

# Aid disbursement begins Monday

Homeowners whose properties were damaged to get RM5,000 each, while those who sustained injuries would receive RM2,500 each, as per prime minister's announcement.

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Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari says he will sit together with Petronas to discuss the replacement of houses destroyed in the gas pipeline fire tragedy. — BERNAMAPIC

## Call for safety review of developments in high-risk areas

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Projects near corridors or routes of gas pipelines will inevitably impact public, says UTM senior lecturer.

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'Ripple effects of new 24% US tariff on Malaysian exports will be felt as businesses adjust to declining revenue and rising costs.'

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By shifting focus to deficits, US president undermines the very foundations of trade discussions, says former minister.



# Aid distribution for fire victims begins on Monday

➤ Homeowners whose properties were damaged to get RM5,000 each, while those who sustained injuries would receive RM2,500 each, as per PM's announcement.

■ BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE  
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**SHAH ALAM:** Government assistance for those affected by the Putra Heights inferno will begin next week, said Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari.

"The disbursement will start on Monday," he told a media conference held at the Selangor state secretariat building yesterday.

Amirudin was referring to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's announcement that homeowners whose properties were damaged would get RM5,000 each, while those who sustained injuries would receive RM2,500 each.

Meanwhile, 85 families and homeowners affected by the incident were allowed to return to their respective homes yesterday.

Amirudin said relevant authorities, including the Fire and Rescue Department as well as Tenaga Nasional Berhad have deemed the houses of the 85 families safe to be occupied.

"There are electric and water connections to these houses. The district's disaster management committee will inform the respective families."

Another 30 homes are also found to be safe but do not have water connection yet.

Thus, out of the 235 affected residential

houses, 115 have been deemed safe to be occupied by the Fire and Rescue Department.

Amirudin said preliminary investigations into the incident are being carried out involving two parts – technical aspects as well as criminal and negligence.

He said the preliminary report would be revealed today, and is expected to be announced by Selangor Police Chief Datuk Hussein Omar Khan.

Amirudin said he would discuss with Petronas on the replacement of houses that were totally destroyed by the blaze.

He said victims are expected to remain at relief centres for another week before alternative placement is provided.

"By the end of this week, the state government will decide on a more suitable and comfortable solution for the rest of the victims who still cannot return to their homes."

"I have also been contacted by Airbnb to provide the victims temporary placements for free before a permanent placement can be arranged."

## Brave mother saves children from Putra Heights blaze

■ BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM  
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**PUTRA HEIGHTS:** A mother's bravery enabled her to save her two young children from a devastating fire that engulfed her home following the gas pipeline explosion in Putra Heights.

Masayuan Takbir, 38, recounted the terrifying moments when she strove to escape with her 9-year-old daughter and 2 years 8 month-old son who both rely on asthma medication.

Recalling the moments before the explosion, Masayuan said she heard an unusual sound but dismissed it. As she was about to sit down to rest, a sudden tremor shook her home. Moments later, a deafening blast erupted, engulfing the area in flames.

"I immediately woke up my children. I told my daughter to open the main door so we could escape, but it wouldn't budge. We tried the kitchen door and another exit, but everything was jammed."

It took her three desperate attempts before she managed to force open the kitchen door.

They ran barefoot to safety, heading towards a nearby riverbank. In the chaos, her children's asthma medication fell on the road.

"My daughter was worried because she and her brother need their medicine. I told her our safety comes first, but I knew I had to retrieve it."

Despite the flames, Masayuan ran back towards the road to recover the medication.

As she bent to pick it up, a second explosion sent a wave of heat and debris towards her.

"I felt my back burning, and stones rained down on me. I could barely breathe as I crawled back to my children."

She urged them to keep running towards safety. When she finally caught up with them, she realised the danger was not over yet.

"My son's hand was badly burned. My daughter, exhausted and overwhelmed by the heat, told me she couldn't go on. I reminded her that we had to stay strong and keep moving," she said, adding that they chanted prayers together for strength.

Despite reaching what seemed like a safe spot, they continued feeling the heat from the fire. With the help of a kind stranger, they made their way towards the riverbank, hoping that the water would offer some relief.

Although physically injured and emotionally shaken, Masayuan is grateful they made it out alive.

"The fire destroyed so much, but I thank God that my children and I survived," she said, still reeling from the traumatic ordeal.

The explosion left them with severe burns. Masayuan suffered third-degree burns on her back and arms. She will need to return to Hospital Putrajaya for further treatment, with the possibility of needing skin grafts.

Her son sustained deep burns on his hand while her daughter suffered minor burns and was treated for exhaustion and smoke inhalation. All three are staying at the temporary relief centre at Masjid Putra Heights.

## Those affected urged to lodge police reports

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Those affected by the gas pipeline fire in Putra Heights are advised to lodge police reports to facilitate investigations and distribution of assistance.

Kota Raja MP Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu said police reports are important to facilitate follow-up action by the authorities, including extending assistance to the victims.

"Police have opened more counters to facilitate this process," he said after visiting the Incident Command Post in Jalan Putra Harmoni, Putra Heights yesterday.

On Wednesday, Subang Jaya police chief ACP Wan Azlan Wan Mamat said police had received 66 reports, most of them over damage to homes and vehicles.

Mohamad, who is agriculture and food security minister, said the affected homeowners are being allowed to return to their houses in stages for inventory inspection.

He said they would be accompanied by police and personnel from the Fire and Rescue Department and Tenaga Nasional Berhad.

He added that the fire affected 485 people with 33 of them still in hospital. – Bernama



Loke with those affected by the fire, at the Putra Heights Mosque temporary relief centre yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

## Berjaya Cares Foundation founder steps in to offer assistance

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Berjaya Cares Foundation founder Tan Sri Vincent Tan has pledged RM3,000 in financial aid with immediate effect for each family affected by the blaze in Putra Heights.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook said he was contacted by Tan, who is ready to provide cash donations to ease the burden of those affected by the incident.

"This is among the donations that are being worked on. Of course, we at the Transport Ministry will continue to contact private companies to help, whether in the

form of cash, essential goods or transportation," he said while visiting the victims at the Putra Heights Mosque temporary relief centre yesterday.

"With continued support from the private sector and relevant parties, it is hoped that all fire victims can be assisted more efficiently to enable them to return to their normal lives."

Loke added that car sales company Carro has agreed to provide 30 vehicles for temporary use by the victims.

He said efforts are also underway to secure free motorcycles for over 70 victims,

with discussions currently taking place with various stakeholders.

"The Selangor Investment, Trade and Mobility Exco Office led by Ng Sze Han is handling registrations, so affected individuals in need of vehicles can sign up."

"We are assessing the demand and reaching out to more companies to secure additional vehicles for temporary use by the victims."

On Wednesday, Ng announced that Chery Malaysia would provide 50 vehicles for the victims to use for one month, further easing their burden. – Bernama



# Review projects near utility zones

► Experts urge stricter risk assessments, buffer zones and safety reviews for projects near gas pipelines

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The major fire in Putra Heights, Selangor on Tuesday underscores the urgent need to reassess the safety of urban development in high-risk areas, particularly those located near gas pipelines and flammable materials.

Senior lecturer at the Department of Urban and Regional Planning, Faculty of Built Environment and Surveying, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Dr Gobi Krishna Sinniah said the government should review high-risk areas and gazette utility reserves as the country's top risk zones.

"Although explosions rarely occur in

residential and commercial areas, they remain a high-risk threat that requires immediate action from the relevant authorities, including the government.

"Developments near corridors or routes of these gas pipelines will inevitably impact the public. Residential or high-density developments should have been identified as high-risk areas, and early preventive measures should also be reassessed," he told Bernama.

He noted that similar fire incidents had occurred in Malaysia in the past such as in the Kerteh Industrial Area, Terengganu last year, at an oil refinery in

Pengerang, Johor in 2022, and in Port Dickson, Negeri Sembilan in 2020, although these did not involve rapidly developing areas.

Gobi Krishna believes a review of residential and commercial development in utility reserve areas is necessary, taking into account environmental and social factors, along with more in-depth risk assessments.

"The authorities need to look not only at the impact of development but also at what will happen to the utility if the development proceeds. I believe our perspective needs to shift in that direction," he said.

He also recommended that the government define the boundaries of areas that could be affected in the event of an incident and establish buffer zones incorporating natural elements such as rivers and forests for greater effectiveness.

"In this case, the development came

later along utility corridors, resulting in mitigation measures being limited to building fences as a barrier between the development and the utility," he said.

He added that local authorities should reassess the necessity of buffer zones in high-risk areas as there is currently a lack of uniformity in standards.

"Some local authorities set the distance at 40 feet (12 metres), while others more or less. This inconsistency can affect the safety of the areas involved, particularly in terms of topography and geography. This matter needs to be examined in greater detail to ensure that buffer zones in utility areas are expanded," he said.

Meanwhile, Institution of Engineers Malaysia president Prof Dr Jeffrey Chiang Choong Luin said the government and local authorities must also enhance awareness and training among developers, engineers and

contractors, particularly in the use of digital mapping technology and geographic information systems, to identify and safeguard utility reserve areas.

"Local authorities must also ensure that every development application or excavation work near utilities undergoes a comprehensive safety impact assessment before approval. They should also increase the frequency of monitoring and safety audits at construction sites to ensure compliance with safety guidelines."

He said the institution is prepared to collaborate with stakeholders to promote safer and more sustainable infrastructure development in Malaysia.

The major fire, which broke out at 8.10am, destroyed and damaged rows of houses and properties, including vehicles, within a 500m radius due to the intense heat.

