara Damansara Medical Centre, Bukit Tinggi Medical Centre, ParkCity Medical Centre and Subang Jaya Medical Centre, hospitals under the A1Health.

Both organisations are also actively exploring further nationwide expansion.

This collaboration builds upon Solarvest's strong track record in the industry, having successfully developed solar infrastructures across 14 hospitals under A1Health, including 10 Columbia Asia Hospitals.

With additional 611 kWp solar installation, the four hospitals are expected to generate close to 800,000 kWh of clean energy annually. To date, A1Health has a cumulative solar PV generation of over 5,000,000 kWp, further reinforcing its commitment as in renewable energy solutions for healthcare industries.



From left: Phang, SJMC CEO Bryan Lin, ParkCity Medical Centre CEO Dr Savitha Dharan, Solarvest Holdings Bhd global sales, assets & marketing group vice-president Jack Tan, Bukit Tinggi Medical Centre CEO Wai Mun Wong, Ara Damansara Medical Centre CEO Linda Leong and Solarvest business development director Alvin Leong.

These transition to solar energy is projected to deliver cost savings of more than RM2.7 million, while reducing approximately 3,200 tonnes of carbon emissions by per year.

Solarvest executive director and group CEO Davis Chong Chun Shiong said that by integrating clean energy infrastructure into the healthcare industry, hospitals can reduce electricity costs by up to 30% while significantly reduce carbon emissions by thousands of metric tonnes annually.

"This initiative not only enhances operational efficiency for hospitals but also sets a precedent for a greener, more sustainable healthcare future," he added.

A1Health marketing, communications and sustainability group head Mandy Phang said their partnership with Solarvest marks a significant step in integrating renewable energy solutions into their operations, reinforcing their commitment to reducing carbon emissions and driving long-term cost efficiencies.

"Together, we are strengthening our environmental responsibility and ensuring a more sustainable healthcare ecosystem that benefits our patients, staff, and the communities we serve," she added.

Solar PV systems in healthcare cut conventional energy use, promote sustainability, and offer long-term environmental and financial benefits.

## AirBorneo to acquire new ATR 72-600 aircraft for RAS ops

**KUCHING:** Sarawak is making arrangements to acquire new ATR 72-600 aircraft for its rural air services (RAS) operations, said State Transport Minister Datuk Seri Lee Kim Shin.

He said that the current aircraft will be replaced once their lease period expires in two years.

"This will be done after the lease period ends, as the existing ones are still under lease. However, arrangements have already been made to acquire new ATR 72-600 models.

"As for the Twin Otter aircraft, they are still relatively new, so we have not made any decision to replace that model yet," he told a press conference yesterday.

He also stressed that Sarawak's airline AirBorneo will maintain the RAS which was previously operated by MASwings Sdn Bhd.

Lee added that more aircraft will be acquired as the state-owned airline expands its services in the region.

Meanwhile, he said that his ministry is taking proactive measures to ensure sufficient flight availability between Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak, for those returning home for the Aidilfitri celebrations.

"We want to ensure there are enough flights so that everyone can return home to celebrate Hari Raya. We will coordinate with airlines to provide additional flights," he said. — Bernama

## SME Bank projects Malaysia's 2025 GDP growth at 4.5-5%

**KUALA LUMPUR:** SME Bank has projected Malaysia's growth to hover between 4.5% and 5%.

Acting group president/CEO Datuk Dr Mohammad Hardee Ibrahim said Malaysia's GDP growth accelerated to 5.1% year-on-year (YoY) for the full year 2024, which is well within their in-house estimate of 4.3% to 5.3%.

This, he added was driven by stronger household spending and supported by favourable labour market conditions, robust investment and recovery in external trade.

"Riding on the back of this positive

momentum, we forecast Malaysia's GDP for 2025 to register between 4.5% and 5%," said Mohammad Hardee.

Upholding their commitment towards empowering the entire Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) ecosystem, he said they continue to provide financing and beyond financing support aimed at scaling up and catapulting the growth of SMEs.

The bank which published its 2025 Economic Outlook Report said it remains committed to supporting SMEs, recognising them as a vital

pillar of the nation's economy.

SME Bank chief economist Lynette Lee Li Qing commented, "We anticipate GDP growth performance in 2025 to be driven by expansion in the services sector, which will remain the primary growth engine, with increased support from both consumer and business related subsectors."

She added: "Going forward, we remain cautiously optimistic on Malaysia's overall growth performance in 2025 amid rising headwinds, mainly stemming from the external side such as

slower GDP growth in key trading partners, potential escalation of the US-China trade war and rising global protectionist policies, volatile geopolitical conflicts as well as lower than expected commodity production and prices."

SME Bank's growth forecast for 2025 is in line with the latest projection by the World Bank's economic outlook in January 2025, which targets global growth to stabilise at 2.7% in 2025 and 2026. This stabilisation is driven by easing inflation, falling commodity prices, and monetary easing in both advanced and emerging economies.

## EDUCATION

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# Most businesses intrigued by digital technologies: Survey

➤ Energy consumption and security concerns hinder full adoption

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Over three quarters of businesses across Asia, Europe and the Middle East are intrigued by the potential of digital technologies, including AI and cloud computing, in driving sustainable development, according to the latest survey report titled *Tech-Driven Sustainability Trends and Index 2024*, commissioned by Alibaba Cloud, the digital technology and intelligence backbone of Alibaba Group.

However, the substantial energy consumption associated with these technologies is still reflecting a key barrier to broader adoption, as 61% of respondents still express concerns over the matter.

The survey highlights Malaysia's evolving stance on AI adoption and sustainability, revealing both enthusiasm and caution among businesses.

Specifically, 76% of Malaysian businesses are actively adopting digital technologies to accelerate sustainability progress, with 77% intrigued by AI's potential to drive sustainability innovation.

Despite this optimism, 62% of Malaysian businesses acknowledge the gap in understanding how digital technology can assist in achieving sustainability goals and 81% of businesses believe that the substantial energy consumption of digital technologies such as powering AI may outweigh its benefits.

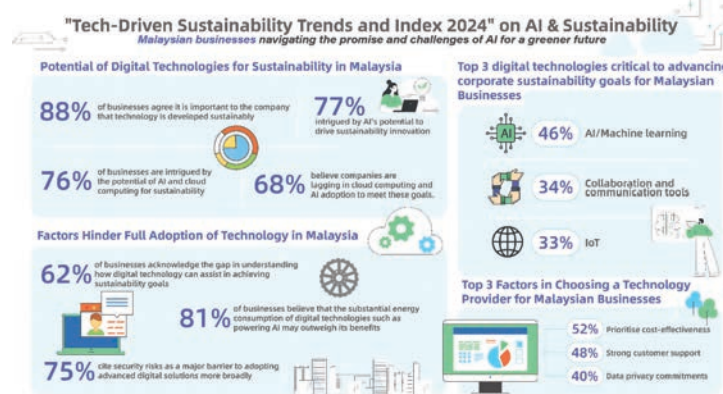
Additionally, 75% cite security risks as a major barrier to adopting advanced digital solutions more broadly.

Despite this optimism, 59% businesses acknowledge the gap in understanding how digital technology can assist in achieving sustainability goals with Asia leading at 63%, followed by Europe at 61% and the Middle East at 45%.

Around two thirds 62% of executives believe their organisations are lagging in adopting cloud computing and AI to accelerate progress towards sustainability goals.

Overall, 82% of businesses agree that sustainable development in technology is paramount for their companies, with markets like Singapore 93%, the Philippines 91%, and Indonesia 89% leading the charge.

Companies increasingly recognise the



multifaceted benefits of adopting digital technologies for sustainability including cost savings, improved operational efficiencies, and enhanced compliance with Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) regulations.

AI and machine learning are viewed as the most crucial digital technologies for advancing corporate sustainability, with businesses in the Middle East 52% placing greater emphasis on their importance compared to Europe 41%, emerging Asian markets 40% and developed Asian markets 36%.

However, the survey reveals a notable concern: 61% of respondents fear that the high energy consumption associated with digital technologies may hinder widespread AI adoption.

Furthermore, 71% of businesses believe that the substantial energy consumption of digital technologies such as powering AI may outweigh its benefits with the highest concerns from Singapore at 86%, the Philippines at 84% and Malaysia at 81%.

The survey reveals 88% of Malaysian businesses agree it is important to the company that technology is developed sustainably.

To add to the concerns highlighted earlier, 68% believe companies are lagging in cloud computing and AI adoption to meet these goals.

This hesitation is driven by barriers such as knowledge gaps (38%), cost constraints (30%), and lack of technical capabilities (31%).

A total of 89% of business leaders acknowledge technology's pivotal role in

achieving global sustainability targets with Malaysian companies ranking AI/Machine Learning (46%), Collaboration and Communication tools (34%), and IoT (33%) as the top three digital technologies critical to advancing corporate sustainability goals.

When selecting technology providers, Malaysian businesses prioritise cost-effectiveness (52%), strong customer support (48%), and data privacy commitments (40%) highlighting the key factors that influence their digital adoption strategies.

"With feedback from decision-makers across 13 markets, the survey report sheds light on the current attitudes and challenges businesses face in adopting AI and cloud computing for sustainability," said Alibaba Cloud Intelligence International business president Selina Yuan.

"At Alibaba Cloud, we are committed to supporting businesses on their sustainability journeys with scalable and sustainable solutions.

"By pledging to use 100% clean energy by 2030 and improving the energy efficiency at our global data centers, as well as optimising Generative AI capabilities such as large language models (LLMs) performance, AI can be a powerful tool to improve efficiency and optimise energy consumption."

The survey report underscores the essential role of technology in driving impactful change, while highlighting the need for businesses to adopt AI and cloud computing responsibly to address energy consumption concerns and bridge the gap in sustainability efforts.

## January IPI up 2.1% year-on-year, led by growth in manufacturing

**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) increased 2.1% year-on-year in January 2025, led by growth in manufacturing sector output.

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Sri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said: "The increase in IPP was mainly contributed by output growth in the manufacturing sector which increased at a slower rate of 3.7% (December 2024: 5.8%).

"Conversely, the mining and electricity sector production recorded decrease of 3.1% (December 2024: 0.9%) and 0.1% (December 2024: 3.5%), respectively.

"In terms of month-on-month comparison, IPP still contracted at the same rate as the previous month, which was negative 0.4%."

He added the increase in manufacturing sector production in January 2025 was supported by output from export-oriented industries, which grew at a slower pace of 5.6% compared to the 6.8% recorded in December 2024.

"This growth was mainly supported by growth in the manufacture of computers, electronic and optical products, which recorded an increase of 7.9%; followed by the manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats (8.9%).

"Additionally, the manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products also contributed at a rate of 3.4%.

"Month-on-month comparison showed the export-oriented industries remained in negative territory with a slight decrease at a rate of 0.9% compared to a 2.4% decrease in December 2024."

Mohd Uzir said domestic-oriented industries increased at a rate of 0.2% in January 2025, compared to 3.7% recorded in the previous month.

This increase was contributed by the manufacture of processed food products industry (7.0%); and the manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment (4.8%).

Month-on-month comparison showed that domestic-oriented industries increased by 1.3% after recording a slight growth of 0.4% in December 2024.

On the mining sector, Mohd Uzir said: "The 3.1% contraction in the mining sector in January 2025 was driven by a double-digit decrease of 10.0% in crude petroleum & condensate output (December 2024: -6.5%), while natural gas production maintained stable growth of 1.4% (December 2024: 5.9%)."

## Malaysians actively working to improve credit health: Experian

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Experian i-Score rating trends for 2024 indicate that many Malaysians are actively working to improve their credit health, particularly those who previously had lower credit scores.

Experian, a data and technology company, key insights from its latest Malaysian consumer credit trends report released yesterday revealed that 75% of consumers who had a 'Weak' rating in 2023 have improved their rating; and 43% of those with a 'Fair' rating last year moved to a higher rating in 2024.

However, around 10% of those with a "Good" rating saw their i-Score rating decline.

These findings reflect changing financial behaviours among Malaysians and reinforce the growing need for greater financial literacy and proactive credit management.

"These trends suggest that more Malaysians are taking proactive steps to strengthen their

creditworthiness, which can help unlock better loan approvals and lower interest rates," Experian said in a statement yesterday.

While many are making financial progress, data also highlights emerging consumer credit risks.

Experian's Early Warning Score (EWS) has identified key risk shifts that lenders should monitor namely 28% of individuals within Experian's data coverage have moved from "Medium" to "High Risk"; 24% of consumers have transitioned from "Low Risk" to either "Medium Risk" or "High Risk".

EWS predicts financial stress in the immediate future, focusing on shorter-term commitments. In contrast, the credit score assesses financial stability over a longer horizon, typically 12 months or more.

A declining EWS score signals increasing short-term financial strain in the market. Furthermore, weak score migration patterns

suggest that, if left unaddressed, these risks could escalate into long-term financial distress for some consumers.

These latest insights point to a potential rise in loan delinquencies and repayment challenges, emphasising the need for financial institutions to take proactive steps in managing risk and supporting consumers in maintaining financial stability and preventing future financial distress.

Experian's data also reveals a notable shift in credit card spending habits - 15% more individuals are now using 75% or more of their credit card limit compared to 2023; this trend is consistent across different age groups, reflecting broader changes in credit usage behaviour.

Higher credit utilisation could reflect either increased spending power or growing financial strain. This reinforces the need for consumers to better manage their credit for long-term financial health.

"At Experian Malaysia, we are committed to empowering consumers with the insights and tools needed to navigate their financial journey with confidence. Our latest credit trends reveal a positive shift in credit scores but also signal emerging risks that require close attention. As Malaysians continue to evolve their financial behaviours, proactive credit management and financial literacy have never been more critical.

"Through our nationwide campaign in March 2025, we aim to equip individuals with the knowledge they need to make informed credit decisions, helping them build stronger financial foundations for the future," said Experian Information Services Malaysia CEO Dawn Lai.

To help Malaysians take charge of their financial health, Experian is launching its Credit Health Month 2025, a month-long national initiative aimed at improving financial literacy and credit awareness.



## VinFast plans 100,000 EV charging stations in Indonesia

**JAKARTA:** Vietnam's VinFast plans to build 100,000 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations across Indonesia as the EV manufacturer pushes into the burgeoning industry in Southeast Asia's biggest economy.

Indonesia, home to the world's largest nickel reserves, has been seeking to position itself as a regional EV hub and a key player in the global EV supply chain.

Investment Minister Rosan Roeslani told AFP late on Tuesday VinFast plans to build up gradually to the number of charging stations pledged, without providing more details.

The company will also begin construction of an electric vehicle factory in West Java province at a cost of more than US\$200 million (RM885 million) and with the aim of producing 50,000 vehicles annually, state news agency Antara reported.

The investment commitment came in a meeting between Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto and VinFast representatives in Jakarta on Tuesday.

Indonesia has been offering a slew of incentives to boost its EV market, including a luxury goods tax exemption that has boosted sales and seen a flurry of key brands entering the country of 280 million people.

There were 195,084 electric vehicles in Indonesia in November 2024, but uptake remains a challenge because of their price and a lack of charging points. — AFP

## Cathay Pacific says profit edged up in 2024

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong carrier Cathay Pacific said yesterday that its attributable profit rose slightly in 2024 to US\$1.27 billion (RM5.6 billion), after announcing earlier this year that its flights were finally back to pre-pandemic levels.

The city's aviation sector was hit hard by Covid-era policies, which imposed strict rules on travellers that kept it internationally isolated before they were lifted in late 2022.

Chairman Patrick Healy said last year marked Cathay's "second consecutive year of solid financial performance", following an attributable profit of US\$1.26 billion in 2023.

"Our solid second-half financial result was driven by elevated cargo demand, higher passenger volumes, lower fuel prices and higher cost efficiencies compared with the previous year."

"This was partly offset by a continued normalisation of passenger yields as the supply of flights increased to meet demand in the overall market as expected."

Cathay and its budget airline subsidiary HK Express together saw a 30% spike in passengers year-on-year.

However, passenger yields — a measure of value generated by passengers — fell by 12% and 23% respectively, "reflecting the intense competition on regional routes".