## CIDB issues apology, retracts statement

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB) has issued an apology and retracted its earlier media statement on the gas pipeline inferno in Putra Heights, Subang Jaya.

In its latest statement, CIDB explained that the decision was made to avoid pre-empting the ongoing investigation, which involves multiple authorities.

As the agency responsible for the development of Malaysia's construction industry, CIDB assured its full cooperation with the authorities conducting the investigation.

"CIDB apologises for any confusion or

concern caused by the statement, especially to the affected residents.

"We understand the difficulties they are facing and are committed to addressing this matter with integrity and transparency. We will ensure that every aspect of the case is thoroughly and fairly examined," the statement read.

CIDB also stressed it would not compromise on compliance with safety standards and construction industry regulations, and that any breaches or non-compliance would be dealt with accordingly, without exception.

"Our commitment is to ensure that the

country's construction industry operates at the highest standards for the safety, well-being and interests of all parties," the board added.

The fireball, which broke out at 8.10am on Tuesday, left a massive impact – creating a crater 32 feet deep and spanning approximately 70 by 80 feet.

The blaze caused towering flames, intense heat and flying debris, destroying rows of houses and properties, including vehicles, within a 500m radius of the site.

More than 300 people were displaced, with some hospitalised and most others evacuated to a temporary relief centre. – Bernama

## RTD offers free document replacement

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Transport Ministry, through the Road Transport Department (RTD), will help ease the burden of those affected by the Putra Heights gas pipeline fire in Subang Jaya by opening a mobile counter at the Putra Heights Mosque temporary relief centre.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the two-day service, which began yesterday, would allow those affected to replace RTD-issued documents destroyed or lost in the fire without the need for a police report, and the process would be completed promptly.

"They only need to provide their names and identity card numbers to have their documents reprinted for free. This service will be extended if needed," he said.

Loke was speaking at a media conference after visiting the centre yesterday.

The documents that can be replaced for free include driving licences, motor vehicle licences (LKM or road tax) and Vehicle Ownership Certificates.

He said the initiative is also supported by the General Insurance Association of Malaysia, which is offering advisory services on claims those affected may be eligible for.

"Prasarana has also provided six vans for use by victims to return to their homes to collect belongings, once permitted by the authorities.

"In addition, these vans can also be used to transport them to LRT stations or wherever they need to go to purchase essential items," he said. – Bernama

## Prasarana provides six free vans for victims

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prasarana Malaysia Berhad (Prasarana), through its Prasarana Prihatin programme, has provided six Rapid KL On-Demand vans free of charge to victims of the gas pipeline fire in Putra Heights, Subang Jaya.

In a statement, the company said the free door-to-door shuttle van service will begin tomorrow and continue until the situation stabilises.

The operational route will run from the temporary relief centre (PPS) at the Putra Heights Mosque Hall to residential areas surrounding Putra Heights, Kampung Puchong Tengah and Kampung Kuala Sungai Baru.

"In addition to the bus captain, senior traffic control officers and auxiliary police will also be on-site to assist with the movement of the community to and from the PPS, as well as to ensure that the service runs smoothly," the statement said.

"This initiative aims to facilitate the movement of victims to retrieve their necessities and personal documents from their homes while they take shelter in the PPS." – Bernama



Anfaal said the aid received so far was sufficient to meet the victims' needs for up to four days. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

## 'Consult with centres before sending donations'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Individuals and NGOs have been advised to consult the administration of the temporary relief centre (PPS) at the Putra Heights Mosque, Subang Jaya, before sending aid to those affected by the blaze.

Selangor Women's Development and Community Welfare exco Anfaal Saari said this was to prevent an overflow of items that may

not be needed by recipients.

"It is better for any NGO to consult first rather than send items that may not be needed by the aid recipients. Since the PPS falls under the jurisdiction of the Social Welfare Department, that agency will coordinate the assistance received," she said when met after delivering aid to women and children at

the PPS.

She added that the aid received so far was sufficient to meet the victims' needs for up to four days.

According to Anfaal, donations of used clothing have been temporarily suspended due to the large volume already received. – Bernama

# 'US tariffs may cause price surge for everyday goods'

➤ Ripple effects will be felt as businesses adjust to declining revenue and rising costs: Consumers association

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysian consumers may face price increases on everyday goods as a result of the new 24% US tariff on Malaysian exports, warned Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca).

Its CEO and secretary-general Dr Saravanan Thambirajah said while the tariff directly impacts exports, its ripple effects would be felt by local consumers as businesses adjust to declining revenue and rising costs.

"Exporters struggling to compete in the US market may try to shift excess stock or production costs to the domestic market.

"Logistics expenses could rise due to decreased export volumes or rerouted trade routes, further driving up prices."

The products most affected would be those tied to export-driven industries, including electronics, palm oil-based products, rubber goods and processed foods.

For instance, items such as televisions, laptops, washing machines, cooking oil, soaps, medical gloves, tyres and food products relying on imported ingredients may see price hikes.

"The rising cost of essential goods would place a significant burden on middle- and

lower-income families, who spend most of their income on food, utilities and education.

"Small price increases could add hundreds of ringgit in additional monthly expenses."

Saravanan highlighted how an increase of RM30 in groceries, RM20 in utilities and RM15 in school supplies could force struggling households to cut back on nutrition, healthcare and education, worsening financial stress and household debt over time.

While the tariffs do not directly apply to Malaysia's imported essentials, he warned that indirect effects could lead to supply shortages.

"If manufacturers prioritise exports or reduce local production, the domestic availability of certain goods may tighten, driving prices even higher."

Fomca urged the government to strengthen the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011 to protect consumers.

"The Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry must closely monitor pricing trends, especially for essential goods," said Saravanan.

He called for the Price Catcher app to be more widely promoted so that consumers can compare prices and report unfair pricing.

He also urged the government to review and adjust ceiling prices for essential items, such as cooking oil, flour, sugar and baby formula, while

ensuring regular inspections at supermarkets, sundry shops and online markets.

Fomca advised Malaysians to adopt smart spending habits.

Saravanan stressed the need to reduce reliance on imports, calling for greater investment in local agriculture, urban farming and streamlined farming subsidies.

The Labour Solidarity and Learning Resource Association warned that the tariff, aimed at reviving US manufacturing, might instead harm both US and Malaysian workers.

Over the past decade, Malaysia has benefitted from new investments and manufacturing plants, largely due to the US-China trade war and geopolitical de-risking. This growth has created job opportunities and introduced new technologies to the country.

However, the association warned that the new tariff policy could lead to manufacturers leaving Malaysia, causing factory closures and job losses for thousands of workers.

It questioned whether the tariffs would even create many new jobs in the United States, given the higher production costs that would likely drive up consumer prices.

The association urged the US government to reconsider the tariff policy and seek a win-win solution with the affected countries.

It advised the Malaysian government to rethink its reliance on foreign direct investment, recommending that the Madani government incentivise local industrialists to invest in manufacturing and other sectors, ensuring sustainable job creation within Malaysia.

## Trump declares baseline taxes on all countries

**KUALA LUMPUR:** President Donald Trump has announced that the United States would introduce a baseline tariff of 10% on all nations and higher duties on some countries, including Malaysia at 24%.

This could put Asian equities under pressure when financial markets open from yesterday.

"While this caused an initial relief rally globally, sentiment in Asia is likely to deteriorate as the market digests the higher tariffs directed at specific countries, including China, which is facing a 34% tariff on imports and Japan's 24% duty.

"Vietnam and Cambodia face even steeper tariffs at 46% and 49% respectively," said investor and global macro analyst ActivTrades Anderson Alves in a market commentary.

He said a broad risk-off environment is expected across Asian markets, with the US dollar likely to outperform regional currencies.

The technology and semiconductor sectors are anticipated to mirror declines in the US market, where the tech-heavy Nasdaq reversed earlier gains, closing 3% down.

"Market operators will keep a close eye on China's response to the announced US tariffs. Some expect China to close the tap on investment in the US in order to strengthen its negotiation position in US trade talks."

The White House noted that the United States will respond in kind to any attempt to retaliate to the duties.

The trade battle would likely be the key driver for markets today and for the rest of the week, Alves added.

Higher sums will be charged on nations that Trump has deemed to be the "worst" trade offenders, Anadolu Ajansi reported.

Trump said: "This is one of the most important days, in my opinion, in American history. It is our declaration of economic independence."

A series of handouts that the White House circulated among reporters highlighted some reciprocal tariffs being imposed by Trump, including a 20% tariff on European Union goods, a 46% tariff on Vietnamese goods and a 44% tariff on Sri Lankan imports.

About 60 nations will face tariffs above 10%, according to a White House official who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity ahead of the official rollout.

Turkiye is among the nations that will face a 10% tariff, alongside the United Kingdom, Kenya, Iceland, Panama, Ethiopia, Lebanon and Togo.

Canada and Mexico will not be subject to the new tariff regime after facing previous penalties imposed by Trump in a bid to pressure them to take greater action on migration and the flow of illicit fentanyl across the US border. - Bernama



**ROCKY ROAD ...**  
A boulder that fell from a cliff at 10am yesterday blocking Jalan Buli Sim Sim in Sandakan, Sabah.  
- BERNAMAPIC

## Govt signs deal with UK company to restart MH370 search

**SELANG:** The government has signed an agreement with marine robotics company Ocean Infinity in United Kingdom to reinstate the search for missing Malaysia Airlines flight MH370.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said it was inked last week.

He said the search operation is currently halted, citing weather conditions, and is expected to resume at the end of the year.

He was speaking at a press conference after welcoming the arrival of the first flight of British Airways to Malaysia after a five-year hiatus at

the KL International Airport.

Loke was responding to an announcement by the Association for Families of the Passengers and Crew that the search for MH370, which disappeared on March 8, 2014, has been delayed until next summer in the Southern Hemisphere.

The association cited Ocean Infinity's prior commitment as the cause behind the postponement, Bernama reported.

It was earlier reported that the government had approved the terms and conditions of the service agreement with Ocean Infinity on a "no

find, no fee" basis.

This means the government will only be required to pay Ocean Infinity if the wreckage is discovered, with a success fee amounting to US\$70 million (RM311 million).

Ocean Infinity participated in the search for MH370 from January 2018, covering more than 112,000 square kilometres of the southern Indian Ocean seabed before ending the mission on May 29, 2018.

MH370 disappeared after departing from Kuala Lumpur en route to Beijing, China, with 239 passengers and crew members on board.

## Airline warns of customer service fraud

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia Airlines has advised their customers to be wary of suspicious messages or comments from fake accounts pretending to be their customer service representatives.

It reported that there has been an increase in fake accounts reaching out to customers and pretending to be customer service representatives in the comments section of their official social media accounts.

"Do not engage with these scammers as they may ask for your personal details, payment information or direct you to fraudulent links.

"Only trust our official, verified accounts on Facebook and X @malaysiaairlines (look for the blue verification tick)," it said on X.

It reminded customers that they could reach the airline through their live chat. - Bernama



# Dumping free medicines sheer waste of public funds

► Unused medications from govt health facilities should be returned via drop-off boxes in designated places

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Public awareness about returning unused medicines obtained from public health clinics or government hospitals remains low.

When no longer needed, many opt for the easier albeit improper option of discarding it in the trash can.

Perhaps because the medicines are given for free, patients feel no obligation to return them to a health facility, when in fact, even used inhalers or cardboard packaging can be recycled.

According to a Pharmacy Services Programme Statistics Report the government spent RM23.25 billion to purchase medicines from 2015 to 2023, and throwing unused ones away is sheer wastage.

Occupational health and general medicine specialist Dr Hanafiah Bashirun said any patient who receives medication from a government clinic or hospital but does not use it, should return the medicines to the health facility (via drop-off boxes).

"However, currently awareness about the need to return medicines is still low, to the point that some choose to just throw medicines in the bin, sink, or flush them down the toilet."

Hanafiah said Malaysia is among the countries with a high rate of non-communicable diseases, including diabetes, high blood pressure and obesity, with patients being supplied medicines for a period of three to six months, depending on their health status.

"However, when patients do not comply with taking their medicines or are prescribed a new type of medicine, most of them just keep the old supply until the expiry date and dispose of it indiscriminately, which is very detrimental since the medicines involve significant costs."

He said in the event of death, the patient's next of kin must also be responsible for returning the medication not yet expired to enable the clinic or hospital to supply them to other patients to address the national medication shortage crisis.

Hanafiah said returning medicines could also prevent them from being misused, Bernama reported.

He urged the Health Ministry to increase awareness campaigns on returning prescribed medications for safe disposal, by publicising the provision of medicine drop-

off (return) boxes placed at pharmacy counters.

According to the National Security Council website, it is estimated that the value of medicines supplied for acute or mild diseases is between RM5 and RM40 per week, while for specialist clinic treatment or chronic diseases, the cost of medicines can reach RM400 per month, depending on the level of care and type of medication given.



The Health Ministry has been urged to increase awareness campaigns on returning prescribed medications for safe disposal, by publicising the provision of medicine drop-off (return) boxes placed at pharmacy counters. —BERNAMAPIC

## Rottweilers that attacked five people euthanised

**BALING:** The two Rottweilers that attacked and bit five individuals in Taman Desa Bidara, Kuala Ketil near here on Tuesday have been euthanised.

Kedah Veterinary Services Department director Dr Shaharul Amar Talib said as soon as they received information on the incident, they inspected the owner's home.

"We found two adult male Rottweiler dogs that had not been neutered. It was difficult to approach them. However, the dog owner cooperated, voluntarily surrendering the dogs to department staff and agreed to have them euthanised."

"Samples have also been collected from the dogs and sent to the Bukit Tengah Veterinary Laboratory in Penang for analysis to detect rabies."

Baling district officer Yazlan Sunardie Che Yahya said the decision was made following a meeting with state Housing, Local Government and Health Committee chairman Mansor Zakaria, representatives from the Kedah Health Department, the Baling District Council, the Veterinary Department and the dogs' owner on Wednesday.

The Baling District Council has also issued two fines to the owner for keeping the dogs without licences.

It was reported that five individuals suffered injuries to various parts of their bodies after being bitten by the two dogs. — Bernama

## MCMC acts against Facebook group

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) has recorded the statements of two main administrators of a Facebook group being used to spread information and comments believed to incite racial and religious discord that can potentially cause public unrest.

MCMC said in a statement that the statements were taken at its headquarters in Cyberjaya at 9am on March 27 following public complaints.

"A mobile phone and SIM card were confiscated for case evidence."

The case is being investigated under Section 233 (1) (a) of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, and the individuals involved could face a fine of up to RM500,000, a prison sentence of up to two years, or both, if convicted.

MCMC also said it had submitted 110 requests to Meta to remove racially provocative content from the Facebook group.

"Of the 110 requests, Facebook found that 106 contents breached its community standards and were discarded." — Bernama

## Mental health issues plague one in six Malaysian children

**KUALA LUMPUR:** One in six children in Malaysia has mental health issues, with its prevalence having doubled since 2019.

According to the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2023: Non-Communicable Diseases and Healthcare Demand technical report, children from urban areas have a higher prevalence of mental health problems compared with those from rural areas.

The report by the Institute for Public Health, published last year, highlighted that the most common mental health issues among children were peer-related, followed by conduct and emotional problems.

It also noted that mental health issues were more prevalent among females than males.

The study utilised a mental health module involving 2,400 children aged between five and 15, with information collected from their parents or guardians.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Faculty of

Social Sciences and Humanities Centre for Research in Psychology and Human Well-Being senior lecturer and clinical psychologist Dr Hilwa Abdullah @ Mohd Nor said the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, which forced society into lockdown, had contributed to the current mental health issues among children.

She said children are particularly vulnerable emotionally, especially when faced with lifestyle changes, as they are still young and have limited ability to regulate their emotions and cope with stress.

"Looking back at the pandemic, we experienced drastic lifestyle changes, including movement restrictions and having to carry out activities online, including schooling. These children had to navigate the challenges of the digital world."

"Such limitations prevented them from expressing their emotions, leading to depression and a tendency for self-harm. Children naturally

enjoy playing and engaging in outdoor physical activities, but when they were confined indoors, spending time on online games and social media, it became a factor that made them emotionally fragile and less resilient."

Hilwa said social media has a significant impact on children, subjecting them to social comparisons, the fear of missing out and obsessive or compulsive scrolling.

Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris National Child Development Research Centre (NCDRC) deputy director (Research and Innovation) Dr Intan Farhana Abdul Rani identified excessive gadget use as one of the main causes of mental health issues among children.

She said this leads to reduced social and physical interaction, which is compounded by other factors such as a competitive educational environment and overly high expectations from guardians, particularly when children are not given the space to play or rest.

"In addition, an unstable family environment, including parental conflicts, divorce, emotional neglect and early childhood trauma from abuse or accidents, are also factors contributing to mental health issues."

"If these factors are not properly addressed, they can have long-term effects on a child's emotions and behaviour."

Intan Farhana said early detection is crucial in addressing children's mental health issues, and urged parents to be attentive to any changes in their children's behaviour, emotions and daily habits.

"For example, changes in sleeping patterns, loss of interest in favourite activities, frequent crying or increased irritability could be early warning signs."

She added that screenings for emotional development can be conducted through the National Child Data Centre under the NCDRC which collects data provided by educators on children under the age of four. — Bernama



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SCAN ME

# Air travel provides highway to world for Mulu society

➤ Poor road networks present challenges to navigating vast terrain

**KUCHING:** Tucked deep in northern Sarawak, the Mulu state constituency spans nearly 10,000 square kilometres, making it one of the largest in the state.

But its sheer size comes with a challenge, namely navigating the vast terrain, which remains a struggle due to poor road networks, with most routes consisting of rugged logging roads.

For many in this remote region, air travel is not a luxury but a necessity.

Mulu assemblyman Datuk Gerawat Gala stressed that Rural Air Services (RAS) remain the backbone of connectivity for villagers and longhouse communities scattered across the constituency.

"Travel by road could take anywhere between seven and 13 hours from Miri, depending on the terrain and weather. In some cases, the journey may not even be possible," he told Bernama in a recent interview.

Mulu stands out as a constituency with an exceptional number of airports, which is a testament to its vastness and the vital role of air transport in daily life.

The five Short Take-Off and Landing airports in Mulu are located at Mulu National Park, Bario, Long Banga, Long Seridan and Long Lellang.

These airstrips are lifelines for locals, ensuring access to medical aid, supplies and transport.

The RAS programme, subsidised by the federal government, provides essential, non-commercial air services to remote parts of Sarawak and Sabah, where air travel is often the only viable mode of transport.

MASwings, which has operated RAS flights since 2007, continues to serve as the link between these rural settlements and the outside world.



Gerawat urged the government to continue subsidising RAS until a safe and reliable road network is established. — **BERNAMAPIC**

According to Gerawat, RAS remains the most efficient and cost-effective means of transport for the community.