CEO Ronald Lam said headwinds in 2025 and beyond included "trade conflicts" that could impact Cathay Cargo and "supply chain challenges" that continue to affect the whole aviation industry.

Cathay said group revenue rose 10.5% year-on-year to US\$13.4 billion, benefiting in part from a one-off gain of US\$74 million from diluting its interest in Air China. — AFP

# Drop in Indonesian govt revenue raises concerns

► Fiscal policy poorly received by investors, pressuring currency: BMI Research

**JAKARTA:** A nearly 30% drop in Indonesian government revenue in January, which comes as President Prabowo Subianto implements big spending plans, has raised concerns about fiscal sustainability and a potential jump in borrowing, economists said yesterday.

Data released late on Tuesday showed state revenue in Southeast Asia's largest economy fell 28.3% year-on-year to 157.3 trillion rupiah (RM42.5 billion) in January.

With spending levels remaining roughly the same in January, the government booked its first budget deficit for that month since the height of the pandemic four years ago.

The document containing the data has since been removed from the Finance Ministry's website.

A ministry spokesperson said it had been taken down because there

was a press conference scheduled for this week where the budget can be "explained more comprehensively".

Fakhru Fulvian, chief economist at Trimegah Securities, said the January data suggested there could be a revenue shortfall of between 150 trillion rupiah and 200 trillion rupiah in 2025 amid weakening global trade and slowing domestic growth.

"(The shortfall) is likely to add some upside on the bond issuance," he said, predicting the fiscal deficit would reach 2.7% of GDP, wider than the government's plan for 2.5%.

By law, the government must keep its annual deficit under 3% of GDP.

Analysts have raised concerns Prabowo might change the rules to make good on his promise to boost economic growth to 8% during his

five-year term, from around 5% now.

The data comes amid increasing concerns about the impact on the budget from Prabowo's policies, including big subsidies for electricity prices, cancellation of a tax hike and flagship free school meals and affordable housing programmes.

In recent weeks, Prabowo has also announced more multi-billion dollar projects, such as a major oil refinery upgrade and a plan to beef up cooperatives across the country.

Prabowo has ordered ministries to cut their spending by US\$19 billion (RM84 billion) to free up funds for other spending.

The president has said he wanted to be more daring in taking on more debt to fuel growth, but has also promised to adhere to existing fiscal rules.

The government's programme, however, has been "poorly received by investors", said BMI Research, part of Fitch Group, citing the 6% drop in the main stock index and the 2.3% depreciation in the rupiah so far this year.

BMI in a research note said Prabowo's cost-cutting measures would not be enough to fund his social welfare programmes.

BMI predicted the rupiah, already one of the region's worst-performing currencies this year, could weaken to 17,000 per US dollar by year-end, despite central bank's intervention.

The currency traded around 16,420 a dollar on Tuesday.

"The biggest risk stems from the extensive loosening of fiscal and monetary policy to achieve the government's 8.0% growth target. Its unsustainability will weigh on the value of the currency," it said.

Bank Indonesia has cut interest rates twice since September to bolster growth.

Jahen Rezki, an economist with the University of Indonesia, called for a re-evaluation of Prabowo's costly programmes in order to maintain fiscal prudence.

"It's too dangerous if the government plays around with imprudent fiscal policy because it has implications in the national economy," he said. — Reuters



Toyota Motor Corp employees working on the assembly line of the company's Motomachi plant. — REUTERS/PIC

## Major Japan firms agree to big wage hikes

**TOKYO:** Many of Japan's biggest companies from tech conglomerates to Toyota have met union demands for substantial wage hikes for a third consecutive year, seeking to help workers cope with inflation and retain staff amid labour shortages.

As annual *shunto* or "spring labour offensive" negotiations at top firms concluded yesterday, electronics conglomerate Hitachi said it had agreed to a record 6.2% increase in monthly wages in line with union demands.

Major Toyota auto parts supplier Denso also plans record pay hikes while Toyota said the combined increase in pay for manufacturing staff would match that of last year, which was the highest since 1999.

Policymakers have pushed for robust pay hikes given sharply higher prices for food and record corporate profits on the back of a weak yen.

But it is unclear whether the hikes will be strong enough to spur consumer spending and encourage the Bank of Japan to increase its policy rate, still at a low 0.5%, more aggressively.

Economists expect Japan Inc's average pay hike for 2025 to be similar to last year's 5.1% rise, which marked the sharpest increase in 33 years and enabled the central bank to exit its decade-long super-loose monetary policy.

Rengo, Japan's largest labour union umbrella group with seven

million members, will release a preliminary report on agreed terms on March 14.

Its unions were seeking an average hike of 6.09%, up from 5.85% last year.

Naoki Hattori, a senior economist at Mizuho Research and Technologies, said that an average pay hike of 5% to 5.5% would support expectations that the Bank of Japan will continue with its practice of raising rates once every six months or so, with the next one seen in June.

For the central bank to increase its pace of interest rate hikes, economists say it will need to see wage growth spur consumer spending.

Kazutaka Maeda, an economist at Meiji Yasuda Research Institute, is not

optimistic that will happen, saying that even an average pay raise of 5%-5.5% across corporate Japan this year would "just offset inflation and not drive consumer spending".

How the average pay hike turns out will also depend on whether there will also be strong pay gains at small and medium-sized firms, which employ around 70% of Japan's workforce.

Toyota has said it plans to pay more for domestic components to help suppliers fund pay rises.

Among major companies, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and electronics conglomerate NEC also responded to union demands in full.

Nippon Steel and Panasonic hiked pay but not to levels sought by unions. — Reuters

# US tariffs of 25% on steel, aluminium kick in

## ➤ EU responds with duties on €26b of American exports

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's increased tariffs on all US steel and aluminium imports took effect yesterday, stepping up a campaign to reorder global trade in favour of the United States and drawing swift retaliation from Europe.

Trump's action to bulk up protections for American steel and aluminium producers restores effective global tariffs of 25% on all imports of the metals and extends the duties to hundreds of downstream products made from the metals, from nuts and bolts to bulldozer blades and soda cans.

Trump's hyper-focus on tariffs since taking office in January has rattled investor, consumer and business confidence in ways that economists worry could cause a US recession and further lag on the global economy.

The European Commission, the executive arm of the European Union charged with

coordinating trade matters, responded swiftly, saying it would impose counter tariffs on €26 billion (RM124 billion) worth of US goods from next month.

"We are ready to engage in meaningful dialogue," Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told reporters, adding she had tasked Trade Commissioner Maros Sefcovic to resume his talks to "explore better solutions with the US".

"We firmly believe that in a world fraught with geoeconomic and political uncertainties, it is not in our common interest to burden our economies with such tariffs."

China's Foreign Ministry said Beijing would take all necessary measures to safeguard its rights and interests, while Japan's chief Cabinet secretary Yoshimasa Hayashi said the move could have a major impact on US-Japan economic ties.

CLOSE US allies Canada, Britain and Australia criticised the blanket tariffs, with Canada mulling reciprocal actions and Britain's Trade Minister Jonathan Reynolds saying "all options were on the table" to respond in the national interest.

Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said the move was "against the spirit of our two nations' enduring friendship" but ruled out tit-for-tat duties.

"Tariffs and escalating trade tensions are a form of economic self-harm, and a recipe for slower growth and higher inflation," he told reporters.

The countries most affected by the tariffs are Canada, the biggest foreign supplier of steel and aluminium to the US, as well as Brazil, Mexico and South Korea, which all have enjoyed some level of exemptions or quotas.

Trump initially threatened Canada with doubling the duty to 50% on its steel and aluminium exports to the US but backed off after Ontario province suspended a move to impose a 25% surcharge on electricity exports to the states of Minnesota, Michigan and New York.

That incident whip-sawed US financial markets already jittery over Trump's broad tariff offensive.

Asian markets were broadly steady yesterday, although Australia's benchmark closed 9.6% below February's record high. — Reuters



## Salesforce to invest US\$1b in Singapore

**SINGAPORE:** US cloud software giant Salesforce said yesterday it planned to invest US\$1 billion (RM4.43 billion) in Singapore over the next five years to boost the use of artificial intelligence agents (AI) in the workforce.

The island state has been increasingly turning to technology to solve its workforce problem as it struggles to deal with a declining birthrate and an ageing population.

The investment aims to accelerate the adoption in Singapore and the region of Agentforce, which enables businesses to create and manage AI agents designed to independently perform tasks such as sales, customer service and marketing.

Unlike chatbots that follow a preset script, AI agents are more advanced as they can think, decide and take action and complete tasks such as booking appointments or processing requests.

"We are in an incredible new era of digital labour where every business will be transformed by autonomous agents that augment the work of humans, revolutionising productivity and enabling every company to scale without limits," Salesforce chief executive Marc Benioff said in a statement.

"Singapore is at the forefront of this shift, and as the world's largest provider of digital labour through our Agentforce platform, Salesforce is thrilled to expand our work with the business community and our longtime partners in the region to drive innovation, productivity and growth."

In an interview with CNBC, Benioff said Salesforce had been in Singapore for the past 25 years and described it as the hub of Southeast Asia.

"We're investing another billion dollars in our operations here and we don't just do sales and marketing. We also do extremely advanced artificial intelligence development," he added.

"We have dozens of the very best AI engineers in the world here in our Singapore research centre." — AFP

## Zara owner posts record annual profit

**MADRID:** Zara owner Inditex, the world's biggest fashion retailer, reported a record annual profit for the third consecutive year yesterday due to dynamic sales and higher prices.

The Spanish group, which owns seven other top brands including Massimo Dutti, Pull & Bear and Bershka, posted a net profit of €5.87 billion (RM28 billion) in the fiscal year which ended on Jan 31, up from €5.38 billion in 2023, which was also a record.

The figure, which follows a solid fourth quarter, matched the expectations of analysts polled by financial data firm FactSet.

Inditex pointed to "very satisfactory" sales which hit €38.6 billion in 2024, a 7.5% increase from the previous year.

The group, which has introduced price hikes to offset rising production costs due to inflation, said "collections have been very well received by our customers".

By comparison, Inditex's main rival in the fast-fashion industry, Sweden's H&M, saw its sales slip in 2024 due to greater competition from low-priced Asian online retailers such as Shein and supply problems.

Looking head, Inditex said it was optimistic about the new year given that sales rose 4% between Feb 1 and March 10 when compared to the same time last year. — AFP



Workers installing steel rods at a construction site in the American city of Miami. — REUTERS/SPIC

## China holds talks with Walmart on price cut demand

**BEIJING:** Chinese authorities have held discussions with Walmart after the US retail giant demanded local suppliers cut their prices, reports said yesterday, as the wide-ranging impacts of President Donald Trump's tariff hikes begin to sink in.

"A source revealed to us that on March 11, the Ministry of Commerce and other relevant departments held talks with Walmart," Yuyuan Tiantian, a social media account under state broadcaster CCTV, reported.

"The reason for the talks was Walmart's demand for significant price reductions from some Chinese suppliers, attempting to shift the burden of US tariffs on China onto Chinese

suppliers and consumers," the report said.

Earlier this month, Trump raised the 10% blanket tariff he previously imposed on Chinese products to 20%, citing Beijing's continued failure to stem the flow of deadly fentanyl precursors.

China responded by slapping its own tariffs of up to 15% on a range of US agricultural goods including soybeans, chicken and pork.

The CCTV-affiliated account said it "believes that there are several key points worth noting from this discussion", including that Walmart's demand for price cuts "may violate commercial contracts".

"If Walmart insists on this course of action,

the consequences for the company will go beyond just a discussion," it added.

Separately, the China Chamber of Commerce for Import and Export of Textiles issued a statement yesterday calling on US retailers to "solve international trade problems fairly and reasonably".

The body said it had recently received reports from members that large US firms had asked Chinese suppliers to lower their prices.

"We are further verifying the situation.

"If the situation is true, we will take positive measures to safeguard the legitimate interests of member companies," the statement read.

— AFP



# MARKET ROUND-UP: MARCH 12

## Bursa Trade Statistic

12 MAR 2025

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

Participation					
Retail (15.12%)		Institution (41.57%)		Foreign (43.31%)	
Net (in RM mil.)		Net (in RM mil.)		Net (in RM mil.)	
<b>+67.78</b>		<b>+39.27</b>		<b>-107.05</b>	
Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)
543.29	475.51	1420.10	1380.83	1405.52	1512.56

Preliminary status (Excluding Trade Amendments) | Final data, refer to Bursa website

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**SUNBIZ** presents a summary of the day's trading activity on Bursa Malaysia and other markets in an easy to digest format.

Sources: Bursa Malaysia, Bernama, shareinvestor.com and websites

**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	11,051.20 -216.60
FBMKLCI	1,484.83 -35.32
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	470.42 -1.24
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	148.95 -1.95
CONSTRUCTION	244.47 -10.81
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,200.70 -568.50
ENERGY	684.32 -10.79
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	475.08 -5.43
HEALTH CARE	1,829.13 -10.27
TRANSPORTATION	995.14 +1.39
PROPERTY	951.89 -8.11
PLANTATION	7,294.04 -47.19
FBMSHA	10,734.40 -139.50
FBMACE	4,398.97 -41.16
TECHNOLOGY	45.98 -0.50

**TURNOVER: 3.898 bil** **VALUE: RM3.368 bil**

## FBM KLCI slides 2.3% amid rising global trade tensions

**THE** FBM KLCI continued its decline yesterday, breaching the key support level of 1,490-1,500, driven by heightened investor concerns over the potential repercussions of an escalating global trade dispute.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd vice-president of equity research Thong Pak Leng said key regional indices were mostly lower as investors navigated uncertainties stemming from potential economic slowdowns.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI dropped 35.32 points, or 2.32%, to 1,484.83 from Tuesday's close of 1,520.15. The index recorded close to 10% loss on a year-to-date basis.

The market bellwether opened 15.44 points lower at 1,504.71, and fluctuated between 1,478.84 and 1,505.33 throughout the day.

On the broader market, decliners thumped advancers 659 to 297, while 469 counters were unchanged, 964 untraded, and seven suspended.

Thong believes that the sharp decline yesterday was a knee-jerk reaction to US President Donald Trump's policies, which have created significant uncertainty for investors.

"The FBM KLCI is currently in oversold position, hence, we expect bargain hunting may emerge anytime soon. The index is expected to trend within the range of 1,480-1,510 for the remainder of the week," he told Bernama.

Heavyweights Maybank fell six sen to RM10.18, Public Bank slipped eight sen to RM4.33, CIMB dipped 26 sen to RM7, and Hong Leong shed 10 sen to RM20.04. MR DIY added three sen to RM1.33 and 99 Speed Mart rose one sen to RM1.98.

As for the actives, Sapura Energy gained half-a-sen to 4 sen, MYEG increased one sen to 90.5 sen, and Natingate rose 2 sen to RM1.17.

## Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
SAPNRG	0.040	+0.005	+14.29	1,836,373
HSI-CWCF	0.080	-0.025	-23.81	1,460,396
HSI-PWD2	0.100	+0.005	+5.26	1,303,650
GAMUDA	3.770	-0.290	-7.14	974,375
CIMB	7.000	-0.260	-3.58	702,762
HSI-CWCM	0.235	-0.015	-6.00	695,856
HSI-PWDN	0.055	-	-	612,827
NATGATE	1.170	+0.020	+1.74	560,321
NEXG	0.255	-0.015	-5.56	490,114
HSI-PWD4	0.130	+0.005	+4.00	372,963
HSI-CWED	0.145	-0.010	-6.45	368,862
HSI-CWCA	0.145	-0.040	-21.62	357,070
HSI-PWD6	0.185	+0.015	+8.82	347,590
SPTECH	0.240	-0.020	-7.69	325,446
PBBANK	4.330	-0.080	-1.81	283,545
GENM	1.750	-0.030	-1.69	279,049
GAMUDA-C2R	0.045	-0.030	-40.00	271,573
YTL-CIF	0.025	-	-	255,544
SUNWAY	4.170	-0.250	-5.66	248,137
HSI-PWD5	0.135	+0.010	+8.00	245,664



## Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
PPB	11.640	+0.340	9,734
PETGAS	16.920	+0.300	8,270
PIE	3.300	+0.290	24,439
HLIND	12.920	+0.220	815
DINO45801028	102.700	+0.200	0.7
HSI-CWA8	1.270	+0.130	267
DKSH	4.780	+0.100	398
KLK	20.580	+0.100	5,731
GREATEC	1.450	+0.070	36,977
SP500-H53	1.120	+0.070	727
MPI	17.360	+0.060	1,502
PLENITU	1.430	+0.060	56
UNISEM	2.000	+0.060	10,334
FBMKLCI-HA5	0.560	+0.055	2,685
FBMKLCI-HA9	0.275	+0.055	1,015
PINEPAC	0.280	+0.050	10
FBMKLCI-HB2	0.235	+0.045	7,476
FBMKLCI-HB3	0.220	+0.045	3,023
HSI-PWFA	0.785	+0.045	660
ORNA	0.800	+0.045	250

## Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
BAUTO-C43	0.010	+100.00	1,100
GENTINGC3L	0.010	+100.00	5,802
HSI-PWDK	0.010	+100.00	27,214
SAPNRG-WA	0.010	+100.00	208,135
SKPRES-WB	0.010	+100.00	2,411
DNEX-C37	0.025	+66.67	2,482
MAHSING-C74	0.015	+50.00	601
MTRONIC	0.015	+50.00	3,062
AFFIN-HA	0.020	+33.33	25
CTOS-C16	0.040	+33.33	1,000
D60-C14	0.020	+33.33	18,633
HSI-PWDS	0.020	+33.33	10,650
SALCON-WB	0.020	+33.33	23,526
SUPERMX-C4P	0.020	+33.33	100
FBMKLCI-HA2	0.045	+28.57	1,160
NATGATE-CJ	0.045	+28.57	19,001
NIO-C11	0.090	+28.57	87
BYD-C33	0.185	+27.59	2,588
FBMKLCI-HB3	0.220	+25.71	3,023
ALRICH	0.025	+25.00	2,280

## World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	41,433.48	-478.23	-1.14
S&P 500 [US]	5,572.07	-42.49	-0.76
NASDAQ [US]	17,436.10	-32.22	-0.18
NYSE [US]	19,052.13	-150.25	-0.78
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,368.61	58.71	1.11
FTSE 100 [UK]	8,541.39	45.4	0.53
DAX [GER]	22,648.91	320.14	1.43
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	36,819.09	25.98	0.07
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	2,694.91	24.19	0.91
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	23,600.31	-181.83	-0.76
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,927.23	-14.19	-0.36
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	185.02	-1.42	-0.76
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	3,371.92	-7.9	-0.23
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,574.82	37.22	1.47
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	73,974.32	-128	-0.17
ASX 200 [AUS]	7,786.24	-103.87	-1.32
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,002.58	-100.82	-1.24
FBM KLCI	1,484.83	-35.32	-2.32
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	3,835.87	10.04	0.26
WTI [US\$/BBL]	66.6	0.35	0.53
BRENT [US\$/BBL]	69.88	0.32	0.46
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	2,925.60	4.7	0.16
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	33.46	0.31	0.94
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	988.9	7.43	0.76
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	481.75	5.15	1.08
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,662.50	134	1.41
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	465.5	-4.75	-1.01
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	553.5	-3.25	-0.58
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	41.79	-0.14	-0.33
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	8,302.00	-128	-1.52
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	196.9	-1.3	-0.66

As at 5pm, Mar 12

## Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
UTDPLT	21.400	-0.900	14,446
ALLIANZ-PA	17.500	-0.800	13
TENAGA	13.000	-0.400	62,227
AJI	13.920	-0.380	897
HLFG	17.100	-0.360	1,744
ALLIANZ	16.880	-0.300	1,375
DLADY	26.700	-0.300	78
PETDAG	16.400	-0.300	9,187
GAMUDA	3.770	-0.290	974,375
NESTLE	69.000	-0.280	2,115
CIMB	7.000	-0.260	702,762
SUNWAY	4.170	-0.250	248,137
IDEAL	3.800	-0.200	20
SUNCON	4.200	-0.190	35,363
ITMAX	3.530	-0.160	41,298
LPI	13.420	-0.160	2,063
NSOP	3.860	-0.160	289
SUNWAY-PA	4.120	-0.160	3,056
HUMEIND	2.470	-0.150	1,526
IHH	7.100	-0.140	75,550

## Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
SP500-C48	0.005	-88.89	300
NEXG-C66	0.020	-86.67	37,395
GREATEC-C16	0.025	-83.33	5,000
ATECH-CJ	0.015	-76.92	500
KERJAYA-C2	0.070	-66.67	500
MAXIS-C48	0.005	-66.67	2,044
PETGAS-C5	0.005	-66.67	300
TM-C1N	0.005	-66.67	1,000
SCGBHD-CC	0.060	-60.00	1,470
TSH-C11	0.010	-60.00	200
FRONTKN-C39	0.070	-53.33	14,000
BAT-C34	0.010	-50.00	500
CIMB-C1P	0.015	-50.00	24,101
CTOS-C14	0.005	-50.00	1,000
ENGKAH-WB	0.005	-50.00	1,031
FBMKLCI-CQU	0.005	-50.00	6,730
GAMUDA-C2X	0.015	-50.00	43,646
HM-WC	0.010	-50.00	178
HONGSENG	0.005	-50.00	2,272
IHH-C48	0.005	-50.00	4,000

# MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

**SUNBIZ** presents extracts of a selection of commentaries and research reports received from stockbrokers on counters that could be of interest to investors.

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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## Foreigners remain net buyers of Malaysian corporate bonds

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Despite global market volatility, foreign investors have remained net buyers of Malaysia's Private Debt Securities (PDS) for five consecutive months, underscoring confidence in the country's corporate bond market.

Citing economic data from Riverbank Macro Insights, Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said investor appetite for corporate bonds remains strong, with primary issuances seeing oversubscription rates of up to seven times.

"This trend reflects continued confidence in Malaysia's corporate debt instruments despite broader risk aversion in global financial markets," he told Bernama.

He noted that while foreign investors have been net sellers in the local fixed-income market, particularly in government bonds, the resilience of the PDS market highlights Malaysia's appeal as a stable investment destination.

He said the cumulative inflows of PDS totalled RM4.2 billion from October 2024 to February 2025, with October 2024 and November 2024 each at RM0.5 billion, December 2024 at RM1.7 billion, January 2025 at RM0.7 billion, and February 2025 at RM0.8 billion.

In February 2025, net foreign outflows from Malaysian fixed-income assets totalled RM1.1 billion, driven largely by Government Investment Issues, which saw net sales of RM1.4 billion, he said.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Government Securities recorded a smaller outflow of RM200 million.

Mohd Afzanizam said strong demand for corporate bonds reflects the attractiveness of Malaysia's private sector debt, supported by solid corporate fundamentals and favourable interest rate expectations.

## Ringgit falls against dollar ahead of US inflation report

**THE** ringgit closed lower against the US dollar yesterday on caution ahead of US inflation data and as the global trade war escalated.

At 6pm, the ringgit dropped to 4.4260/4300 against the greenback from Tuesday's close of 4.4100/4175.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the market was worried about the escalating trade war, which dampened risk sentiment.

"The release of the US Consumer Price Index (CPI) tonight is quite important and could determine the direction of US interest rates this year," he told Bernama.

Mohd Afzanizam said the US Federal Reserve (Fed) might want to ease its policy rate further to counter a possible recession in the US economy. "Additionally, regional equities market, along with the FBM KLCI, have recorded close to a 10% decline on a year-to-date basis, signalling that the risk-off mode is still pervasive," he added.

The ringgit was traded mostly lower against a basket of major currencies.

It rose versus the Japanese yen to 2.9775/9804 from 2.9921/9974 at Tuesday's close but dropped against the British pound to 5.7255/7306 from 5.7035/7132 and depreciated vis-a-vis the euro to 4.8301/8345 from 4.8091/8173 previously.

The local noted traded lower against Asean currencies.

It dipped versus the Singapore dollar to 3.3181/3213 from Tuesday's closing of 3.3118/3177, slipped against the Thai baht to 13.0688/0868 from 13.0415/0695 and edged lower vis-a-vis the Indonesian rupiah to 269.0/269.3 from 268.7/269.3 previously.

The ringgit was also lower versus the Philippine peso at 7.71/7.73 from Tuesday's closing of 7.70/7.72.

## Exchange Rates

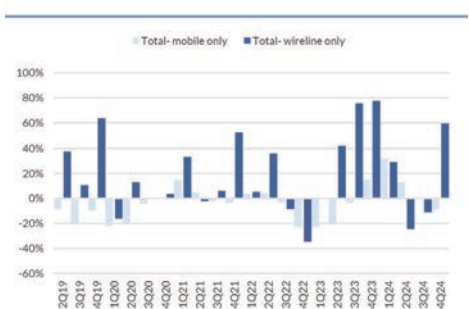
FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.4925	4.3585	4.3485
1 Australian Dollar	2.8370	2.7230	2.7070
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3650	3.2680	3.2600
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1030	3.0190	3.0070
1 Euro	4.8980	4.7400	4.7200
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5710	2.4760	2.4600
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3650	3.2680	3.2600
1 Sterling Pound	5.8200	5.6360	5.6160
1 Swiss Franc	5.1210	4.9030	4.8880
100 UAE Dirham	123.4700	117.0900	116.8900
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7660	3.5070	3.3070
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.4300	59.7900	N/A
100 Danish Krone	67.3100	61.9500	61.750
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.3000	55.4000	55.2000
100 Indian Rupee	5.2300	4.9100	4.7100
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0283	0.0256	0.0206
100 Japanese Yen	3.0320	2.9350	2.9250
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.7000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	43.1700	39.7100	39.5100
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6300	1.5300	1.3300
100 Philippine Peso	7.9500	7.4900	7.2900
100 Qatar Riyal	124.3500	118.0400	117.8400
100 Saudi Riyal	120.8500	114.7300	114.5300
100 South Africa Rand	25.4700	23.0100	22.8100
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5600	1.4400	1.2400
100 Swedish Krona	46.1700	42.0300	41.8300
100 Thai Baht	13.8800	12.3100	11.9100

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

## Telecommunications

Neutral

### Fixed line players chalked stronger earnings growth



Source: Company data, RHB

**FOR** the Dec 2024 quarter, fixed line players outpaced their mobile peers again. Aggregate Q4'24 fixed line PATAMI grew 59% YoY vs the 9% YoY decline chalked by the MNOs (Big-2) players. The stronger fixed line growth was, in part, buoyed by a RM372 million tax credit from TM in Q4'24. Of the stocks covered, five telcos delivered earnings that were in line while Axiata lagged our forecast (albeit a consensus beat). We adjusted FY25-26 core earnings by -10% to +8%, after factoring in the latest guidance. We expect sector core earnings (ex-Axiata) to grow by 8.6% in 2025 (2024: +0.2%), largely on stronger CDB earnings from higher merger synergies.

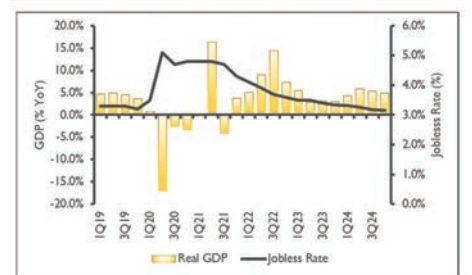
A key highlight for the quarter were special dividends declared by the fixed line operators. TM announced a special 6 sen DPS on top of a final DPS of 12.5 sen, taking cumulative DPS to a new high of 31 sen. Its DPR of 59% is at the top end of its 40-60% guidance (based on reported PATAMI). The special DPS was against a higher PATAMI base with tax credits recognised. TDC declared a notable 27.45 sen special DPS that, together with the ordinary DPS, put its full year DPR at 272%. Maxis also dished out a final DPS that was above the usual run rate, which management lamented as being "one-off". We see capital management upsides for TM (due to its strong balance sheet, with a net debt/EBITDA of 0.6x) and TDC (due to its net cash position).

Key downside risks to our stock calls and/or earnings are greater competition, weaker-than-expected earnings and regulatory setbacks. - **RHB Research, March 12**

## Malaysian Economy

Jobless rate: 3.1% in January 2025

### Malaysia Quarterly Jobless Rate vs. Real GDP (1Q19 - 4Q24)



Source: DOSM, TA Securities

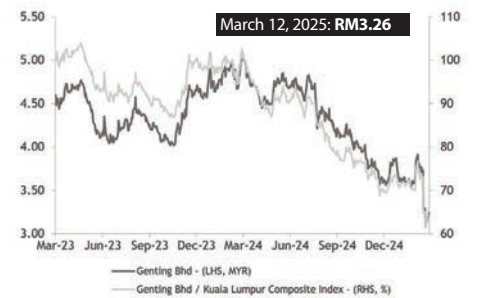
**THE** labour market maintained its positive momentum in January 2025, with nationwide employment continuing to expand. Employment grew by 2.8% YoY and 0.3% MoM, bringing the total workforce to 16.68 million (Revised Dec24: 16.63 million). Starting January 2025, labour force statistics have been revised to align with Malaysia's latest population estimates.

According to the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM), key drivers of this sustained labour market improvement include the expansion of the semiconductor industry and increased adoption of advanced technologies, which have attracted strong investments from global corporations. Additionally, government initiatives such as the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint (MyDigital) and the National AI Roadmap 2021-2025 are equipping the workforce with critical digital skills, particularly in artificial intelligence and emerging technologies. These efforts are also fostering growth in micro, small, and medium enterprises through targeted upskilling and reskilling programmes.

As the economy continues to expand, the labour market is expected to maintain steady growth, with rising employment levels and a declining unemployment rate. This year, we anticipate that the jobless rate to average at 3.1% with a possibility of reaching 3% by the end of the year. Also, GDP growth is projected to range between 4.8% and 5.3%, and the DoSM is set to release the first-quarter data in May 2025. - **TA Research, March 12**

## Genting Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM3.98



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

**RECALL** that Q4'24 results disappointed largely due to RWLV. On RWLV, GENT attributed it to warm weather in Las Vegas but we gather that some gamblers avoided it as it is under investigation by the NGCB for admitting illegal bookies. Thus, GENT's share price fell to Covid-19 pandemic levels or close to a 10-year trough. Yet, the Lim family (Kien Huat Realty and Lim Keong Hui) bought 7.3 million shares for RM22.8 million and CEO (Tan Kong Han) bought 0.1 million shares for RM0.3 million recently.

Due to RWLV's poor performance (Q4'24 EBITDA: US\$1.5 million, FY23A quarterly average EBITDA: US\$48.8 million), GENT's earnings visibility is unclear. RWLV's operations will likely remain weak as long as it is under investigation. Hence, historical PER analysis is not meaningful. That said, its current P/BV of 0.4x is an all-time low while its current discount to SOTP of 66% is at all-time highs ex-Covid-19 pandemic. GENT's current valuation also offers GENS (RM3.93/shr in our SOTP valuation) for free.

In our view, GENT's current valuations have fully priced in core ROAE decline. Yet, we believe there could be near term catalysts that could rerate its valuations. First, 20%-owned TauRx is expected to receive a reply from the MHRA in Apr/Jun on whether its Alzheimer's combating drug is approved. If it does and TauRx is worth US\$15 billion as per our estimates. GENT could be worth RM5.09/shr. Second, a positive resolution to NGCB's investigation on RWLV will likely see the latter's operations recover.

Key near term risk is GENM losing the US\$600 million lawsuit by its Bahamian partner in which is expected to be known by June 2025. BUY with RM3.98 TP. - **Maybank Investment Bank, March 12**





# the Sun **LYFE**

THURSDAY | MAR 13, 2025

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## Smarter homes

*Celebrating  
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lifestyles*  
- P22



### WEEKLY **FOCUS**

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social media

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Travel  
and leisure

#### WEDNESDAY

Fashion  
and beauty

#### THURSDAY

Home  
and living

#### FRIDAY

Food  
and beverage

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refreshes genre

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Tate McRae  
renews dance-pop



# Unveiling products for smart future

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

**S**MART home appliances maker Midea has unveiled a preview of its 2025/2026 product line-up, featuring advanced Internet of Things (IoT) integration, energy efficiency and user-centric designs to ensure sustainable growth in the year.

With an array of innovations, the product preview displayed the company's commitment to making smart, energy-efficient and user-friendly home appliances that are accessible to all.

"This is not just about launching new products — it is about embracing the future of home living. Consumer lifestyles are evolving as people are getting busier than ever and they seek smarter, more efficient solutions. Midea is here to lead the next wave of change, combining affordable innovation, high-quality manufacturing and great customer service to bring seamless smart living into every home," said Midea Malaysia managing director Mark Tam at the Genting International Convention Centre last week.

## Driving innovation

In a fast-evolving industry, with savvy consumers equally placing greater emphasis on energy efficiency, smart integration and seamless design, Midea has preemptively advanced its sustainability and innovation efforts to meet the former's growing demands, particularly with the company's latest air-conditioners and refrigerators that are certified by the Sustainable Energy Development Authority.

As such, the company's 34 air-conditioner and 13 refrigerator models have achieved a four-star rating or higher, while Midea has additionally observed a significant increase in the adoption of inverter air-conditioners, with energy-saving models exceeding 40% of the total sales.

Beyond energy efficiency, seamless home integration is becoming a key factor in consumer purchasing decisions. Midea's latest range of smart home appliances aligns with emerging trends by incorporating artificial intelligence (AI)-powered capabilities and sophisticated modern designs.

The latest product range is equipped with RFID and Wi-Fi capabilities, allowing users to control their appliances remotely through the SmartHome application, ensuring a more intuitive and connected home experience.

## Growth and market expansion

Midea continues to strengthen its position as one of Malaysia's fastest-growing home appliance brands. The company's air-

► Midea showcases energy-efficient 2025/2026 lineup



Tam (left) and Midea Malaysia deputy general manager Peter Jiang demonstrating the upcoming smart home products by the company, which covers a range of appliances, including for the kitchen.

conditioner segment recorded year-on-year growth exceeding 30%, while maintaining a 20% compound annual growth rate of the company over the past five years overall, reflecting sustained market momentum.

Going into 2025, Midea Malaysia has set its target on breaking RM1 billion in annual sales — projecting double-digit growth by banking on its more than 1,000-strong nationwide dealer network to ensure greater accessibility to its innovations for sustained rapid growth.

To solidify its benchmark in delivering smart home solutions and more intelligent, energy-efficient products to consumers, Midea is actively expanding its network of Midea Brand Stores outlets. Over the next two years, the company plans to upgrade over 50

of these outlets nationwide, enhancing the overall customer experience.

Simultaneously, Midea is focused on creating sales terminals equipped with professional technical support, expert consultation and comprehensive one-stop experiential services, further demonstrating the company's excellence in customer service and its role in industry development.

## Next wave of smart living

Midea is setting the stage for the next wave of smart living with its latest range of intelligent, energy-efficient home appliances. From the kitchen to the bedroom, these innovations are designed to provide Malaysian consumers with seamless, modern and user-friendly

experiences that make smart living more accessible.

Centered around the SmartHome app, Midea has integrated big data, AI, cloud platform and other IoT technologies to create a smart home experience that allows users to live fulfilling lives with their families, while controlling appliances through their phones.

As Midea advances its vision for smarter, more sustainable homes, the new product line-up will be introduced in the coming months.

In conjunction with the upcoming Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration, Midea will be rewarding customers with Touch 'n Go rebates worth up to RM500 beginning this Sunday.



Tam says Midea's latest line-up is timely with the recent announcement on the increase of electricity tariffs.

One of the highly anticipated new products is Midea's Insta Fit Refrigerator.





BY THASHINE SELVAKUMARAN

**F**RIENDSHIPS, like any relationship, are meant to grow and change. But sometimes, after months or years apart, reconnecting with an old friend does not feel the same. You sit across from them, reminiscing about shared memories, but there is a gap. You do not laugh at the same jokes, their life feels foreign to you and suddenly, the comfort you once had is gone. It is confusing, even heartbreaking. Do you fight for the friendship or is it time to let go?

Here is how to assess whether to rekindle or move on when a friendship feels different.

#### Acknowledge change without blame

It is easy to think — they have changed or I have changed — but in reality, life has simply moved forward. Instead of blaming yourself or your friend, acknowledge change is natural. People develop new interests, careers, relationships and perspectives that shape who they become.

Ask yourself: “Are we different in a way that is enriching or alienating?”

Some friendships evolve into something new, while others naturally drift apart. If your core values still align but your lifestyles differ, there is still room for reconnection. But if conversations feel forced, or you find yourself holding back, it might be a sign that the bond is not the same.

#### Assess if friendship still feels safe and supportive

Friendships thrive on emotional safety, the ability to be yourself without judgment. When you reconnect, do you feel heard and understood? Or do you feel like you need to filter your words and experiences?

If your friend is dismissive of your struggles, uninterested in your life or constantly comparing their journey to yours, the emotional safety net may be gone. On the other hand, if you still feel a sense of mutual respect and care, even if you do not relate to every part of each other's lives, the foundation of your friendship is still strong.

# Assessing sinking friendships

► What to do when relationships feel different, no longer add value to life



Make space for connections that align with who you are now.

A good way to test this is to open up about something important to you. If their response is warm and engaged, the connection is still there. If they seem indifferent, it may be a sign that the friendship is not what it used to be.

#### Put in effort, only if mutual

Friendships require effort from both sides. If you feel the gap but want to close it, take small steps such as suggesting a casual meet-up, checking in on their life or reminiscing about old times. See how they respond.

If they make an effort to reconnect by asking about your life, planning hangouts or simply responding with enthusiasm, then that is a good sign. But if they are always too busy, uninterested or only engaging when it benefits them, it may be time to accept that they have moved on. Friendships should not feel like one-sided emotional labour.

#### Decide to rekindle or let go gracefully

If you feel a spark of connection, it is worth nurturing the friendship in a

new way. Maybe you will not be as close as before, but that does not mean the bond has to disappear. Some friendships transition from daily chats to occasional catch-ups, and that is okay.

But if being around them feels exhausting, emotionally draining or even painful, letting go might be the healthier choice. Letting go does not have to be dramatic. It can simply mean accepting that you have both outgrown the dynamic you once had. Cherish the memories, but allow yourself to embrace new friendships that align with your

present self.

Losing the ease of an old friendship is tough, but it is part of growing up. Not all friendships are meant to last forever in the same way. If the connection is still there, it is worth putting in the effort to redefine the bond. But if it no longer serves you, it is okay to move forward with gratitude rather than guilt.

At the end of the day, true friendships are about quality, not history. The best ones will evolve with you, not hold you back.



A one-sided friendship is not worth holding onto.



Friendships change, and that is okay. — ALL PICS FROM PEXELS



BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ

**D**IRECTED by Seth Gordon, *Back in Action* is exactly what its title promises: a thrilling return to the world of espionage, complete with action, sharp comedy and surprisingly heartfelt family dynamics.

Starring the charismatic duo of Jamie Foxx and Cameron Diaz, this Netflix action comedy is a fast-paced rollercoaster of fun.

With a runtime of just under two hours, it wastes no time in throwing viewers into the thick of things, offering a blend of romance, family drama and explosive spy sequences.

This movie taps into the "spies turned lovers" trope with a fresh twist, showcasing the afterlife of espionage where the biggest mission becomes raising kids and navigating family issues. But when duty calls, the result is a non-stop adrenaline rush laced with clever one-liners and genuine chemistry.

#### Watch for fun, stay for chemistry

The movie thrives on the understanding not every action film needs to be brooding or overly complicated. *Back in Action* reminds audiences that sometimes, they just want to have fun and fun is exactly what it delivers. Every scene bursts with energy, from action-packed chases to heartfelt family moments, ensuring no dull moments exist.

What truly elevates the film is the undeniable chemistry between Foxx and Diaz. Their back-and-forth is believable and entertaining, balancing romantic tension and comedic timing. The dialogue is sharp, filled with unexpected zingers and witty exchanges that keep the tone light even when the stakes are

# Spy who loved me

➤ Foxx, Diaz dazzle in this action comedy with explosive energy, memorable one-liners

high. Every character gets a moment to shine and catchy one-liners land on the mark.

#### Charming cast

Foxx brings his signature charisma to the role of Matt, blending action-hero bravado with the humour of a dad who has been out of the game a little too long. Diaz matches him beat-for-beat as Emily, effortlessly switching between concerned mother and fierce operative. Together, they remind audiences why they are such beloved stars.

Supporting performances add a delightful layer to the narrative. Glenn Close steals scenes with her commanding presence, offering both gravitas and comedic timing. Andrew Scott delivers as the MI6 agent whose dynamic with the main duo adds another layer of intrigue and humour. Even the younger cast members bring heart to the story, making the family drama feel as vital as the action.

#### All-in-one package

*Back in Action* hits the sweet spot between pulse-pounding action and



Roberts (Alice, left) and Jackson (Leo) get a crash course in their parents' secret past.

laugh-out-loud comedy. The action sequences are stylish and well-choreographed, keeping the adrenaline pumping without ever feeling excessive. Each scene is tightly paced, ensuring the film never loses momentum.

Romance is also at the film's core, though it never becomes too saccharine. Instead, the love story feels earned and grounded. The film understands relationships, especially ones forged in the heat of espionage, are complicated but worth fighting for. The family drama adds another layer of depth, showing the challenges of balancing past lives with present responsibilities.

#### Witty dialogue that delivers laughs

One of the film's biggest surprises is how sharp the dialogue is. The humour feels organic, with each character given clever lines that feel true to their personalities. The comedic timing is impeccable, especially between Foxx and Diaz,



Foxx (left) and Diaz bring action, comedy and romance as former CIA agents-turned-parents.

**DIRECTOR:**  
Seth Gordon  
**CAST:** Jamie Foxx, Cameron Diaz, McKenna Roberts, Rylan Jackson, Andrew Scott

E-VALUE

7

ACTING

6

PLOT

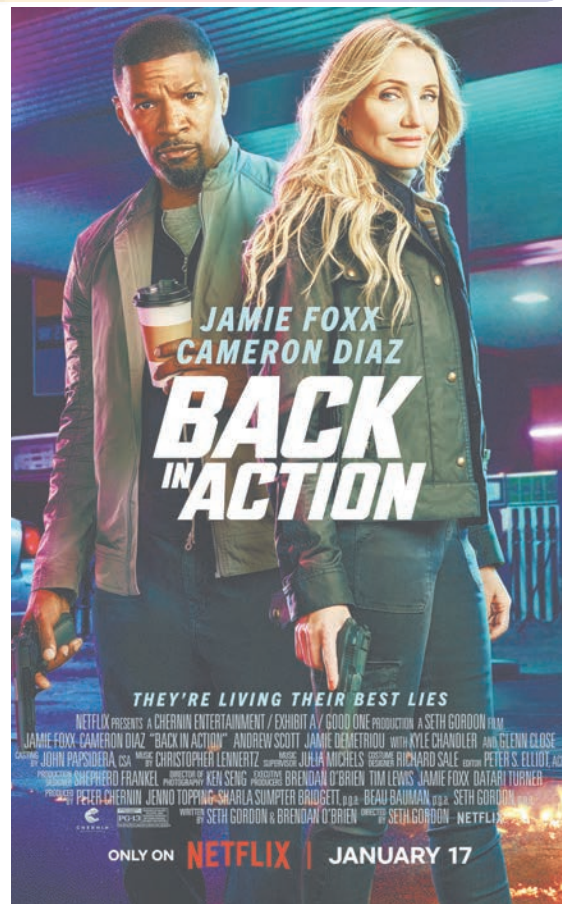
6



(Standing, from left) Close (Ginny) and Demetriou (Nigel) join the chaos in this action-packed film.

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*Back in Action* delivers thrills and non-stop fun in a simple, satisfying package.



Foxx brings his signature charisma to the role of Matt.



Diaz proves she is as sharp as ever, balancing motherhood and espionage.

whose banter is consistently amusing.

From sarcastic quips during high-speed chases to playful digs during quieter family moments, the script ensures the laughs keep coming. The one-liners are memorable without feeling forced and the humour always serves the story rather than distracting from it.

#### No dull moments

What truly sets *Back in Action* apart is its commitment to entertainment. The pacing is brisk, the plot easy to follow and every scene offers something fresh. Viewers will not find themselves checking the clock but instead, they will be too busy laughing, cheering and maybe even getting a little emotional.

The film does not try to reinvent

the wheel and that is a good thing. It embraces what it is – a fun, fast-paced action comedy with heart. There is no need to overthink the plot, the movie is best enjoyed by sitting back and soaking in the entertainment.

#### Fun ride worth watching

*Back in Action* is not just a comeback for its stars, it is a refreshing take on the spy genre. The film knows exactly what it wants to be: a fun, thrilling and heartwarming story that never takes itself too seriously.

For anyone in the mood for a feel-good action comedy with a dash of romance and family warmth, *Back in Action* delivers everything it promises and more. It is an excellent reminder that sometimes, the best movies are ones that simply provide audiences a good time.





25-year-old Neriah is touring the US.

## US pop singer Neriah returns with single *Gone Girl*

**POP** songstress Neriah has returned with new music, releasing her latest heartbreak anthem *Gone Girl* with American singer Jake Miller.

The single, which follows the success of her last hit tune *Only Always*, was inspired by the 2014 movie *Gone Girl*.

"*Gone Girl* came from a moment of pure emotion. I had just had a huge fight with my boyfriend and all I could think about was how much I loved the movie. The way it captures betrayal, power and control felt too real in that moment.

"I wanted to channel that energy into a song that was not just about heartbreak but about reclaiming the narrative. It is for anyone who has ever been pushed too far and decided to flip the script," said Neriah about the song.

The 25-year-old had teased the song prior to its release, leaving clues across the US cities where she was performing.

Originally known as Neriah Fisher, the singer first rose to fame as a YouTube vlogger. She gained over 61,000 subscribers by posting fashion hauls, make-up tutorials and music covers of popular songs.

The California native then ventured into music and has since released three EPs and a debut album.

She has accumulated a strong following for her music, having over 618,000 monthly listeners. Her top streaming markets include the Philippines, Indonesia and Malaysia.

# Close Ur Kopitiam makers aim for 2026 CNY film

► Jaspers Lai to direct, star in *Lost & Found*

**D**ISSY, the Malaysian producer and creative force behind the Chinese New Year (CNY) film *Close Ur Kopitiam*, has announced its next CNY movie *Lost & Found*, slated for 2026.

It will be made in collaboration with Jaspers Lai, who will take on directing and lead acting roles, bringing his beloved online persona Bao Ya Gu to the big screen.

Unlike typical festive comedies, *Lost & Found* is an adventurous road trip film that takes audiences on a journey from Malaysia's southernmost tip all the way to the northernmost point. With a mix of Dissy's signature humour and Lai's unique storytelling, the film aims to be another game-changer for local cinema.

Dissy co-founder Morn Liew said the

Dissy celebrates *Close Ur Kopitiam*'s box office earnings of RM12.7 million in Malaysia.Lee at a recent banquet celebrating *Close Ur Kopitiam*'s success.

idea for *Lost & Found* had been in the works for two years but was postponed due to budget considerations in favour of producing *Close Ur Kopitiam*. However, with the latter's strong box office performance, the team is now confidently moving forward with the project.

Acknowledging the expectations that come with such an ambitious project, Lai said he was determined to focus on delivering a meaningful and high-quality film. He recalled Singaporean comedy icon Mark Lee's advice to him: "Do not focus too much on the box office. The key is to put your heart into making a great movie."

In terms of box office receipts, *Close Ur Kopitiam* continued its barnstorming performance, grossing over RM13.2 million across Malaysia and Singapore – RM12.7 million in Malaysia alone.

## Final season of *Mo* delves into Palestinian refugee experience

■ BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

**FOR** a series about a Palestinian family living as refugees in the US, consisting largely of the comedic antics of show lead Mohammed "Mo" Najjar (Mohammed Amer), *Mo*'s second season is much more hands-on with its subject matter.

After the previous season ended by stranding Mo in Mexico, the second and final one attempts to reunite Mo with his mother Yusra (Farah Bsieso), brother Sameer (Omar

Elba), sister Nadia (Cherien Dabis) and girlfriend Maria (Teresa Ruiz), with his family still seeking government approval of their asylum status.