Beyond passengers, flights are also crucial in delivering essential goods, including food and medical supplies.

He highlighted the unpredictability of road travel as landslides, collapsed log bridges and poor road conditions frequently cut off access to villages.

"Transporting goods over these rough roads is costly and unreliable. In contrast, air transport, despite being subsidised, is often the more practical and affordable option," he explained.

He urged the government to continue subsidising RAS until a safe and reliable road network is established, emphasising that affordable fares, especially discounted rates for senior citizens, have been a great relief to the local community.

Gerawat expressed hope that the community would see upgrades to the airport terminals in Mulu, particularly at Bario, which is the busiest RAS destination with three to four daily flights.

He shared his vision for Bario to become a transit hub, capable of accommodating larger ATR aircraft, which can carry up to 60 passengers and more cargo.

"Bario could serve as a gateway to the new Indonesian capital Nusantara and major towns in Kalimantan, such as Samarinda, Balikpapan and Malinau. This would bring significant economic benefits to the local community," he added.

On Feb 12, Transport Minister Anthony Loke reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to subsidising RAS in Sarawak and Sabah, following the Sarawak government's takeover of MASwings.

He announced that RM209 million had been allocated for RAS operations last year, ensuring continued connectivity for rural communities.

MASwings operates 40 routes across Sarawak and Sabah, using ATR72 and Twin Otter Viking aircraft, Bernama reported.

For the people of Mulu, air travel is more than just a convenience; it is a lifeline. Until roads improve, the skies will continue to be their primary highway to the world.

## MMEA cook unsung hero at sea during Raya

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Not many may know the significance of the role played by Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) junior maritime officer Samsuri Halib.

He bears the responsibility of preparing meals for the MMEA crew when they are on duty in the middle of the ocean, thousands of kilometres away from home, braving storms and waves to safeguard the nation's waters.

Samsuri has to ensure every meal he prepares not only provides sufficient energy for the crew to perform their duties optimally but also tastes like home-cooked food.

"A cook is one of the most sought-after persons on a ship. When hunger strikes, everyone heads to the kitchen. We may be far from our families but food is what brings us together. At the very least, when we enjoy a meal, our hearts feel closer to them."

"Among the crew's favourite dishes are *nasi dagang*, *kampung*-style dishes with fresh herbs that evoke memories of eating with their families and barbecue-grilled lamb."

Sharing his experiences as a cook, Samsuri, who joined MMEA in 2005 and served in the operations, weaponry and logistics divisions before taking over duties in the kitchen, admitted that he initially worried about how the crew would receive his cooking.

This was because he had no formal experience in the culinary field. However, instead of feeling discouraged, the challenge fuelled his determination to learn to cook and provide the best meals for the crew.

Knowing that it would not be easy for him to look up recipes online when aboard the ship as there is no internet access in the middle of the ocean, he took the smart approach by collecting recipes in advance before setting sail. Fellow crew members also shared their own recipes.

When asked about the experience of celebrating Hari Raya Aidilfitri at sea, Samsuri said while most Malaysians were enjoying *ketupat* and *rendang* with their families, the crew could only gaze at the vast ocean, carrying a longing that is difficult to express in words.

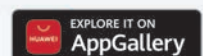
"It is a truly heavy sacrifice. However, I am determined to bring a little bit of the *kampung* atmosphere to the ship. With whatever ingredients available here, I will be preparing traditional dishes, such as beef *rendang*, peanut sauce, *kuih-muih* and other local delicacies to soothe our longing." — Bernama

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## Myanmar earthquake toll crosses 3,000

**BANGKOK:** The death toll from Myanmar's devastating earthquake has surpassed 3,000, with hundreds more missing, as forecasts of unseasonal rain presented a new challenge for rescue and aid workers trying to reach people in a country riven by civil war.

Last Friday's 7.7-magnitude quake, one of the Southeast Asian nation's strongest in a century, jolted a region home to 28 million, toppling buildings, flattening communities and leaving many without food, water and shelter.

Deaths rose to 3,003 on Wednesday, with 4,515 injured and 351 missing, Myanmar's embassy in Japan said on Facebook, while rescuers scramble to find more.

But conditions could get even tougher for the huge relief effort after weather officials warned unseasonal rain from Sunday to April 11 could threaten the areas hardest-hit by the quake, such as Mandalay, Sagaing and the capital Naypyidaw.

"Rain is incoming and there are still so many buried," said an aid worker in Myanmar. "And in Mandalay, especially, if it starts to rain, people who are buried will drown even if they've survived until this point."

There have been 53 airlifts of aid to Myanmar, the embassy in Japan said in its post, while more than 1,900 rescue workers arrived from 15 countries, including Southeast Asian neighbours and China, India and Russia.

The rains will add to the challenges faced by aid and rescue groups, which have called for access to all affected areas despite the strife of civil war.

On Wednesday, state-run MRTV said a unilateral government ceasefire would take



Aid for Myanmar being loaded onto a cargo plane at Halim Perdanakusuma Air Base in Jakarta yesterday. —AFP/PIC

immediate effect for 20 days, to support relief efforts after the quake, but warned authorities would "respond accordingly" if rebels launched attacks.

The move came after a major rebel alliance declared a ceasefire on Tuesday to assist the humanitarian effort.

Nearly a week after the quake, rescue workers in neighbouring Thailand looking for

survivors combed a mountain of debris left after a skyscraper under construction collapsed in Bangkok.

Rescuers are using mechanical diggers and bulldozers to break up 100 tonnes of concrete to find any still alive after the disaster that killed 15 people, with 72 still missing.

Thailand's nationwide toll stands at 22. —Reuters

## With US absent, China steps in

**BANGKOK:** After a 7.7 magnitude earthquake shook Myanmar on Friday, international rescuers rushed into the country.

The most ubiquitous among them have been Chinese relief workers, whose blue and orange uniforms appear across videos circulating on social media.

The posts are often accompanied with expressions of gratitude towards Beijing, whose first responders – as well as their Indian and Russian colleagues – have pulled dazed survivors and bodies out from the rubble of hotels, schools and monasteries.

The reaction marks a change in the negative reception China often receives on Myanmar's social media because of its support for the unpopular military government.

China has so far pledged to deliver US\$13.76 million (RM61.38 million) worth of supplies. The first batch of aid, including tents, blankets and first aid kits arrived in Yangon on Monday, Beijing has said.

The United States, which was until recently the world's top humanitarian donor, has offered a relatively modest US\$2 million. Washington also said it would send a three-member assessment team, though their arrival has been delayed by problems obtaining visas.

A State Department spokesperson said that in addition to the US\$2 million the United States was "already working with local partners to help deliver food, medicine, and emergency equipment" and "terminated programmes that could be deployed to support earthquake disaster assistance efforts may be reinstated as needed".

Hours after the quake, Beijing dispatched first-response teams, including dozens of medical workers, earthquake experts, field hospital workers and rescue dogs.

Those teams have been some of the main visible signs of official assistance in affected areas like Mandalay and Sagaing, where residents said they received no help from the military.

India's Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday its aircraft and ships had delivered 625 tonnes of aid, while rescue workers had recovered 16 bodies from Mandalay and treated 104 patients. Russia and India have also set up mobile hospitals.

China has used its state media machine to broadcast its relief efforts.

English-language state broadcaster CGTN was one of the few international media outlets with reporters sending on-camera dispatches from Mandalay, the epicentre of the disaster.

Some rescue teams entered Myanmar from China's Yunnan province, travelling overland through areas held by rebels, who have a complex relationship with Beijing.

The decision to send rescuers by road as well as air was seen by analysts like Sai Tun Aung Lwin as a signal from Beijing that it had influence with the rebels and the government.

China appears to have opened a "humanitarian corridor" that effectively stretches through rebel and government territory, said the researcher, who studies China's role in Myanmar. —Reuters

# Climate change biggest challenge in Southeast Asia

## Japan remains most trusted major power

**SINGAPORE:** The majority of Southeast Asians (55.3%) say that climate change and extreme weather events are now the region's biggest challenge, surpassing unemployment and economic recession, which had topped the list for the past two years, according to a survey report released yesterday.

The State of Southeast Asia Survey 2025, conducted by the Asean Studies Centre at the ISEAS – Yusof Ishak Institute from Jan 3 to Feb 15, involving 2,023 respondents from 10 Asean member states, revealed that climate change is the top challenge for four countries.

The Philippines and Vietnam, both frontline countries in the path of strong typhoons, ranked climate change as the top concern, with scores of 70.9% and 70.3%, respectively.

They were followed by Malaysia at 55% and Thailand at 54.6%.

Sluggish economic prospects remained

second in rank (49.3%) as the region's biggest challenge, followed closely by fears of intensifying economic tensions between the major powers (48.3%).

More than half of the respondents (51.6%) rank aggressive behaviour in the South China Sea as their top geopolitical concern, surpassing the Israel-Hamas conflict which topped last year's list. This is followed by global scam operations (48.1%) and the new US leadership (46.9%).

In confronting rising protectionism and nationalism around the world, 40.2% of the respondents prefer to accelerate Asean regional integration among member states.

The Asean Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA) – touted as the world's first regional digital economy agreement – is an important regional integration tool for Asean, with over a third of respondents remaining optimistic about the DEFA's ability to raise digital capabilities and enhance digital trade in the region.

Speaking at the report launch over a webinar, United States Studies Centre chief executive officer Dr Michael Green said, in

light of US President Donald Trump's announcement on tariffs on Wednesday, he agreed with the respondents' sentiment.