While holding on to its comedic roots, particularly Mo's Palestinian-inspired *falafel* tacos and *luchador* activities in the first few episodes, the series slowly becomes an emotional one. Loosely based on Amer's life, the episodes turn into a reflective and sometimes confrontational look at his people's faith, culture and history

through the eyes of Mo.

The season is a successful blend of both humour and social commentary, such as Maria moving on from Mo during his two-month absence and getting into a rebound relationship with a successful Israeli chef whose restaurant's menu is entirely food appropriated from different cultures without an actual identity of its own.

Amer does not pull any punches regarding the conservative notions of his people, such as Yusra's initial reluctance to get professional help for Sameer's autism, believing instead the power of family is enough.

However, one of the more powerful moments and messages in *Mo* is something that resonates with Palestinians. Throughout the season, Yusra becomes increasingly addicted to "hate-watching" the latest Israeli atrocities against Palestinians through social media content. Eventually, in the seventh episode, Nadia confronts her mother, saying: "We are more than our pain and suffering."

In the final episode, *Mo* comes full circle, bringing the Najjar family back to Palestine, as they face the realities



Mo's (right) spat with the US ambassador to Mexico over what to call the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is one of the show's best moments.



Mo is loosely based on co-creator Amer's (third from left) life. – PICS BY NETFLIX

in their home country, relatives and other Palestinians. Other than a few comedic moments such as Mo accidentally calling Muslims to prayer earlier than the actual time, *A Call from God* is the ideal episode to

end *Mo* on and effectively seals the series as a brilliant portrayal of a different side of the Palestinian plight.

*Mo*'s two seasons are streaming on Netflix.

# Bringing **sexy** back

► Canadian singer Tate McRae proves risque dance-pop remains alive, well with *So Close to What*

BY JOHN TAN

**P**OP music is always thought to be fun and light-hearted. Listeners could turn to it for reliable comfort, pleasure and good times. In recent years, however, the genre seemed to have receded in popularity.

Dance-pop, for one, no longer dominates the music charts as it used to in the 2010s. But we might be on the cusp of seeing its resurgence thanks to Tate McRae.

The 21-year-old Canadian singer, who is among today's hottest rising stars, channelled pop's fun and risque nature in her latest album *So Close to What*.

Capturing her experience growing up, McRae conveys the introspective journey through infectious pop and dance-pop melodies.

## Igniting old flame

The album could not have arrived at a better time. Considering the nostalgic longing among music enthusiasts, *So Close to What* offers a sweet escape to the late 2000s and the 2010s.

While the album retains its own identity, the dance influence from those decades is strong. Tracks such as *Dear God*, *Sports Car* and *Miss Possessive* are reminiscent of hits from Britney Spears (whom McRae is a fan of) and The Pussycat Dolls.

The infectious tracks evoke the same feeling of edginess and sassiness, ideal for accompanying you on the dance floor.

## Seamless transition

Heading in this sonic direction is a smart move on McRae's part – it plays to her strength as an artist.

She is at her best with upbeat tempos. One can easily determine this upon listening to the dance tracks on the album.



*So Close to What* is McRae's first number one album on the Billboard Hot 100.  
– PICS FROM INSTAGRAM @TATEMCRAE

*Sports Car*, *It's OK I'm OK* and *2 Hands* were rightfully picked to be singles from the album. The dancing in the singles' music videos further strengthens their potency.

But McRae does not abandon her emotional roots. Residues of *You Broke Me First*, the ballad that catapulted her to fame, can be found in *Means I Care* and *Siren Sounds*. They would make good singles.

## Still needs work

That said, the album does not have much substance to it. While there are a few memorable tracks to bop to, the majority of the album's offerings do nothing for McRae's pop credibility.

At best, they are serviceable but

nothing more. The hooks, melodies, lyrics and concepts do not make for an artistic statement for McRae. They merely position her as a generic pop artist.

She could, however, turn things around. After all, this is only her third studio album. Some of the best pop artists only reached their peak at their fourth or fifth one.

McRae, in the meantime, should try to find a musical identity outside of Ryan Tedder's productions – though his work here is the album's saving grace.

Producers such as Max Martin, Shellback and Ester Dean could stretch her musical capabilities and enrich her sound. Maybe then, McRae can finally rise up as this generation's pop icon.

The album shows McRae is at her best with upbeat tempos.



While retaining its own identity, McRae's album is heavily influenced by dance tunes from the late 2000s and 2010s.



Liebling is seen here in the image that launched countless memes.  
– PIC FROM FACEBOOK @HEAVYMETALHARDROCK

## Lightning in a Bottle's electrifying riffs

**I**T is a truly bewitching image – a wide, wild-eyed stare from an aging rocker with wisps of billowing white hair has seemingly captured the imagination of netizens.

Looking very much like a wizard about to cast an evil spell, the epic image of Bobby Liebling of Pentagram giving audiences the evil eye on stage has been shared thousands of times and launched countless memes.

This has piqued the interest of a new generation of music lovers, leading them to ask: "Who is this grandpa rocker?"

Liebling is the frontman for Pentagram, which was formed in 1971 and is widely considered to be among the progenitors of doom metal. Despite critical acclaim, the American band from Alexandria, Virginia never tasted commercial success, always flying just below the radar.

With the internet shining an unexpected spotlight on the band, a new generation of fans are tuning into the sludge-drenched vibes of Pentagram in droves, as reflected in its increasing streaming numbers.

The band has been quick to react to this newfound fame by announcing a slew of tour dates alongside an appearance at Hellfest in France. It has also released a new album, which is stocked to the brim with gargantuan riffs and classic stoner rock vibes, much to the delight of diehard fans.

Will newbies dig *Lightning in a Bottle*?

Doom-encrusted rock with a heavy 70s vibe is the order of the day. It is the Black Sabbath blueprint in all its glory and then some. Though Liebling is no Ozzy Osbourne, his impassioned wails do enough to get the listener's attention.

The guitar riffs are just like thick slabs of meat – raw, primal and plenty juicy for music lovers to sink their teeth into. Swirling and all-encompassing, the tunes on *Lightning in a Bottle* are built like a tank to slowly crush and brutally assault the senses.

Given this band has been ploughing a steady burrow for five decades, no one can begrudge them a late career flourish, even if it is via a manic photo of its frontman. That is not to say *Lightning in a Bottle* is a weak record. Quite the contrary, it is fun, energetic and a great addition to any self-respecting music lover's collection.

Casual listeners will find plenty to enjoy – even if it is just for an afternoon of streaming.

*Lightning in a Bottle* was released on Jan 31 on Heavy Psych Sounds and is available to stream on all major platforms. – by R. BALA



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322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJISTRET DI KUALA LUMPUR**  
DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA  
GUAMAN SIVIL  
NO: WA-A72M-1084-01/2025

ANTARA

YAYASAN HAN RAKAT  
(No. K/P: 201201017719  
(1003231-A)) ...PLAINTIF

DAN

JAMALAH BINTI MAT ROS  
(No. K/P: 830713-08-5204) ...DEFENDAN

**NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI)**

Kepada:-  
1) JAMALAH BINTI MAT ROS

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dilakukan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, dalam Guaman No. WA-A72M-1084-01/2025 oleh Yayasan Han Rakat ("Plaintiff") yang berlamat di Tingkat 20, Menara Tio 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 Writ Saman bertarikh 15.01.2025 dan Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 15.01.2025 diserahkan secara pampunan kepada kamu melalui penempatan pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, penempatan di alamat terakhir kamu yang diketahui Plaintiff dan pengiklankan sekali di suatu penerbitan akhbar "The Sun", dan pampunan Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan sedemikian akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh pengampunan atau pengiklankan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membeli tindakan tersebut, kamu mesti memasukkan kehadiran sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu tidak hadir sedemikian, penghakiman boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada  
26 harihulan Februari 2025

.....t.t.  
TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY  
Peguamcara Plaintiff

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI) ini telah dititilkan oleh TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY, peguamcara pihak Plaintiff yang berlamat di C-10-28, Block C, Lobby 2, Centum Oasis Corporate Park, No. 2, Jalan PUJ 1A/2, Ara Damansara, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel No. : +603 2714 5456  
E-mail : [genetan@genetan.biz](mailto:genetan@genetan.biz)  
Faks No. : +603 2714 5457  
Ruj Kami : GMT/YPR/CEJ/01054/2025

322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJISTRET DI KUALA LUMPUR**  
DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA  
GUAMAN SIVIL  
NO: WA-A72M-1085-01/2025

ANTARA

YAYASAN DEWAN PERNIAGAAN MELAYU PERLIS BERHAD  
(No. Syarikat: 199201018259  
(249763-J)) ...PLAINTIF

DAN

MOHD SYAHID ASYRAF BIN BAHARUDIN  
(No. K/P: 880209-05-5175) ...DEFENDAN

**NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI)**

Kepada:-  
1) MOHD SYAHID ASYRAF BIN BAHARUDIN

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dilakukan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, dalam Guaman No. WA-A72M-1085-01/2025 oleh Yayasan Dewan Perniagaan Melayu Perlis Berhad ("Plaintiff") yang berlamat di Tingkat 20, Menara Tio 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 Writ Saman bertarikh 15.01.2025 dan Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 15.01.2025 diserahkan secara pampunan kepada kamu melalui penempatan pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, penempatan di alamat terakhir kamu yang diketahui Plaintiff dan pengiklankan sekali di suatu penerbitan akhbar "The Sun", dan pampunan Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan sedemikian akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa lapan hari (7) hari selepas tarikh pengampunan atau pengiklankan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membeli tindakan tersebut, kamu mesti memasukkan kehadiran sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu tidak hadir sedemikian, penghakiman boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada  
19 harihulan Februari 2025

.....t.t.  
TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY  
Peguamcara Plaintiff

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI) ini telah dititilkan oleh TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY, peguamcara pihak Plaintiff yang berlamat di C-10-28, Block C, Lobby 2, Centum Oasis Corporate Park, No. 2, Jalan PUJ 1A/2, Ara Damansara, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel No. : +603 2714 5456  
E-mail : [genetan@genetan.biz](mailto:genetan@genetan.biz)  
Faks No. : +603 2714 5457  
Ruj Kami : GMT/YPR/CEJ/01055/2025

322 Notices

**IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE**

Originating Application No. 729 of 2024

In the matter of Order 27 Rule 2 of the Rules of Court 2021  
And  
In the matter of Section 60 of the Trust Companies Act 2005  
And  
In the matter of Section 62 of the Trustees Act 1967  
And  
In the matter of a Legacy to the persons named in Appendix A under the trust relating to the Singapore Malaysia Equity Fund

British and Malayan Trustees Limited  
... Applicant

**NOTICE OF LODGEMENT OF UNCLAIMED MONIES INTO COURT**

TAKE NOTICE that the Applicant had on 14 January 2025 lodged unclaimed monies in respect of the Singapore Malaysia Equity Fund into Court. The persons appearing to be entitled to the monies are as follows:

Anthony Mary Arputham Au Kum Kwong Celestine Anthony Chan Keng Chong Chan Yan Song Cheah Chun Kwong Chen Siew Chin Cheng Hua Ju Chia Song Teng Chua Leng Sim Fabian Estate Of Eliatamby Palanyvel, Deceased Foo Kok Wan Foo Siow Ling Goh Mui Gek Goh Yeong Lock Hariyot Kaur Bajaj Jasevign Kaur Bajaj Khatijah Bte Ibrahim Falli Koh Boon Kheng Koh Li Huang Kuah Kian Hoe Kuah Kian Lam Lay Bih Chin Lee Boon Puay Lee Eng Leon Lim Keng Huat	Lim Yan Loon Meena Senkuttuvan Mohamed Tajir Md Yacob Neo Kian Chye Ng Kim Kee Ng Saw Tin Rawli Bin Ahmed S. Nadarajah Seow Kim Choon Sibert Yvonne Soh Leng Lu @ So Choh Soon Soo Gee Tan Jong Hiem Tan Kheng Siong Tay Cheow Beng Teh Ete HJ, Mahmood Tio Siew Lin Tseng Jovina Vanniasingham, Daniel Kanagaratnam Wong Fong Kuan Wong How Kin
--	---

Dated this 13 March 2025  
Solicitors for the Applicant  
David Lim & Partners LLP

322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH SESEYEN DI SEREMBAN**  
DALAM NEGERI SEMBILAN DARUL KHUSUS  
NO GUAMAN: MA-SS32-12-10/2024

ANTARA

DATO' NATARAJAN MANOHARAN  
(No. Syarikat: 033029527-V) ...PLAINTIF

DAN

1. MYELUCHAM MEDIA  
(No. Syarikat: 033029527-V) ...PLAINTIF

2. KOGILAM A/P MUNIASAMY  
(No. K/P: 72023088196)  
Atas kapasiti sebagai pemilik berdaftar MYELUCHAM MEDIA

3. GANAPATHY MUNIANDY

4. KUMARANATHAN A. KUTTAPPAH  
(No. K/P: 870815-05-5101) ...DEFENDAN-DEFENDAN

**IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI**

Berkenaan dengan Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan yang bertarikh 22.10.2024 kepada:-

1. MYELUCHAM MEDIA  
(No. Syarikat: 033029527-V)

2. KOGILAM A/P MUNIASAMY  
(No. K/P: 72023088196)  
Atas kapasiti sebagai pemilik berdaftar MYELUCHAM MEDIA

3. GANAPATHY MUNIANDY

Amil perhatian bahawa suatu Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan telah dilakukan terhadap kamu di dalam Mahkamah Seseyen Seremban dalam Guaman Sivil No. MA-SS32-12-10/2024 oleh DATO' NATARAJAN MANOHARAN, Plaintiff yang dinamakan diatas telah mendapat suatu Perintah bahawa Mahkamah telah memerintahkan bahawa Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan dan segala surat-surat-surat dan dokumen-dokumen yang perlu diserahkan dalam prosiding tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu secara pampunan oleh Plaintiff dan pengiklankan sekali di suatu penerbitan akhbar "The Sun", dan pampunan Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan sedemikian akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh pengampunan atau pengiklankan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membeli tindakan tersebut, kamu mesti memasukkan kehadiran sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu tidak hadir sedemikian, penghakiman boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 21.01.2025

.....t.t.  
Peguamcara Plaintiff

IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI ini telah dilakukan oleh TETUAN KAH SHAN, Peguamcara pihak Plaintiff yang berlamat di No. 265-1, Pusat Dagangan Serendang S/3, Pusat Dagangan Serendang, Bandar Sri Serdang, 71950 Serdang, Negeri Sembilan.  
(Tel: 06-837441/06-7203435)  
(Ruj K/S/ DEF/1080/24)  
(Email: [kartiagahan.laga@gmail.com](mailto:kartiagahan.laga@gmail.com))

322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF EEFAR LITHOGRAPHIC SDN. BHD.**

Registration Number : 199301022746 (277484-D)

**[IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP]**

**NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016 that a Final Meeting of the Company will be held at 106, Jalan Tembaga, 11600 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang on 14 April 2025 at 10:00 a.m. for the following purposes:

- To receive an account from the Liquidator showing the manner in which the winding up has been conducted.
- To consider, and if thought fit, pass the following resolution as an Ordinary Resolution:-

"That the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator, shall be kept by the Liquidator at 0-26-A1 Gurney Tower Office, 18 Persiaran Gurney, 10250 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, for a period of three (3) months from the date of Final Meeting and that thereafter such books, accounts and documents may be destroyed by the Liquidator."

Dated this 13th day of March, 2025

**TAN KIAH SIANG**  
Liquidator

# Swiatek, Rune march on

**T**WICE champion Iga Swiatek walloped Czech Karolina Muchova 6-1, 6-1 to reach the Indian Wells quarterfinals yesterday, while Dane Holger Rune moved into the final eight of the men's draw with a 6-4, 6-4 win over Stefanos Tsitsipas.

For Swiatek, the win continued her relentless march through the California desert tournament where the Polish second seed has dropped just six games in her three matches.

After waiting through a rain delay, Swiatek took immediate hold of the momentum, sprinting through the first four games and not dropping a first-serve point in the opening set.

Muchova, who enjoyed an inspired run to the US Open semifinal last year after recovering from wrist surgery, was unable to find her level in the second set as the mistakes piled up.

Second seed Swiatek closed it out in 57 minutes with an unreturnable serve to set up a

## Duo book spots in Indian Wells quarterfinals

meeting with either Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen of China or Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk.

"From the beginning, I felt like, you know, I can lead and I didn't make many mistakes at the beginning, so then later on I just didn't want to let Karo... be able to start playing her game," Swiatek told reporters. "I'm happy I did that till the end."

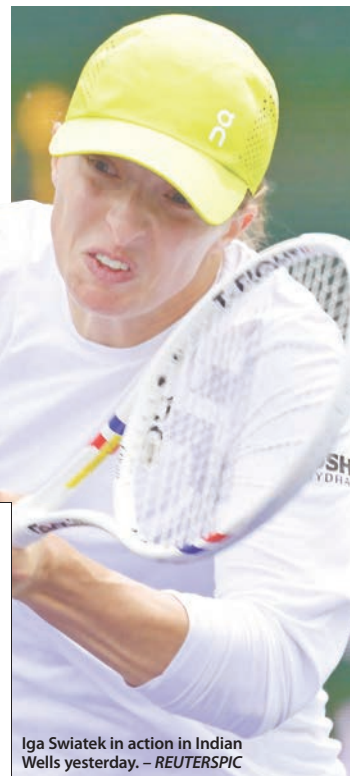
Rune, the 12th seed, played the role of aggressor throughout his encounter with Tsitsipas to end the Greek's seven-match winning streak and reach his ninth Masters 1000 quarterfinal.

The Dane delivered the shot of the tournament to stave off a break point in the second set when he launched an arcing "tweener" from behind the baseline, sending

the ball to the opposite baseline that an outstretched Tsitsipas was unable to retrieve.

"I stayed very committed on my game plan and mentally I was very good. I think that made the difference, how composed I could start. Because Stef is back in shape I think it is fair to say. It was a cool battle," said Rune.

Rune will next face Dutchman Tallon Griekspoor, who beat Japanese qualifier Yosuke Watanuki 7-6(4), 6-1 earlier to reach his first Masters 1000 quarterfinal. - Reuters



Iga Swiatek in action in Indian Wells yesterday. - REUTERS/SPIC

## Scott pours cold water on PGA-LIV merger

**ADAM SCOTT** remains hopeful that negotiations between the PGA Tour and the Public Investment Fund result in a reunification of professional golf, but the former major champion is also realistic that the talks could fizzle out.

As a player director on the tour's Player Advisory Council, the 44-year-old Australian has been involved in high-level meetings that included a trip to the White House.

The involvement of President Donald Trump has heightened anticipation that a deal is closer than ever, but Scott also recognizes that significant hurdles remain.

Chief among them is the future of the PIF-funded LIV Golf, and whether the concept of team golf aligns with the long-term goals of the PGA Tour.

"I think it is part of the stumbling block," Scott acknowledged yesterday ahead of The Players Championship.

"The tour's being very careful and respectful of everyone and wanting to give everyone, the golf fans and the media and the players, the product that they want."

"But we're starting from two different sides of this, so I think it's hard to find the balance that's acceptable for everybody. And it also may not be ultimately possible."

"I think there's an urgency for a result, no matter what," Scott said. "I think that would be in everyone's best interest, to be honest, whether you're the PIF or a player anywhere or the PGA Tour. I think it just doesn't need to linger."

"I think there are positive things happening in the game and at the PGA Tour and that can continue to happen. I just think we hopefully will get to an outcome soon. That would be what I would like. I guess that signals urgency," - Field Level Media

IN THE GENERAL DIVISION OF THE HIGH COURT OF THE REPUBLIC OF SINGAPORE Originating Application No. 730 of 2024		
In the matter of Order 27 Rule 2 of the Rules of Court 2021 And In the matter of Section 60 of the Trust Companies Act 2005 And In the matter of Section 62 of the Trustees Act 1967 And In the matter of a Legacy to the persons named in Appendix A under the trust relating to The Savings Fund		
British and Malayan Trustees Limited		... Applicant
NOTICE OF LODGEMENT OF UNCLAIMED MONIES INTO COURT		
TAKE NOTICE that the Applicant had on 14 January 2025 lodged unclaimed monies in respect of The Savings Fund into Court. The persons appearing to be entitled to the monies are as follows:		
<b>Fifty-First (51st Distribution)</b> A.S.M. Abdul Razak Abdul Samad A/L Allapitchay Andrew J. Zaczewski Anita M. Narvaja Arianayagam S/O S T Arasu Azimah Mahmud Balakrishnan Menon S/O Govindan Menon, Deceased Chan Chan Seng Chan Cheow Hai Johnny Chan Chue Siew Chan Keng Chong Chan Khing Siew Chan Weng Hon Chang Bee Eng @ Chien Ah Chee Chang Shu Mou Cheah Ah Soo Chen Siew Chin Chong Hua Jui Chiang Woh Chong Keok Chong Teck Kheng Chong Yoon Choo @ Chong Keow Chye Chong Yuet Young Chooing Kar Shin Chu Tze Shoon Dollah B. Bachee Estate Of P Govindasamy Deceased Estate Of Wong Wong Tin Hoy Deceased Faridah Bte. Hassan Fong Weng Cheow G.H. Rajan @ N. Rajan S/O Govind Gallen Shere Hilary Hogan Gan Hwa Nan Gan Yoke Tong Goh Teck Heng H.J. Zaczewski, Deceased Hamid Ithar Hamimah Bte Abd. Jalal Ho Ah Choo Ho Pak See Ho Yoon Kong @ Louis Ho Indra Devi Jagannathan Pogavathi James De Cruz Jamillah Abd. Rahman Jules Dominic Peris, Deceased K. Kumari Kandiah S/O Alwar, Deceased Kang Tien Kuan Koh Moy Jay Lily Kang Tien Kuan Koh Moy Jay Lily Lau Boon Kiat Lau Hong Seng Law Khai Yew, Deceased Lee Beng Huat Bernie Lee Chiew Seong, Deceased Lee Fong Yew Lee Hock Kheng, Deceased Lee Lian Fong Lee Saw Yung @ Lee Sau Lee Sin Hock Lem Chu Kem Leong Quan Lin Lesley Macfarlane Lien Sew Wah Liew Yui Ching Lim Han Chye Tony Lim Kia Hee Lim Lian Keng Lim Siew Yen Lim Tan Lee Lim Tiew Beng Lim Yew Hui Lim Yoke Cheong	Lo Khi On David Loke Cheng Kim, Deceased Loo Ah Kow @ Loo Han Wah Low Buey Huey Low Liang Seng Md. Mansor Bin Umar Mohamed Noor Bin H.M. Noordin, Deceased Mundath Ramakutty Muralidharan S/O A. Nadarajah Murat B. Dahalan Muthusamy Chettiar S/O Pommuchettiar, Deceased Narasayan Nair Narayanan Ng Chee Han Ng Hwee Ngo Ng Kim Kee Ng Shook Phin Ng Siew Lian Ng Yew Tuan @ Oei Joe Tuan Nurmah Bte Zainuddin Pamela Anne De Souza Phoon Chee Chien @ Pang Phoon Chee Chien @ Pang R.P. Sivaram R. Pararajasingam Rahmah Mahmood S Govindasamy S/O Seenivasagam, Deceased Fong Weng Cheow Salimah Bte Zainal Seah Qiyue Soon Terrace Sim Yook Ee Sinnamma Subramaniam Tan Kim Poh Tan Meng Choo Evelyn Tan Pak Suet Tan Seow San Tan Soy Mui Tan Yak Kiat Tan Yan Lin Tay Beng Choo Tay Geok Eng Tay Poh Choo Teoh Eng Seok, Deceased The Executors Of The Est. Of Tan Lai Poh, Deceased Thio Sin Hai Thio Sin Ngo Maureen Thum Yoke Mui Tung Weng Suen Wee Bee Bee Wong Kai Kee, Deceased Wong Mow Leng Wong Peng Wah Wong Thiam Chong, Janice Wong Yoke Mei Wuryastuti Sunario Yam Yoke Sim Yap Tai Nyen Francis Yee Fook Sin Yeo Tiong Beng Yesh Phaik Har, Deceased Yew Lian Chew Yvonne Marie Reuters Zaczewski Esther Bartha Bai Zaczewski Rebecca Evelyn Padmalai Zain BI, Tengku Mohd. Hamzah Paritrao Jane Francisca A/P L G Rethual, Executor And Trustee Of The Est Of A.M. Mariadass, Dec'd	<b>Final Distribution</b> A.S.M. Abdul Razak Abdul Samad A/L Allapitchay Abu Ressa Bin Suba Andrew J. Zaczewski Angela W. Raymond Anita M. Narvaja Arianayagam S/O S T Arasu Azimah Mahmud Balakrishnan Menon S/O Govindan Menon, Deceased Chan Chan Seng Chan Cheow Hai Johnny Chan Keng Chong Chan Khing Siew Chao Shu Mou Cheah Ah Soo Chen Siew Chin Cheng Hua Jui Chiang Woh Chong Teck Kheng Chong Yoon Choo @ Chong Keow Chye Chong Yuet Young Chooing Kar Shin Collin Robert Flindell Dollah B. Bachee Estate Of P Govindasamy Deceased Faridah Bte. Hassan Deceased Fong Weng Cheow Fung Kim Hing G.H. Rajan @ N. Rajan S/O Govind Gan Hwa Nan Gan Yoke Tong Goh Teck Heng H.J. Zaczewski, Deceased Hamid Ithar Hamimah Bte Abd. Jalal Ho Ah Choo Ho Yoon Kong @ Louis Ho Jagannathan Pogavathi James De Cruz Jamillah Abd. Rahman Jane Francisca A/P L G Rethual, Executor And Trustee Of The Est Of A.M. Mariadass, Dec'd K. Kumari Kandiah S/O Alwar, Deceased Kang Tien Kuan Koh Moy Jay Lily Kwek Bok Lan, Deceased Lau Boon Kiat Lau Hong Seng Lau Yui Pheng Law Khai Yew, Deceased Lee Beng Huat Bernie Lee Chiew Seong, Deceased Lee Hock Kheng, Deceased Lee Lian Fong Lee Sam Yung @ Lee Sau Lee Sin Hock Lem Chu Kem Leong Quan Lin Lesley Macfarlane Lien Vui Ching Lim Han Chye Tony Lim Keng Hoon Lim Kia Hee Lim Siew Yen Lim Tan Lee Lim Tiew Beng Lim Yew Hui Lim Yoke Cheong Lo Khi On David Lo Pak Sang Loke Cheng Kim, Deceased Loo Ah Kow @ Loo Han Wah Low Buey Huey Low Liang Seng Md. Mansor Bin Umar Mohamed Noor Bin H.M. Noordin, Deceased Mundath Ramakutty Muralidharan S/O A. Nadarajah Murat B. Dahalan Muthusamy Chettiar S/O Pommuchettiar, Deceased Ng Chee Han Ng Heng Huat Ng Hwee Ngo Ng Kim Kee Ng Shook Phin Ng Siew Lian Ng Yew Tuan @ Oei Joe Tuan Nila AP Rajao & Penmal A/L Rajao Nurmah Bte Zainuddin Pamela Anne De Souza Paritrao Phoon Chee Chien @ Pang Chee Chan @ Poon Chee Chien R.P. Sivaram R. Pararajasingam Rahmah Mahmood S Govindasamy S/O Seenivasagam, Deceased Seah Qiyue Soon Terrace Sim Yook Ee & O/B Mr Lim Wei Han Soh Kien Peng Soh Lay Choo Syed Mahmood Bin Syed Hussain Tan Kim Poh Tan Meng Choo Evelyn Tan Pak Suet Tan Seow San Tan Soy Mui Tay Beng Choo Tay Geok Eng Tay Poh Choo Teoh Eng Seok, Deceased The Executors Of The Est. Of Tan Lai Poh, Deceased Thio Sin Hai Thum Yoke Mui Tong Siew Yin Tung Weng Suen Vivekanand Ramrajay Wan Ismail Bin Wan Md. Salleh Wee Bee Bee Wong Bennett Wong Chiew Keng Wong Kai Kee, Deceased Wong Mun Seng Wong Peng Wah Wong Thiam Chong, Janice Wong Yoke Mei Wuryastuti Sunario Yee Mun Wah Yeo Tiong Beng Yesh Phaik Har, Deceased Yew Lian Chew Yui Chin Wang Yvonne Marie Reuters Zaczewski Esther Bartha Bai Zaczewski Rebecca Evelyn Padmalai Zain BI, Tengku Mohd. Hamzah

322 Notices	322 Notices
<b>DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJISTRET DI KUALA LUMPUR</b> <b>DALAM WILAYAH</b> <b>PERSEKUTUAN, MALAYSIA</b> <b>GUAMAN SIVIL NO.:</b> <b>WA-472-19-02/2025</b>  <b>ANTARA</b>  <b>PERDANAAN PENGURUSAN KOMPLEKS WILAYAH (BRIN: 1330)</b>  ... PLAINTIFF  <b>DAN</b>  1. FARIDAH BINTI JALIL (NO. K/P (Lama): 1852645) (Sebagai pendakwa bagi harta pusaka Abdul Jalil Bin Yusoff (No. K/P (Lama): 1852539, Si Mati))  2. DORA BTE JOHANEI (NO. K/P (Lama): 1852747) ... DEFENDAN-DEFENDAN  <b>NOTIS PENYAMPAILAN GANTI-BENTUK IKLAN</b>  Kepada :  1. FARIDAH BINTI JALIL (Sebagai pendakwa bagi harta pusaka Abdul Jalil Bin Yusoff (No. K/P (Lama): 1852539, Si Mati)) No. 18, Jalan Terlok Putih Taman Sepuluh 58000 Kuala Lumpur  2. DORA BTE JOHANEI Lot US 46/36, Kompleks Wilayah No. 2, Jalan Mursih Abdullah 50100 Kuala Lumpur  AMBIK PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majistret di Kuala Lumpur Guaman No. WA-472-19-02/2025 oleh Perbadanan Pengurusan Kompleks Wilayah yang berlatam di 21-4, Block B, The Boulevard, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. (Rujukan Fail: L3 16237) (Email: general@wlpia.com.my/failharah. faris@wlpia.com.my / siti.hardinah@wlpia.com.my)  Dan adalah diperintahkan bahawa penyampaian writ dalam tindakan ini kepada kamu kena dilaksanakan melalui iklan ini. Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan ini kamu hendaklah dalam tempoh (21) hari dari tarikh pengiklanan notis ini, tidak termasuk hari pengiklanan, memasukkan kehadiran di Pengadilan Mahkamah. Jika kamu ingkar memasukkan kehadiran, pengiklanan boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.  Bertarikh pada 13 Mac 2025.  Tandatangan WONG LU PEEN & TINKU ALINA Pegawai cara bagi pihak Plaintiff  Notis Penyampaian Ganti-Bentuk iklan ini diffailkan oleh WONG LU PEEN & TINKU ALINA, pegawai cara bagi Plaintiff yang berlatam di 21-4, Block B, The Boulevard, Mid Valley City, Lingkaran Syed Putra, 59200 Kuala Lumpur. (Rujukan Fail: L3 16237) (Email: general@wlpia.com.my/failharah. faris@wlpia.com.my / siti.hardinah@wlpia.com.my)  Dated this 13 March 2025 Solicitors for the Applicant David Lim & Partners LLP	<b>DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYSIA DI PULAU PINANG DALAM NEGERI PULAU PINANG, MALAYSIA</b> <b>DALAM KEBANKRAPAN</b> <b>NO. PA-29NCC-359-08/2024</b>  Per: SIVANESWARAN A/L RAMALINGAM (No. K/P. 800309-07-5-269) ...Peghatut Penghakiman  Ex-gart: MAYBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD (No. Syarikat: 200701029411 (787435-M)) ...Pemutut Penghakiman  <b>NOTIS</b>  (Dalam Perkara Petisyen Pemutut bertarikh 26-11-2024)  Kepada:  SIVANESWARAN A/L RAMALINGAM TS 4443, Jalan Permatang Batu, 14000 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang  AMBIK PERHATIAN bahawa satu Petisyen Pemutut telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Tinggi Pulau Pinang di Maybank Islamic Berhad (No. Syarikat: 200701029411 (787435-M)) yang berlatam di Remedial & Recovery Centre, Asset Quality Management, Level 3, No. 11, Jalan 51A/222, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan bahawa Petisyen Pemutut tersebut diserahkan kepada kamu secara penyampaian ganti dengan menempalkan satu salinan Petisyen Pemutut beserta dengan satu salinan Perintah di Papan Notis Mahkamah Tinggi Pulau Pinang, di premis alamat terakhir Penghatut Penghakiman di TS 4443, Jalan Permatang Batu, 14000 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang dan dengan mengiklankan satu Notis sekali di suratkhabar harian tempatan berbahasa Inggeris ialah The Sun dan penempatan dan pengiklanan tersebut hendaklah menjadi sempurna dan cukup bagi penyampaian Petisyen Pemutut terhadap Penghatut Penghakiman tersebut empat belas (14) hari selepas tarikh akhir penempatan dan pengiklanan tersebut.  DAN SELANJUTNYA AMBIK PERHATIAN bahawa Petisyen Pemutut tersebut akan didengarkan di Mahkamah ini pada 14-04-2025 pukul 9.00 pagi, dimana kamu dikehendaki hadir, dan jika kamu Sivaneswaran A/L Ramalingam (No. K/P. 800309-07-5-269), tidak hadir Mahkamah boleh membuat perintah kebancakan terhadap kamu dalam ketidakhadiran kamu.  Petisyen Pemutut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini.  Ponlong Kanan Petisyen Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia Georgetown  Notis ini dikeluarkan oleh Tuan Murad & Foo yang berlatam di Suite 10.01, Tingkat 10, MWE Plaza, No. 8, Lebuh Farquhar, 10200 Pulau Pinang Pegamcara bagi Pemutut Penghakiman tersebut di atas. (No. Ruj. : TLN/MB8(P)/F.144/2017(B)/Aisyah)



**MANCHESTER UNITED'S** financial crisis, exposed by co-owner Jim Ratcliffe this week, has heaped more pressure on Ruben Amorim's men to deliver Europa League glory and a return to Champions League revenues next season.