"So, what should Asean do? I think the respondents are right. You fight protectionism with trade liberalisation, Asean-wide trade liberalisation ... deals with Europe, with Japan, with Australia, with India if possible.

"So, I think the respondents are right, but it's not easy because when protectionism is in the air, it takes real political leadership to push for trade liberalisation. So, it's the right answer, but not easy to do," he said.

The survey also found that the US has overtaken China to become the prevailing choice (52.3%) if the region were forced to align itself with one of the two strategic rivals.

However, China remains the most influential economic (56.4%) and political (37.9%) power in the region, outpacing the US by significant margins, albeit with some decline in its overall economic and political-strategic influence.

Japan remains the most trusted major power in Southeast Asia (66.8%), up from 58.9% last year, followed by the EU (51.9%), which surpassed the US (47.2%) this year. —Bernama

## Three Filipinos arrested in China on suspicion of spying

**BEIJING:** China yesterday said it had "destroyed" an intelligence network set up by the Philippine espionage agency and arrested three spies.

The announcement comes as the two countries continue to confront each other over disputed territory and tensions mount over the Philippines' security ties with the United States.

At least five Chinese nationals were arrested on suspicion of espionage in January and another two in February by Philippine authorities.

The latest arrests in China come two days after the Chinese embassy in Manila issued a travel warning to its citizens about "harassment" from Philippine law enforcement agencies.

State broadcaster CCTV reported yesterday that authorities had identified one of the suspects as a Philippine national who had lived and worked in China long-term and had been found conducting espionage near military facilities.

The CCTV report included a video of his arrest

and what appeared to be a recorded confession.

He was recruited by Philippine intelligence services to "take advantage of his long-term residence in China to conduct espionage activities in China and collect sensitive information, especially on military deployment".

He came close to military facilities multiple times and "conducted close observation and secret photography", CCTV said.

The three individuals had been recruited by the Philippine national since 2021 and received

regular payment for their work, CCTV said.

They were also tasked with "assisting the Philippine intelligence agency in selecting and developing personnel, and expanding its network in China".

They had provided "a large amount of military-related and confidential video materials" to Philippine agents, "causing serious harm to China's national security and interests", CCTV quoted a Chinese national security officer as saying. —AFP

## Suspected cocaine seized from ship

**SEOUL:** South Korean authorities found about two tonnes of suspected cocaine on Wednesday on a ship docked at a port, the customs service said, in what appears to be the largest haul of smuggled drugs in the country's history.

Korea Customs Service and Coast Guard found 57 boxes of the suspected drug on a bulk ship docked at Gangneung city port on the east coast of the Korean Peninsula, the customs service said in a statement.

They searched the ship after receiving information from the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and Homeland Security Investigations, South Korean authorities said.

The ship started its voyage in Mexico and travelled via Ecuador, Panama and China before reaching Gangneung, the statement said.

The customs agency had earlier estimated the weight of the suspected drugs at about one tonne, but doubled it after weighing the boxes.

The suspected cocaine haul easily outweighs South Korea's previous record for smuggled drugs, which was 404kg of methamphetamine found in 2021, a customs spokesperson said.

South Korea has tough drug laws and crimes are typically punishable by at least six months in prison or up to 15 years or more for repeat offenders and dealers. – Reuters

## Australian PM falls at campaign rally

**SYDNEY:** Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese appeared to fall off a stage yesterday during a campaign event for May's national election, but quickly recovered and insisted he was "sweet" afterwards.

The leader of the centre-left Labor party, 62, was posing for photos following his speech at the Mining and Energy Union Conference held in New South Wales, when he stepped back and lost his footing, drawing gasps from the audience.

Albanese promptly got back on his feet and gestured to the crowd with two hands that he was fine.

Video footage from the event showed Albanese had tumbled off the stage, although he shrugged off the incident when asked about it during a radio interview with the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.

"I stepped back one step. I didn't fall off the stage ... just one leg went down, but I was sweet," he said.

Albanese is on the campaign trail for an election on May 3. The Labor party is running neck-and-neck in opinion polls with the conservative Liberal-National opposition led by Peter Dutton. – Reuters

## N. Korea marathon draws foreign runners

**BEIJING:** Foreign amateur runners yesterday flew out of Beijing for North Korea to race in the first Pyongyang Marathon in six years.

The marathon is part of celebrations marking the birth of North Korea's founding leader Kim Il Sung in 1912 and is scheduled to take place on Sunday.

The last edition of the Pyongyang Marathon was held in 2019, after which it was suspended because of the pandemic, which prompted the nuclear-armed state to seal its borders in an effort to quell the virus.

With North Korea tentatively reopening, foreign participants departed from the Chinese capital on a six-day visit organised by Koryo Tours.

The travel agency specialises in trips to North Korea and describes itself as the exclusive travel partner of the marathon.

A group of foreigners was seen boarding an Air Koryo commercial flight from Beijing to Pyongyang in a video posted on the company's Instagram account. – AFP



# New York mayor's corruption case dismissed

## Judge slams Trump administration 'bargain'

**NEW YORK:** A US judge dismissed corruption charges against New York City Mayor Eric Adams on Wednesday, even as he said the Trump administration's argument that the case should be dropped because it was hindering the Democratic politician's help with an immigration crackdown "smacks of a bargain".

The Justice Department's request in February that the case be dismissed because it was distracting the mayor from helping President Donald Trump step up deportations sent shockwaves and prompted eight federal prosecutors to resign over concerns the administration was violating longstanding norms by allowing political considerations to influence prosecutorial decisions.

In a 78-page ruling on Wednesday, US District Judge Dale Ho in Manhattan said he

had little choice but to dismiss the indictment because US courts lack the authority to compel prosecutors to pursue charges.

But he said the Justice Department's decision to seek dismissal of the charges was troubling because an individual's criminal liability should not depend on whether they support the administration's policies.

"Everything here smacks of a bargain: dismissal of the Indictment in exchange for immigration policy concessions," the judge wrote.

Adams, 64, pleaded not guilty last September to charges of accepting bribes and illegal campaign contributions from Turkish officials in exchange for favours, including pressuring fire officials to let Türkiye open a new Manhattan consulate despite safety concerns.

Speaking to reporters outside his Manhattan residence, Adams said he had done nothing wrong and that the case should not have been brought in the first place.

"I am now happy that our city can finally close the book on this and focus solely on the

future," Adams said.

In court papers, the Justice Department argued that public officials trading one public act, such as dropping a prosecution, for another public act cannot be considered a *quid pro quo* akin to a personal gift or bribe.

Ho said that argument raised concerns about political favouritism in prosecutorial decisions.

"The breathtaking implications of DOJ's position ... are difficult to square with the words engraved above the front entrance of the United States Supreme Court: Equal Justice Under Law," the judge wrote.

Ho said his decision was not about whether Adams was innocent or guilty.

The case has been a flashpoint in campaigning for New York City's mayoral election in November, where the unpopular mayor faces an uphill battle for a second term.

A Quinnipiac University poll released on March 5 found only one in five New York City voters approved of Adams' job performance, and 56% thought he should resign. – Reuters



Yoon supporters waving US and South Korean flags as they rally in Seoul yesterday. – AFP/PI

## Seoul raises security ahead of impeachment verdict

**SEOUL:** Police here began dialling up security levels yesterday in preparation for a Constitutional Court ruling on President Yoon Suk Yeol's impeachment, as they sealed off areas around the court.

Police took the alert to the second-highest level yesterday and said they would issue the top alert today, enabling the deployment of 100% of the force. The top alert is typically issued in response to the potential for mass casualty events, acts of terrorism or major disasters.

Police have already cleared a 150m radius around the courthouse.

"The area surrounding the court is basically sealed off from any protesters," said an official from the Korean National Police Agency.

The move comes as embassies, including the

United States and France, have issued warnings to their citizens to avoid political rallies or mass gatherings in connection to Friday's verdict.

Authorities are hoping to avoid a repeat of the 2017 presidential impeachment ruling, when four people died after the court upheld the removal of former president Park Geun-hye.

At the time, Park's supporters clashed with authorities, piling onto police buses, smashing windows with sticks and assaulting officers.

Ahead of today's ruling, schools, embassies, major corporations, tourist sites and museums near the courthouse announced they would be closed.

Lee Ho-young, acting chief of the Korean National Police Agency, has said the situation has become "more grave than ever," citing "threats to

the safety of key figures" and possibility of violent and illegal incidents.

Yoon plunged democratic South Korea into political turmoil when he declared martial law on Dec 3, suspending civilian rule and sending soldiers to parliament.

The suspended president still commands the backing of extreme supporters – who include controversial religious figures and YouTubers – who have staged protests for weeks in the run-up to the verdict.

Pro-Yoon rallies turned violent in January when extremist supporters, angered by the court's approval of Yoon's formal arrest warrant, stormed a Seoul courthouse, injuring at least 50 police officers and vandalising the building by smashing windows and doors. – AFP



# 'All lines crossed in Gaza'

## UN building hit in Jabalia

**GAZA:** Israeli airstrikes hit a UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA) building in Jabalia, northern Gaza, yesterday, said Philippe Lazzarini, the agency's commissioner-general.

"The building was previously a health centre, heavily damaged earlier in the war. Initial reports indicate the facility was sheltering over 700 people when it was hit. Among those killed are reportedly nine children, including a two-week-old baby," he posted on his official X account.

"Displaced families stayed at the shelter after it was hit because they have nowhere else to go. Since the war began, more than 300 UN buildings have been damaged or destroyed even though all their coordinates are regularly shared with the warring parties. More than 700 people have been killed while seeking UN protection," he said.