United host Real Sociedad tomorrow (4am Malaysian time) with their last-16 tie finely poised after a 1-1 draw in Spain last week.

The Red Devils sit 14th in the Premier League meaning their hopes of salvaging a miserable season depend on European glory.

Ahead of announcing plans for a new 100,000-seater stadium to replace Old Trafford on Tuesday, Ratcliffe defended the ruthless cost-cutting he has implemented throughout the club during his first year in charge.

United have not yet detailed how they plan

## Cash-strapped Devils turn to Europa League to save season

to finance the reported £2 billion (RM11.5 billion) cost of the new stadium.

The English giants have only once in the past 35 years missed out on European football entirely.

That fate looks almost certain this season unless United lift the Europa League in Bilbao on May 21.

"It's massive," said United midfielder Christian Eriksen of the Sociedad game.

"We know there's a lot of pressure on that game, but it also comes with being at this club.

"You play for trophies so we have to play well to go through."

Sociedad are also dreaming of making the short trip to Bilbao for the final to salvage a disappointing campaign.

Imanol Alguacil's men sit 11th in La Liga and lost the first leg of their Copa del Rey semifinal 1-0 at home to Real Madrid.

Tottenham, 13th in the Premier League, also desperately need Europa League glory to save their season.

Rumours suggest manager Ange Postecoglou's job depends on turning around a 1-0 first leg deficit against AZ Alkmaar in London.

Postecoglou has been hampered by a

lengthy injury list for most of the campaign, but has few excuses with Spurs finally approaching full strength.

"We need everyone. From the supporters, players, staff, from the club, we need everybody with that game to turn it around," said Spurs captain Son Heung-min.

Rangers already have one foot in the last eight after a stunning 3-1 first leg win away to Fenerbahce.

"I don't think it's over," said Fenerbahce boss Jose Mourinho. "The only thing I tell them is, don't celebrate too much. Because there is a second match. It's my only advice." – AFP

# Kane completes rout

England captain leads Bayern past Leverkusen into Euro last eight

**HARRY KANE** scored a goal and set up another as Bayern Munich won 2-0 at Bayer Leverkusen yesterday, going through to the Champions League quarterfinals 5-0 on aggregate.

Bayern were comfortable against last season's unbeaten German champions, having already done the damage with a dominant 3-0 win at home in the first leg.

With the match scoreless at half time, Leverkusen rolled the dice in search of the goals they needed but it was Bayern who struck, with Kane waltzing through to tap in a Joshua Kimmich cross early in the second period.

With Leverkusen again pushing forward, the visitors added a second in the 71st minute, Alphonso Davies slamming a clever Kane chip low and hard to double Bayern's lead.

Kane, so often criticised for going missing in big games and scoring against the minnows, was again commanding, as he had been when scoring a brace in Munich.

The England captain showed finesse and physicality as he kept Bayern on track for a dream home final and a chance to exorcise the ghosts of their 2012 Champions League final loss to Chelsea.

"We didn't want to be a team who dropped off and defended the lead. We wanted to be on the front foot, put pressure on, and create chances to win the game," Kane told *Amazon Prime*.

"It's never easy when you have a 3-0 lead. Psychologically, you know. But I think the way we went about it today was a top performance. To beat this team 5-0 over two legs shows the type of team we are."

"We want to grow in the competition. We've



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane celebrates scoring the opening goal against Bayer Leverkusen. – AFP/PIC

had some results in this competition that haven't been great and I feel like we've learned from that," Kane added.

"I feel like we're going to have to keep learning as we go further but, you know, we're in the quarterfinal now where Bayern Munich should be and we want to keep pushing."

Bayern will play three-time European champions Inter Milan in the last eight after Kane became the first English player to score 10 goals in a season in the history of the European Cup or the Champions League.

"The San Siro is a tough place to go but any team we play, we can cause them problems," he said.

"We will prepare well. And try and find areas we can hurt them but it's a chance to get into a semifinal over Champions League so we'll be ready."

Leverkusen showed spirit despite missing pivotal midfielder Florian Wirtz, but the scale of the task was too high.

Eight points behind Bayern in the league, Xabi Alonso's likely last remaining chance for silverware this season is the German Cup, where Leverkusen are through to the final four.

Alonso praised his team for "fighting until the last minute with pride and dignity," and said "but we didn't lose the tie today – we made it too difficult for ourselves in the return leg."

"The Champions League is a competition where you can't make mistakes and we made too many," Alonso said, according to *uefa.com*.

"We needed something spectacular, but it didn't work out."

"The performance was good. There was no lack of quality, it was a lack of efficiency." –

AFP/Reuters/Agencies

## Hamilton in red as Piastri eyes win

**LEWIS HAMILTON** will launch his bid to win the drivers' championship at a third Formula One team when he makes his much-anticipated debut for Ferrari in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix on Sunday.

Formula One's most successful team have not won a championship since the 2008 constructors' title and Hamilton, moving from Mercedes to Maranello, arrives chasing a record eighth.

Hamilton's switch has already sent fans into a frenzy in Italy and Melbourne's big Italian community will be out in force at Albert Park as the lakeside circuit hosts the opener for the first time since 2019.

Ferrari, runners-up to McLaren in the 2024 constructors' championship, celebrated a 1-2 in Melbourne last year when Carlos Sainz, who has since moved to Williams, won the race ahead of teammate Charles Leclerc.

McLaren, however, may be set to steal Hamilton's thunder after encouraging performances in winter testing with F1 data showing they were quickest on low fuel in Bahrain and had an advantage over Ferrari on race pace.

That would have been music to the ears of Australian fans cheering for McLaren's Oscar Piastri as he looks to become the first home driver to win the race since it was added to the F1 world championship calendar in 1985.

The Melbourne native finished fourth last year at Albert Park behind third-placed teammate Lando Norris.

Briton Norris, the bookmakers' pre-season favourite for the championship, may well be Piastri's biggest obstacle to a drought-breaking win for Australia.

Though Hamilton's Ferrari debut and McLaren's pre-season form have dominated the buildup, Red Bull's defending champion Max Verstappen will launch his bid to become the second man to win five drivers' titles in a row following Michael Schumacher.

Red Bull finished only third in the constructors' championship last season and after doing the least amount of laps at winter testing the pace of the car remains to be seen.

"We learnt a lot from testing but there is still a lot more work to be done," Verstappen said in a race preview issued by Red Bull yesterday.

"We have ideas about what we can do and how we can take on what we learnt at testing, so we will see how we go when we start driving on the track."

While Albert Park will give an early indication of how the teams stack up, it offers different conditions to Bahrain and usually throws up a surprise or two.

Rain forecast for race-day could add another twist following the scorching heat expected at qualifying on Saturday. – Reuters

## Inter book Munich date after ending Feyenoord run

**INTER MILAN** will face Bayern Munich in the quarterfinals of the Champions League after seeing off Feyenoord 2-1 yesterday to complete a comfortable 4-1 aggregate victory.

A thumping early strike from Marcus Thuram and Hakan Calhanoglu's penalty at the San Siro gave Inter comfortable passage to the last eight, where the Italian champions will face a blockbuster clash with Bayern Munich.

Inter lead Serie A and there is talk in Italy that Simone Inzaghi's team have a chance at repeating the league, Italian Cup and Champions League treble won by Jose Mourinho 15 years ago.

"It's not about believing or not believing (in the treble), when you're at Inter you play every game to win. If you win every match you'll do great things," said Thuram.

Standing in Inter's way next month will be Bayern after they swept aside Bayer Leverkusen,

who beat Inter during the league phase.

Inzaghi is hoping that he will have his first XI available for what will be the biggest matches of the season for Inter who are keen to go one better than 2023 when they lost the Champions League final to Manchester City.

"It will be a complicated match. They're solid and very well coached but we'll go for it just as we have against everyone, playing against other top teams," said Inzaghi.

"I hope we'll have everyone available for the tie... We brought on two players from the youth team near the end and I told them that they'll need to give us a hand because we're a bit short at the moment."

The hosts were already comfortably ahead from their dominant first-leg display in Rotterdam but Thuram made sure there would be no nasty surprises in the eighth minute.

It was one of Inzaghi's regulars in Calhanoglu

who gave Feyenoord a lifeline in the 38th minute when he bundled into Jakub Moder to hand the Poland midfielder a chance to level the scores on the night.

However Calhanoglu redeemed himself and sent Inter through to meet Bayern five minutes after the break by confidently stroking home from the spot after what looked like a soft foul on Mehdi Taremi by Thomas Beelen.

"It was a dubious penalty in my opinion, maybe given too easily. It seemed to me that there wasn't much contact," Feyenoord coach Robin Van Persie told reporters.

"The players worked very hard, they defended well at times. Maybe we could have done better in some situations but we were up against a really good team who play quality football."

"The boys did everything, I couldn't have asked any more from them." – AFP

**L**AMINE YAMAL and Raphinha dazzled as Barcelona thumped Benfica 3-1 yesterday, reaching the Champions League quarterfinals 4-1 on aggregate.

Raphinha netted either side of a stunning Yamal strike as the Catalans dominated in the first half, building on their 1-0 last 16, first leg win in Lisbon.

Nicolas Otamendi had quickly levelled Raphinha's opener but the visitors were blown away at the Olympic Stadium as Barcelona progressed comfortably from the tie and produced some moments of brilliant attacking football.

Hansi Flick's side will face Borussia Dortmund or Lille in the quarterfinals as they aim to win the competition for the first time since 2015 and the era of Lionel Messi, Neymar and Luis Suarez.

"We are candidates to win everything," Raphinha

# Barca storm into last eight

## Yamal, Raphinha fire brilliant Catalans past Benfica

told *Movistar*, with the club in the hunt for a potential treble. Barcelona are unbeaten in 17 matches in 2025.

"It's good that the players think about that (winning everything), it shows they have confidence, they believe in what they are doing, but my job is to stay calm," said Flick.

Flick had said Barca would play for late club doctor Carles Minarro, who died suddenly on Saturday ahead of the team's match against Osasuna, which was postponed, and the players observed a silence in his honour before kickoff.

"What happened made us arrive at this game even more determined to win," added Raphinha.

"We won for us and Carles is always with us... he always has a place

(here)," said Flick.

Five-time Champions League winners Barca took the lead after 11 minutes when Spain international Yamal burst into the area, chopped his way past Florentino and then mis-hit the ball across to Raphinha for a simple finish.

Benfica levelled within two minutes when Otamendi escaped Ronald Araujo to head home from a corner.

However Barcelona, and particularly their wingers Yamal and Raphinha, were in sensational form and they quickly reclaimed their lead.

Yamal netted his first goal in seven matches, but it was worth the wait, with the 17-year-old cutting in from the right and arcing a sensational shot past Anatoliy Trubin and in at the far post from the edge

of the box.

"His goal was spectacular, it shows what Lamine is - he's a spectacular player with tremendous quality," said Raphinha.

Raphinha grabbed his second before the break to give Barcelona a three-goal aggregate lead after a blistering run by Alejandro Balde.

"We have dynamite up front and we have to take advantage of it," said Barca midfielder Pedri.

Bruno Lage's side were without injured veteran Angel Di Maria but even with him beating Flick's Barca on this form would have been a difficult ask.

Benfica are left to focus on the Portuguese top flight, where they are second behind Sporting Lisbon.

"We're left with a feeling of frustration, we could have done better in both games," Lage told *SportTV*. - AFP



FC Barcelona's Lamine Yamal (left) in action with Benfica's Samuel Dahl. - REUTERS/SPIC

## 'PSG have no limits'

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN captain Marquinhos insisted there were "no limits" to what the French club could do in this season's Champions League after they ousted Liverpool on penalties on Tuesday in the last 16.

"It was a great performance. We really deserved to go through over the two legs, hands down," Marquinhos told broadcaster *Canal Plus* after PSG won 4-1 in the shoot-out to go through to the quarterfinals.

PSG have regularly gone out of the Champions League at this stage over the last decade, but the significance of the date was not lost on Marquinhos, who pointed out they had claimed famous last-16 wins on March 11 against Chelsea in

2015 and Borussia Dortmund in 2020.

"It's March 11, the date when we beat Chelsea here in England, Dortmund too, so it's every five years. For us it's a special day," said the Brazilian.

"To come here and win with a very young team, one of the youngest in the Champions League, I think the coach, the staff, everyone has done a great job and I am really happy."

PSG will now play either Aston Villa or Club Brugge in the quarterfinals, and Marquinhos, at PSG since 2013, added: "We have no limits to what we can do but we always need to improve, not stop here."

"This was just a last-16 tie, even if it could have been a final. There is still a lot of work to do." - AFP

## Slot hugs Nunez after miss

LIVERPOOL manager Arne Slot moved quickly to console Darwin Nunez after the striker's missed penalty in the Champions League defeat to Paris-Saint Germain.

The Uruguayan striker struck his effort to Gianluigi Donnarumma's left, only to see the Italian international get both hands to the ball to push it away.

It was the first penalty the 25-year-old had taken for the club since missing against Chelsea in January last year.

Nunez appeared devastated as the PSG players celebrated wildly with the away fans. However, he was immediately approached by Slot, who put his arm around the striker and appeared to offer

words of encouragement.

Nunez has been introduced in the 73rd minute, replacing Diogo Jota. However, he struggled to get involved in the contest, wasting one opportunity when he tried to square a ball across goal instead of shooting with his left foot.

His contribution was duly criticised by pundits, with Stephen Warnock saying on *BBC Radio 5 Live*: "Darwin Nunez didn't have an affect on the game."

"You had that feeling as he walked up to the ball (for the penalty). A sense of anxiety from the Liverpool fans."