"Too many UNRWA premises have also reportedly been used for military and fighting purposes by Palestinian groups or the Israeli forces. The total disregard of UN staff, premises or operations is a profound defiance of international law."

He called once again for independent

investigations to find out the circumstances of each of these attacks and the serious violations.

"In Gaza, all lines have been crossed over and over again," he said.

In Tel Aviv, the Israeli military said yesterday it was investigating an incident in which its troops opened fire on ambulances, claiming to have targeted "terrorists," while the UN reported that 15 medics and humanitarian workers were killed.

"The incident on March 23 in which IDF (military) forces opened fire targeting terrorists advancing in ambulances, has been transferred to the General Staff's fact-finding and assessment mechanism for investigation," military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Nadav Shoshani said in a statement.

The Palestinian Red Crescent said on Sunday it had recovered the bodies of 15 rescuers after Israeli forces targeted the ambulances in the southern Gaza Strip last month.

Bodies of eight medics from the Red Crescent, six members of Gaza's civil defence agency and one employee of a UN agency were retrieved, the Red Crescent said.

The UN humanitarian office (OCHA) said on Tuesday that a team of first responders was killed by Israeli forces on March 23, and that other emergency and aid teams were hit one

after another over several hours while searching for their missing colleagues.

"The (Israeli military) places utmost importance on maintaining communication with international organisations operating in Gaza and engages with them regularly," Shoshani said yesterday.

UN aid official Jonathan Whittall said on Wednesday that a mass grave in Rafah where the bodies of the 15 medics were found illustrated the "war without limits" that Israel is leading in Gaza.

An Israeli military official said the army "contacted the organisations multiple times to coordinate the evacuation of the bodies, in accordance with the operational constraints".

"Understanding that the process might take time, the bodies were covered with sand and cloth sheets so that they wouldn't get damaged," the official said.

The military has not formally responded to claims that the bodies were dumped in a mass grave.

Speaking after a mission to Gaza uncovered the mass grave, Whittall, the head of OCHA in the Palestinian territories, said "it was shocking" to see medical workers "still in their uniforms, still wearing gloves, killed while trying to save lives".

UN chief Antonio Guterres too expressed shock at the killings. – Bernama/AFP

## Probe massacres, Damascus told

**BEIRUT:** Amnesty International called on the Syrian government to ensure accountability for sectarian massacres targeting the Alawite minority last month, saying they may constitute war crimes.

Several days of violence starting on March 6 saw the worst sectarian bloodshed since rebels overthrew president Bashar al-Assad, with massacres largely in the Alawite coastal heartland.

Amnesty said that "the Syrian government must ensure that the perpetrators of a wave of mass killings targeting Alawite civilians in coastal areas are held accountable".

The massacres "must be investigated as war crimes", it said in a statement.

Truth, justice and reparation are "crucial to ending cycles of atrocities", it said.

The UN human rights office has said that "perpetrators raided houses, asking residents whether they were Alawite or Sunni before proceeding to either kill or spare them accordingly", with men shot dead in front of their families.

Online footage, which AFP was unable to independently verify, showed men in military garb shooting people at close range.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor has said security forces and allied groups killed more than 1,700 civilians, mostly Alawites, during the violence.

Amnesty secretary-general Agnes Callamard said: "Once again, Syrian civilians have found themselves bearing the heaviest cost as parties to the conflict seek to settle scores."

Interim President Ahmed al-Sharaa, whose group Hayat Tahrir al-Sham led the offensive that toppled Assad in December, has vowed to prosecute those behind the "bloodshed of civilians" and has set up a fact-finding committee, which has yet to announce its results.

Amnesty said authorities must "ensure independent, effective investigations of these unlawful killings". – AFP



A Palestinian sits at the site of an Israeli strike on an encampment housing displaced people in Khan Younis yesterday. – REUTERS/PICT

## Hungary withdraws from ICC as Netanyahu visits

**BUDAPEST:** Hungary has decided to withdraw from the International Criminal Court, it said yesterday, shortly after Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu, sought under an ICC arrest warrant, arrived in the country for a state visit.

Prime Minister Viktor Orban invited his Israeli counterpart to Budapest in November, a day after the ICC issued its arrest warrant over allegations of war crimes in Gaza, where Israel launched its offensive.

Israel has rejected the accusations, which it says are politically motivated and fuelled by antisemitism.

It says the International Criminal Court has lost all legitimacy by issuing the warrants against a democratically elected leader of a country exercising the right of self defence.

As a founding member of the ICC, Hungary is theoretically obliged to arrest and hand over anyone subject to a warrant from the court but

Orban made clear that Hungary would not respect the ruling which he called "brazen, cynical and completely unacceptable".

Hungary signed the ICC's founding document in 1999 and ratified it in 2001, but the law has not been promulgated.

Gergely Gulyas, Orban's chief of staff, said in November that although Hungary ratified the Rome Statute of the ICC, it "was never made part of Hungarian law", meaning that no measure of the court can be carried out within Hungary.

Gulyas told state news agency MTI yesterday that the government would launch the withdrawal process later in the day.

Orban had raised the prospect of Hungary's exit from the ICC after US President Donald Trump imposed sanctions on the court's prosecutor Karim Khan in February.

"It's time for Hungary to review what we're doing in an international organisation that is

under US sanctions," Orban said on X in February.

The Bill on starting the year-long process of withdrawing from the ICC is likely to be approved by Hungary's parliament that is dominated by Orban's Fidesz party.

ICC judges said when they issued the warrant that there were reasonable grounds to believe Netanyahu and his former defence chief were criminally responsible for acts including murder, persecution and starvation as a weapon of war as part of a "widespread and systematic attack against the civilian population of Gaza".

The Israeli campaign has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, according to Palestinian health authorities, and devastated the Gaza Strip.

The ICC also issued an arrest warrant against a Hamas leader in November. His death was confirmed after the warrant was issued. – Reuters

## BRIEFS

### ISRAEL STEPS UP SYRIA AIRSTRIKES

**DAMASCUS:** Israel stepped up airstrikes on Syria, declaring the attacks a warning to the new rulers in Damascus as it accused their Turkish allies yesterday of trying to turn the country into a Turkish protectorate. The strikes, targeting air bases, a site near Damascus and the southwest, put renewed focus on Israeli concerns about the rebels who deposed Bashar al-Assad in December, with Israeli officials viewing them as a rising threat. The Israeli army, which seized ground in the southwest after Assad was toppled, said its forces killed several gunmen who opened fire on Israeli troops. Syria's state news agency SANA said that Israeli shelling had killed nine people in the area. – Reuters

### RUSSIA BANS ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION

**MOSCOW:** Russia's general prosecutor yesterday banned the activities of the Elton John AIDS Foundation, accusing it of taking a negative stance towards countries that protect "traditional spiritual and moral values". The prosecutor's office said its ban applied to two organisations, one registered in the United States and the other in Britain, both of them called the "Elton John AIDS Foundation". Both are officially designated as "undesirable organisations", it said. The foundation was set up by the gay British singer and songwriter who has spoken out against what he has said is unacceptable discrimination against gay people by the Russian authorities. – Reuters



**COMMENT** by Haezreena Begum Abdul Hamid

# Rising threat of forced criminality

**O**NE of the fastest-growing forms of human trafficking in Southeast Asia, and particularly in Malaysia over the past three years, is trafficking for forced criminality.

This involves the coercion and deception of individuals into large-scale financial fraud operations, often linked to cybercrimes such as online scams, extortion and money laundering.

Trafficking for forced criminality refers to the exploitation of individuals through coercion, force or deception to compel them into criminal activities for the financial gain or benefit of traffickers.

Victims are often forced to become online scammers, drug couriers, money mules or are coerced into acts of terrorism or activities that facilitate terrorism, among other crimes.

Reports indicate that these criminal operations occur in legal and illegal establishments, including casinos, hotels, entertainment centres and businesses registered as legitimate entities.

Many of these sites are secured within enclosed or fenced-off areas where victims are confined and forced to engage in cybercrimes, such as international financial fraud.

Currently, Section 2 of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (Atipom) does not explicitly recognise forced criminality as a specific form of exploitation. However, it does mention "any illegal activity", which can be interpreted to cover such acts.

Nonetheless, clearer provisions and amendments are urgently needed, especially in light of the increasingly complex and technologically advanced nature of these crimes, which often involve tools like artificial intelligence (AI) within organised criminal networks.

According to Datuk Fadil Marsus, deputy director (Intelligence and Operations) of the Criminal Investigation Department at Bukit Aman, the police recently rescued 504 Malaysian nationals from Thailand, Myanmar, Cambodia and

other countries who were at risk of becoming victims of forced criminality.

However, only around 10% were confirmed as genuine trafficking victims. The majority had voluntarily joined scam syndicates and only sought rescue after facing threats or abuse for failing to meet the syndicate's profit targets.

Some of these individuals also acted as agents, recruiting other Malaysians into similar scams abroad, and many have reportedly been uncooperative with authorities upon their return.

These syndicates exploit people's vulnerabilities, targeting those easily enticed by promises of high-paying overseas jobs. They typically seek individuals fluent in languages such as English and Chinese to carry out cyber fraud.

Victims are forced to engage in a range of online crimes, including romance scams (also known as "pig butchering"), crypto fraud, money laundering and illegal gambling.

While some willingly enter these syndicates, they often find themselves trapped in exploitative cycles, unable to leave unless ransom payments are made by their families.

Survivors who have managed to escape have reported enduring severe torture at the hands of these syndicates.