The penalty miss is likely to cast further doubt on the forward's future at Anfield. - Express Newspapers

**SPORTS TOTO RESULTS**

**DRAW NO: 5938/2025 DATE: 12/03/2025 (WED)**

**STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.**

196901000090 (84202)

**TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL**

**1st Prize 7064**

**2nd Prize 8154**

**3rd Prize 1615**

**Special**

4956 5384

0070 0698

3936 3607

4639 2637

0014 0235

**Consolation**

9719 4422

5956 9060

5592 3097

3558 6609

5180 4022

**4D JACKPOT**

Jackpot 1 **RM 5,932,142.46**

7064 8154 8154 7064

7064 1615 1615 7064

8154 1615 1615 8154

Jackpot 2 **RM 433,075.94**

Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

**4D Zodiac**

1st Prize **7064** + **ROOSTER**

2nd Prize **8154** +

3rd Prize **1615** +

4th Prize **Special Prize** +

5th Prize **Consolation Prize** +

6th Prize **Any 4D drawn number**

**TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL**

**5D**

1ST **8 8 5 0 9**

2ND **3 2 4 2 0** 4TH **8 5 0 9**

3RD **6 4 4 0 0** 5TH **5 0 9** 6TH **0 9**

**6D**

1ST **8 9 5 0 7 4**

2ND **8 9 5 0 7** or **9 5 0 7 4**

3RD **8 9 5 0** or **5 0 7 4**

4TH **8 9 5** or **0 7 4**

5TH **8 9** or **7 4**

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**damacai**

Draw Date: 12/03/25 (Wed) Draw No: 5885/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

**1+3D SUPER 1+3D**

1st Prize **4728**

2nd Prize **2051**

3rd Prize **5285**

**Starters**

7651 9054 4160 2943

8670 1455 3204 7865

9122 6803 7836 5098

2155 6093 2372 9587

6286 5343 0500 5762

**Consolation**

3204 7865

7836 5098

2372 9587

0500 5762

**1+3D**

Jackpot 1 **RM7,839,042.30**

4728 + 2051 2051 + 4728

4728 + 5285 5285 + 4728

2051 + 5285 5285 + 2051

Jackpot 2 **RM220,748.40**

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

**3+3D**

1st Prize **664 728 + DRAGON** 1st Prize Bonus **RM350,000.00**

2nd Prize **042 051 + RAT** 2nd Prize Bonus **RM1,345,904.60**

3rd Prize **805 285 + DOG** 3rd Prize Bonus **RM1,841,506.00**

**Starters**

967 651 319 054 174 160 382 943

048 670 941 455 653 204 187 865

719 122 506 803 807 836 925 098

412 155 746 093 542 372 219 587

876 286 515 343 980 500 105 762

**Consolation**

174 160 382 943

653 204 187 865

807 836 925 098

542 372 219 587

980 500 105 762

**3D**

1st Prize **728** 2nd Prize **051** 3rd Prize **285**

**3D**

Jackpot **RM888,846.40**

728 + 051 + 285 051 + 285 + 728

728 + 285 + 051 285 + 728 + 051

051 + 728 + 285 285 + 051 + 728

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

**HSSB 1+3D Jackpot 1 RM400,327.50 won on 9/3/25!**

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## RESULTS &amp; STANDINGS

**CHAMPIONS LEAGUE** (Last 16, 2nd leg):  
**Barcelona 3** (Raphinha 11, 42, Yamal 27)  
**Benfica 1** (Otamendi 13) – Barcelona win  
 4-1 on agg, **Bayer Leverkusen 0 Bayern**  
**Munich 2** (Kane 52, Davies 71) – Bayern  
 win 5-0 on agg, **Inter Milan 2** (Thuram 8,  
 Calhanoglu 51-pen) **Feyenoord 1** (Moder  
 42-pen) – Inter win 4-1 on agg, **Liverpool**  
**0 Paris Saint-Germain 1** (Dembele 12)  
 aet – 1-1 on agg; PSG win 4-1 on penal-  
 ties.

**ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP:** Middles-  
 brough 2 QPR 1, Burnley 1 West Brom 1,  
 Sunderland 1 Preston 1, Derby 2 Coventry  
 0, Cardiff 1 Luton Town 2, Norwich 2  
 Sheff Wed 3, Sheffield United 1 Bristol  
 City 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheff Utd	37	24	7	6	52	28	77
Leeds	36	22	10	4	72	23	76
Burnley	37	20	15	2	50	11	75
Sunderland	37	19	12	6	55	34	69
West Brom	37	13	17	7	47	33	56
Coventry	37	16	8	13	52	48	56
Bristol City	37	13	15	9	47	40	54
Mid'boro	37	15	8	14	57	48	53
Blackburn	36	15	7	14	41	37	52
Sheff Wed	37	14	9	14	53	58	51
Norwich	37	12	13	12	59	52	49
Watford	36	14	7	15	46	50	49
Millwall	36	12	12	12	36	37	48
QPR	37	11	11	15	42	48	44
Preston	37	9	17	11	37	43	44
Swansea	36	12	8	16	38	46	44
Portsmouth	36	11	9	16	44	57	42
Oxford Utd	36	9	12	15	37	53	39
Hull	36	9	10	17	36	45	37
Stoke	36	8	12	16	36	50	36
Cardiff	37	8	12	17	40	61	36
Derby	37	9	8	20	37	49	35
Luton Town	37	9	7	21	34	60	34
Plymouth	36	6	12	18	36	73	30

## BRIEFS

## Muhammad Azeem ready for Universiade 2025

**NATIONAL** sprinter Muhammad Azeem Mohd Fahmi is poised to take on the country's challenge at the 2025 Rhine-Ruhr World University Games (Universiade) in Germany, according to contingent head Assoc. Prof. Datuk Ts Dr Mohd Hafiz Yusoff. However, he explained that the final selection still depends on discussions with the National Sports Council (MSN) to ensure there are no schedule conflicts with other tournaments, in addition to taking into account the athlete's current performance and fitness level. "Muhammad Azeem is indeed one of the candidates on the list but we need to verify and review with MSN to avoid any schedule overlap. That is our priority," he said. Mohd Hafiz added that the Malaysian Contingent Committee will hold an athlete selection workshop to shortlist 60 athletes who will compete in seven of the 19 events contested at the 2025 Universiade.

## Rachel fights back to clear hurdle in Brisbane

**MALAYSIA'S** top squash player Rachel Arnold staged an impressive comeback in the opening round of the Australian Open 2025, overturning a two-game deficit to defeat Egypt's Nour Elhelal at South Bank Piazza, Brisbane. The 21-year-old Nour started strongly and caught Rachel off guard to secure a 2-0 lead with 11-7 and 11-9 wins. However, the Malaysian fought back in dominant fashion, taking the next three games 11-5, 11-6 and 11-4 to seal the victory. Rachel will next face Egypt's Rowan Elaraby in the second round today, with the world No. 19 holding a 3-3 head-to-head record against Rowan.

## Buriram dash JDT's ACLE quarterfinal hopes

**JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM** (JDT) head coach Hector Bidoglio expressed sadness after his team's defeat to Thailand's Buriram United, but vowed to continue working and growing in the future.

The Argentinian said his players gave 100% effort and it showed on the pitch during their 0-1 loss to the Thai's side at the 2024/25 AFC Champions League Elite (ACLE).

"I am very sad because I saw the players working hard every week but this is football. Now, we need to continue working and growing because JDT is a big club. This club's future doesn't depend on one result."

"I am sure that in the coming weeks, in the coming months and the coming years, JDT will continue to grow," he said during the post-match press conference at Sultan Ibrahim Stadium on Tuesday.

The second leg match against Buriram marked the exit of the Malaysian top football club, with a

single goal by the visiting club's striker Suphanat Mueanta in the 58th minute.

Commenting on the Southern Tigers' disallowed goal in the last minute of the match, Bidoglio said they have no choice but to accept the decision by Kuwaiti referee Ahmad Alali.

"My staff said no offside but the Video Assistant Referee (VAR) said yes. Our intention was to push all the time playing in the opponent's ground, sometimes on the side, sometimes shooting and sometimes crossing."

"We tried all the possibilities but this is football. I am very sad for our fans, very sad for our boss (JDT's owner Tunku Mahkota Ismail) and my colleagues," he added.

Meanwhile, Buriram's head coach Osmar Loss Vieira said he was very happy and proud with the achievement because his boys

played for the honour of themselves, the team and country.

"It was clear from the beginning that we had space to counter-attack because JDT was pressured to score. We had many chances to score two or three goals in counter attacks."

"It's important to keep a cool head in this kind of situation, we need to understand and read the game. My players adapt faster and did perfectly," said the Brazilian.

Player of the match Suphanat expressed gratitude towards his teammates for making it easier for him to perform against JDT in clenching an important win for the club to advance to the quarterfinals of the ACLE in Saudi Arabia next month.

"The coach trust me and I trust the coach. The coach will tell me what I need to do to improve my game, so the team can do well," said the 23-year-old. – Bernama



JDT's Bergson Da Silva (centre) heads the ball during the match against Buriram United at the Sultan Ibrahim Stadium. – BERNAMAPIC

## Early exit for Malaysians

Disappointing results as Tang Jie-Ee Wei, Zii Jia and Aaron-Wooi Yik crash out in Birmingham

**NATIONAL** mixed doubles pair Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei suffered an early exit in the opening round of the All England Championship.

The second-seeded Malaysians were way below par as they fell to Indonesia's Rehan Khusarjanto-Gloria Widjaja 18-21, 22-20, 21-11.

The newly formed Indonesian pair have been in impressive form, finishing runners-up at the German Open and Orleans Masters in the past two weeks.

For Tang Jie-Ee Wei, it was yet another disastrous outing, as they have now failed to progress beyond the last 16 in three consecutive All England appearances.

Earlier, National men's singles shuttler Lee Zii Jia suffered an early exit after losing to unseeded Hong Kong player Angus Ng Ka Long in the first round yesterday.

In the match held at Utilita Arena in Birmingham, seventh-seed Zii Jia got off to a great start, claiming the first set 21-19.

However, he was unable to maintain his momentum, allowing Ka Long to fight back

and secure a 21-16, 21-12 victory in a match that lasted over an hour.

The Paris 2024 Olympic bronze medallist admitted that his movements were restricted as he had yet to fully recover from an ankle injury sustained last December.

"I thought I was ready for this Europe tour because I had about two weeks of proper training before coming here. (But) these injuries actually take much longer (to heal) than I expected."

"Maybe I was too rushed to come back. Things have happened, so I have to accept it," Zii Jia said in an audio clip shared by the Badminton World Federation.

Meanwhile, in the men's doubles category, two Malaysian pairs – Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik and Ong Yew Sin-Teo Ee Yi – also crashed out in the first round after losing to their respective opponents.

Aaron-Wooi Yik suffered a surprise defeat to Denmark's Rasmus Kjaer-Frederik Sogaard 16-21, 21-16, 18-21, while Yew Sin-Ee Yi fell to England's Ben Lane-Sean Vendy 18-21, 19-21. – Bernama

### Winning Results

Full payment guaranteed



Draw No: 175/25 Date: 12/03/2025

#### 4D Classic

1st Prize 1602

2nd Prize 8986

3rd Prize 6873

SPECIAL	CONSOLATION
3062 0588	3100 9346
9407 4326	7032 5779
1664 5200	6891 2718
6319 6486	7693 4727
5602 9289	1960 3738

#### 4D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 RM20,299,679.81

1602 + 8986	1602 + 6873
8986 + 1602	8986 + 6873
6873 + 1602	6873 + 8986

Jackpot 2 RM247,164.89

WON

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

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#### Magnum Life

6	9	10	11	17	27	30	36
				26	33		

Grand Prize

RM1,000 EVERY DAY for 20 years

2nd Prize

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WON

#### Jackpot Gold

Jackpot 1 RM12,330,771.53

Jackpot 1 - Group 1 + Golden Number

Jackpot 2 RM145,336.58

PARTIALLY WON

Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

GROUP 1	0	2	8	6	7	3					
GROUP 2	0	2	8	6	7	OR	2	8	6	7	3
GROUP 3	0	2	8	6	OR	8	6	7	3		
GROUP 4	0	2	8	OR	6	7	3				
GROUP 5	0	2	OR	8	6	7	3				
	OR	8	6								
GOLDEN NUMBER	0	6									

All jackpot amounts stated above are for this Draw. Subject to T&Cs of the Scheme. Please visit to [www.magnum4d.my](http://www.magnum4d.my) for more info. THE BIGGER PLAY IS TO PLAY RESPONSIBLY.





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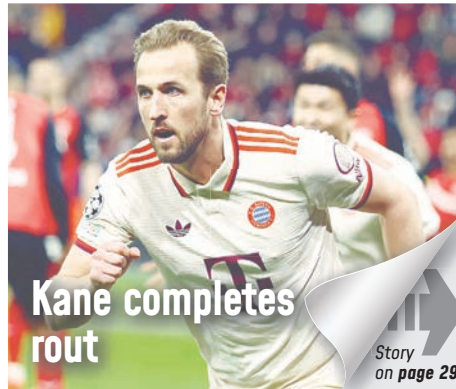
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SCAN ME



**Swiatek, Rune march on**

Story on page 28



**Kane completes rout**

Story on page 29



**Barca storm into last eight**

Story on page 30

## Endfield

*Slot in shock after Liverpool knocked out of Champions League by PSG*

BY CARL MARKHAM AND JAMIE BRAIDWOOD

**L**IVERPOOL head coach Arne Slot admits there was a sense of shock they were knocked out of the Champions League by Paris St Germain.

Leading 1-0 from the first leg, albeit against the odds after being dominated, they quickly found themselves pegged back by Ousmane Dembele's 12th-minute goal at Anfield.

Slot said it was difficult to separate the two teams after 90 minutes and while he accepted the Ligue 1 champions edged extra-time, the 4-1 defeat on penalties, with Gianluigi Donnarumma saving from Darwin Nunez and Curtis Jones, still felt harsh.

"Of course it is shock," he said. "It is maybe not the moment to tell them now but two seasons ago we went out to Real (Madrid) after losing 5-2 at home so if you have to go out, go out the way we did against one of the best teams in Europe and making such a fight."

"I hope every fan around the world was hoping this game wouldn't stop because it was incredible."

"Two teams had an incredible level and intensity in the first 25 minutes. I also remember the first 25 against Manchester City and Real Madrid but this was unbelievable what we showed in the first 25."

"Over 90 minutes I don't think we deserved to lose, over 180 maybe it was deserved we went to extra-time."

"In extra-time I thought maybe PSG was better than us. Then it comes down to penalties and they scored four."

Liverpool's disappointing night was compounded by an ankle injury to Trent Alexander-Arnold which will almost

certainly rule him out of Sunday's (Mon 12.30am Malaysian time) Carabao Cup final.

"He had to come off. That's never a good sign," added Slot, who was less concerned about Ibrahima Konate who looked to be suffering from cramp when he was replaced in extra-time.

"From what I heard from people that saw the images of how (Alexander-Arnold) got injured, that didn't look very good so I would be surprised if he is available for Sunday. For me Ibo was more that he was tired than it was an injury."

Alexander-Arnold, who was replaced at right back by Jarell Quansah, would have expected to start against Newcastle as Slot's side look to win their first piece of silverware this season.

The Reds also have a 15-point lead in the Premier League. Alexander-Arnold was unable to play in last season's Carabao Cup triumph, against Chelsea, due to injury.

While Newcastle played against West Ham on Tuesday, going through 120 minutes and penalties was hardly ideal preparation for Liverpool ahead of their trip to Wembley but Slot said his players would look to use the cup final to



Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold reacts following an injury during the last 16 2nd leg Champions League match against PSG yesterday. - AFPPIX

bounce back from their disappointment against PSG.

"The good thing is we play a final on Sunday, so mentally that's probably the best you can ask for, because this is what we are playing football for: to play finals," he said.

"And then there are two-and-a-half weeks in between before we start the season again. And if we can play nine times with this intensity - and the ones we play at home with the same intensity from the fans as well - then I am really looking forward to the end of the season."

PSG boss Luis Enrique felt it was a statement win for his side.

"Clearly I am happy," he said. "I'm really pleased with our performance. I think it is really significant moment for us, for the players and the supporters."

"Either of the two teams could have gone through, we both deserved to go through but we deserved it slightly more, especially in the first game."

"We showed what sort of team we are, we have huge strength of character, personality, and a team who go out to play their own football."

"There were times when Liverpool had the upper hand and were slightly better than us but we never gave up attacking and we put in a top performance, which was what we needed to do."

"The first game belonged to (Liverpool keeper) Alisson Becker, the second game belonged to Donnarumma." - The Independent