Two common patterns emerge from these cases. First, individuals who were initially deceived and exploited later become agents or recruiters themselves. After witnessing the lucrative returns from scam operations, some choose to remain and actively participate in recruiting others, transitioning from victim to perpetrator.

Second, those lured by legitimate job offers are then forced into criminal activities, such as online fraud, without any means to escape the cycle of exploitation.

Under Atipom, individuals officially identified as trafficking victims are eligible for Interim Protection Order and may be placed in a shelter for up to 21 days while investigations are ongoing.

Malaysia currently operates 10 such

*"Trafficking for forced criminality refers to the exploitation of individuals through coercion, force or deception to compel them into criminal activities for the financial gain or benefit of traffickers."*



There is a prevailing misconception that limits human trafficking to forced labour and sexual exploitation, overlooking the globally recognised element of criminal exploitation. — **REUTERSPIC**

shelters, providing refuge for Malaysian and foreign victims. The programmes at these facilities focus on psychosocial support, spiritual well-being, education and physical recovery.

The Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, along with other NGOs, plays a crucial role in addressing the psychological trauma endured by victims.

However, there is an urgent need for more specialised programmes tailored to the unique experiences of victims of forced criminality whose trauma may differ significantly from that of those trafficked for sexual exploitation or forced labour.

Psychosocial interventions could also be administered at victims' homes or alternative safe spaces for those who decline placement in shelters, facilitating their recovery and reintegration into society. Despite concerted regional efforts to combat forced criminality, three major challenges persist. First, there is a prevailing misconception that limits human trafficking to forced labour and sexual exploitation, overlooking the globally recognised element of criminal exploitation.

Second, the investigation and prosecution of these crimes are hampered by syndicates' cross-border operations, sophisticated structures and advanced technologies, all of which impede law enforcement efforts.

Third, international legal cooperation remains inadequate. Although Malaysia is a member of the Bali Process, addressing this crime effectively requires stronger transnational collaboration, particularly in areas such as mutual legal assistance and extradition.

In conclusion, tackling forced criminality demands a comprehensive approach that combines holistic law enforcement strategies, a nuanced understanding of trafficking dynamics related to criminal exploitation and enhanced international cooperation.

Only through such coordinated action can Southeast Asia begin to dismantle the expanding networks of forced criminal exploitation.

**Dr Haezreena Begum Abdul Hamid** is a criminologist and senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law, Universiti of Malaya. Comments: [letters@thesundaily.com](mailto:letters@thesundaily.com)

## Under One Roof

### Thriving through single motherhood

**Q: I am a single mum with three young children, working full-time and taking online university courses. Juggling all of these responsibilities on my own is becoming increasingly challenging. While my past relationships have not been ideal, the thought of having a supportive partner to share the load is starting to seem more appealing. Do you have any advice?**

**Focus on the Family Malaysia:** It is natural for a woman in your situation to desire a partner who can share in your life and help lighten the burden of raising three children.

You clearly have a lot on your plate, and it is understandable to consider how a supportive husband could make a positive difference. Additionally, research shows that children tend to thrive in a two-parent household.

However, it is important to approach entering a relationship with caution, especially when the motivation is primarily based on need. As you likely know, marriage is more than just a practical partnership.

A spouse is not just a provider,

housekeeper, babysitter or co-parent – they are a partner in every sense.

We strongly recommend seeking counselling and reflecting on your past relationships. This self-examination will help you avoid repeating unhealthy patterns.

Additionally, taking the time to work on personal growth and healing is essential, so you will be ready when the right person comes along.

Remember, success in marriage is just as much about being the right person as it is about finding the right person.

Meanwhile, try building friendships with other mums. Work on building connections with caring women in your neighbourhood and community.

Do not hesitate to ask a relative for help or consider hiring a part-time babysitter to give yourself a much-needed break. Having some breathing room will allow you to recharge and better prepare yourself for the future.

**Q: How can I help my child deal with his overwhelming fear of insects? He has always**

**been scared of bugs, but after being bitten by something during outdoor playtime at preschool, he now becomes hysterical every time the class is about to go outside.**

**Focus on the Family Malaysia:** Your child's panicked reaction may stem from his personality, age or lack of understanding.

Children's fears can be due to inexperience. They may become overly fearful because they do not have complete or accurate knowledge about what scares them, which can lead to generalisations (for example, "all bugs bite").

Children who are naturally more anxious or tend to be on "high alert" may need extra support in learning how to handle fear, adversity and difficult situations.

A practical approach could be to turn overcoming your son's fear into a fun project. Visit the library together and pick out books about bugs. Learn their names and discuss the important roles they play in the environment.

Start with harmless insects like ladybugs and caterpillars, and perhaps draw pictures of bugs together. You could also buy some toy

plastic bugs for him to play with.

From there, gently introduce him to "safe" bugs, letting him hold them to show they are not threatening. Some children even enjoy giving ants rides on their toy trains.

The goal is to take something that causes fear and make it familiar and enjoyable.

All of this requires patience and a genuine connection with your child. Over time, it is likely that your son will come to understand that most bugs are harmless.

However, if the fear persists after a few months or seems to worsen, it may be a good idea to schedule an evaluation with a licensed clinical professional.

**This article is contributed by Focus on the Family Malaysia, a non-profit organisation dedicated to supporting and strengthening the family unit. It provides a myriad of programmes and resources, including professional counselling services, to the community. For more information, visit [family.org.my](http://family.org.my). Comments: [letters@thesundaily.com](mailto:letters@thesundaily.com)**





# Rail adventure

Tracking down Malaysian heritage - P12

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Bourgeois on a diesel locomotive on the Jungle Railway.



Bourgeois explores the interior of a rare Class 22 diesel locomotive in northern Malaysia.



Bourgeois (left) on the Jungle Railway with the president of Malaysia's first official railway fan club, Faizal.

# Malaysia's unique railway heritage

► English social media star embarks on locomotive adventure

**R**AIL enthusiast and social media star Francis Bourgeois appeared on BBC Earth's *The Travel Show: My Great Malaysian Railway Adventure* last Sunday as he embarked on his first-ever journey through Malaysia to uncover the country's fascinating railway heritage.

Known for inspiring a new generation of train spotters through his passion for trains, Bourgeois explores how Malaysia has reinvented and restored the infrastructure left by the British and how train travel works in more demanding terrain.

Starting in Kuala Lumpur, Bourgeois helps engineers to prepare the Great Leisure Heritage Train for its relaunch in June, making it Malaysia's only steam-powered service on the mainland. He then boards a revived luxury railway, Asia's version of the Orient Express, to get an insider's look at how fine dining is prepared in a kitchen smaller than a cupboard on the Eastern & Oriental Express.

Venturing deep into the Taman Negara rainforest, Bourgeois discovers how Malaysia's train revival has aided in conservation efforts to protect the critically endangered Malayan tiger while the Jungle Railway connects some of the most remote towns and villages in the country's interior.

This captivating rail adventure across Malaysia is available on Unifi TV channel 501, Astro channel 554 and BBC Player.



Bourgeois inside the cab of the abandoned Class 22 diesel locomotive.



Bourgeois peeks out of the rare Class 22.



Spotting the Class 29 locomotive with train enthusiasts at Rawang Station.



Bourgeois spotting the monorail in KL for the first time.



Bourgeois boards the cab of a diesel locomotive on the Jungle Railway.



The temple on Penang Island houses a huge statue that is dedicated to compassion.





10% drop in shipments to US could dent M'sian exports by 1.3 percentage points: MIDF

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Market analysts have raised concerns following US President Donald Trump's announcement of expansive new global tariffs.

MIDF Research warns that if the policy triggers a 10% drop in Malaysia's shipments to the US – which represented about 13% of total exports last year – it could shave 1.3 percentage points off the country's exports.

If it is assumed the tariff hikes also cause demand from regional economies to weaken, additional 10% declines in exports to regional markets (such as Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, Vietnam, Japan and even China) could cause overall exports to experience a larger decline of around -5.8ppt, it said in a note yesterday.

The US announced a minimum 10% tariff on all imports, effective today, while imposing additional duties of 10-50% on about 60 nations, effective April 9, including Asean countries.

However, MIDF Research expects a mitigating effect from reduced imports of intermediate goods such as electrical and electronic products, machinery and metal components due to weaker production activity.

"Accounting for lower imports, the net impact on GDP could be up to -1.5 ppt. This means Malaysia could still achieve around +3.0% GDP growth this year, supported by resilient domestic activity," the research firm said.

It added that the magnitude of the trade and production shock would depend on the shift in final demand and the ability of companies to absorb higher costs.

"We do not expect this temporary supply shock to trigger a sharp global downturn. However, the broader impact on global trade could be more substantial this time, as the latest round of tariffs – dubbed 'Trade War 2.0' – now involves more countries beyond the US-China conflict."

However, MIDF Research said efforts to promote greater trade with other regions, such as BRICS, and within Asean, will partly mitigate the slower demand from the US.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd said many analysts expect the tariffs, if imposed, to have adverse implications on the prospective earnings of Chinese companies.

Except for Singapore (10%) and the Philippines (17%), Malaysia's 24% reciprocal tariff ranked the third lowest within the Asia-Pacific region, with Cambodia (49%), Vietnam (46%), Thailand (36%) and Indonesia (32%) as the top four targets, the firm said.

UOB Global Economics & Markets Research said for Asian countries, particularly Asean-5, reciprocal tariffs would be relatively easy to manage, since the average rates in those countries hover around 7-8%.

However, product-specific tariff rates, especially in the double-digit range, could cause significant impact to these exporters and their supply chain partners, it said.

## 'Trump tariff policy violates core principles of global trade'

BY HAYATUN RAZAK  
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**PETALING JAYA:** US President Donald Trump has disregarded the fundamental principles of international trade negotiations by signing an executive order and launching a sweeping global tariff regime.

Former international trade and industry minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz said Trump has strayed from the concept and spirit of bilateral, plurilateral (such as with Asean as a bloc) and multilateral negotiations, particularly those under the World Trade Organization.

Rafidah said Trump has used the trade deficit between the United States and other countries as the basis for action, a move that has never traditionally been the foundation of trade negotiations.

"Negotiations have usually focused on key products for the countries involved. By shifting the focus to deficits, Trump has undermined the very foundations of trade discussions," she told *SunBiz*.

Rafidah warned that foreign companies operating in Malaysia may begin reassessing their long-term strategies. "It is not easy to relocate operations involving complex and expensive equipment – these are not 'mobile' operations," she said.

The government must begin engaging with affected companies to understand how, and to what extent, they are impacted, Rafidah said. "Only then can Malaysia implement measures that will encourage them to remain operating here."

The newly introduced "reciprocal tariff" policy will see the US apply a standard 10% duty on all imported goods, supplemented by extra levies matching other nations' tariffs on American products. The rates vary significantly by country, with China facing the highest additional duty at 34%, followed by Indonesia 32%, India 26%, Malaysia 24% and the European Union 20%.

Malaysia Strategy Research Centre president Prof Datuk Chin Yew Sin said it will affect the export of electrical and electronic products to the US, leading to a slower economic growth rate for Malaysia. "The Malaysian government will need to negotiate with the US government so as to get a better tariff."

In the meantime, he said, Malaysia has to look for other markets, such as South America, the Middle East and African countries, to diversify exports so as not to rely so much on the US market.

"China is our largest trading partner, we

➤ Former minister Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz says US president has strayed from concept and spirit of negotiations, undermined foundations of discussions



Rafidah says foreign companies operating in Malaysia may begin reassessing their long-term strategies.

have to continuously upgrade our 'cozy' relationship with China so that we can increase our exports to that country. China will be expected to achieve its 5% economic growth this year. China will contribute 30% of its economic growth to the whole world and continue to become the engine of growth globally," Chin said.

Economist Dr Geoffrey Williams warned that the impact of the US tariff hikes could be significant, adding that if the impact is prolonged, Malaysia's gross domestic product growth could be dragged to the lower end of the government's forecast this year.

"The US is Malaysia's second-largest single export market, and nearly half of those exports are in the electrical and electronics sector, which could be hit hardest," he told *SunBiz*.

However, Williams noted that foreign direct investment (FDI) may remain resilient.

"Tariffs in Malaysia are already low compared to other Asian countries, so the situation could even be positive for FDI.

"But the government must not retaliate with higher tariffs on US products. Instead, it should aim to reduce trade restrictions and negotiate lower tariffs quickly," he said.

Williams warned that a broader trade war could erupt if the European Union and China respond with retaliatory tariffs.

"That would be disastrous. For now, I believe this is simply a negotiating stance by the US. The best strategy for all countries is to lower tariffs and trade barriers, ushering in a new era of free trade," he said.

The Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (Miti), in a statement yesterday, said the agency views these tariffs seriously and is actively engaging with the US authorities to seek solutions that will uphold free and fair trade.

Malaysia is not considering retaliatory tariffs, it said, adding that the National Geo-economic Command Centre, recently approved by the Cabinet, will evaluate the impact of the US announcement on Wednesday and will consider a comprehensive and multipronged strategy to mitigate the effects of these tariffs on the domestic economy and industries.

According to the US Bureau of Economic Analysis, Malaysia ranks 15th on the US list with a trade surplus of US\$24.8 billion (RM110.45 billion) in 2024. Despite the trade deficit in goods, the US enjoys a trade surplus in services with Malaysia.

"We acknowledge that Trump's tariff hike poses a significant challenge to global trade dynamics.

"While respecting such sovereign decisions, Malaysia strongly believes in constructive engagement for mutually beneficial economic relations. Miti is committed to safeguarding Malaysia's economic interests and maintaining strong trade relations with the US," the ministry said in the statement.

To mitigate tariff impact, Malaysia is expanding export markets by prioritising high-growth regions and leveraging existing free trade agreements, including the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership.

More reports p14

## Malaysia must shift economy to next level of productivity: Forum chairman

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia will need to shift its own economy to the next level of productivity to remain competitive post-US tariffs announcement as internal reforms are now becoming even more important to the country.

Founding chairman of Malaysia Global Business Forum Nordin Abdullah said the importance of a strategic response beyond a knee jerk reaction will be critical for Malaysia as trade is just one component of the bilateral relationship with the United States.

"Recent investment strategies have targeted

many US based firms and the US remains the largest investor in the Malaysian economy," he said in a commentary piece yesterday.

He said some regional competitors have been given more favourable positions on the tariff spectrum and that may translate into increased inward investments from companies looking to get components of their global supply chains in optimal jurisdictions.

"Trade diversification is going to be an obvious idea but that is now going to be everyone's first choice of least resistance. That will take us into another competitive scenario, as

such more resources will need to be allocated to external trade promotions.

"If Malaysia is able to outdo competitors in this game, the great tariff shakeup could actually be an advantage to Malaysian exporters. This is an opportunity for bold leadership, to summon the courage to step into that breach and to outspend competitors during this time of rapid change.

Beyond the current round of changes, if tariffs do not do the job quickly enough for the Trump administration, he said, economic planners need to anticipate what will be put on

the table next.

"Detailed scenario planning is critical for export exposed companies and industries. The need to manage rapid changes and avoid a broader crisis is still within our own making," he said.

Earlier, the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry said in a statement that it is not considering retaliatory tariffs and is actively engaging with the US authorities regarding the imposed tariff to seek solutions that will uphold the spirit of free and fair trade. – Bernama



■ BY AIMIE SHAZRIE  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Nazsoft Tech Sdn Bhd, a digital solution provider, is banking on artificial intelligence (AI) as a core driver in improving the efficiency of its Madani Digital Trade (MDT) platform, aiming to streamline global trade connectivity for Malaysian exporters.

CEO Dr Muhammad Nazrol Zawawi said the AI-powered platform is designed to bridge market gaps, automate business matching, and provide real-time analytics to help exporters make data-driven decisions.

"AI enables 24/7 engagement between buyers and sellers, overcoming time zone differences and reducing missed trade opportunities. The system can also analyse trade trends, suggest potential markets, and facilitate seamless communication," he told SunBiz.

He noted that the MDT platform integrates AI-driven automation, virtual exhibitions and match-making features, making it a cost-effective alternative to physical trade exhibitions. "The company believes this will help small and medium enterprises (SME) enhance their global market reach with minimal costs."

Nazrol said its partnership with Matrade (Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation) further enhances the platform's credibility through AI-backed verification. "Through this, genuine buyers and sellers can be identified, reducing fraud risks and increasing trade efficiency."

He said the company expects the

# Nazsoft Tech harnesses AI to enhance platform's efficiency

► Company expects Madani Digital Trade to contribute 2%-5% to annual revenue initially

platform to contribute an estimated 2% to 5% to its annual revenue in the initial phase, as the company ramps up efforts to market and promote the platform within the industry.

"Significant investment will be required to drive adoption, but the platform has the potential to enhance trade engagement for Malaysian exporters by bridging gaps in global market access. MDT is designed to connect local exporters with international buyers more efficiently, addressing challenges such as time zone differences and language barriers," he noted.

Nazrol said the company has invested more than RM10 million into MDT as part of its digital transformation strategy, integrating AI-driven automation, virtual exhibitions, and business-matching features to provide a cost-effective alternative to physical trade exhibitions.

He said Nazsoft is also committed to local job creation, as the company is employing home-grown technology talent across Malaysia,

including Kota Bharu, Ipoh and other cities. "While our current priority remains on the domestic market, the company is open to exploring regional expansion, particularly in Asean."

Looking ahead, Nazrol said the company has set a target of capturing at least 5% of the government digital solutions market within the next five years.

"We are focusing on enterprise resource planning and digital infrastructure development. Our goal is to provide government agencies and government-linked companies. By 2030, we aim to have at least a 5% share in this sector," he added.

With MDT offering a centralised platform for government trade-related services, including access to export grants, Nazrol said, the company expects the number of SMEs onboarded to grow significantly.

"By consolidating grants and services under one platform, we are making it easier for SMEs to access financial aid and expand globally."



Nazrol says Nazsoft Tech has set a target of capturing at least 5% of the government digital solutions market by 2030.

## FMM: Semiconductors exempt but most M'sian exports hit by new US tariffs

**PETALING JAYA:** The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) has expressed dissatisfaction over the United States' decision to impose a 24% reciprocal tariff on Malaysian exports, given Malaysia's strong trade relationship with the US and long-standing commitment to open and fair trade.

FMM president Tan Sri Soh Thian Lai (pic) noted that while US tariffs exempt semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and some raw materials, most Malaysian exports to the US will face new tariffs. These include key products such as gloves, plastics, electrical and electronic goods not classified under semiconductor categories, and industrial machinery.

Soh said the affected sectors will now face the full 24% tariff, which could lead to a significant reduction in export volumes, job pressures within affected industries, and the rerouting or restructuring of supply chains involving Malaysian producers and US-linked multinational operations based in Malaysia.

"From FMM's perspective, while Malaysia's tariff rate of 24% is comparatively lower than our Asean neighbours namely Cambodia (49%), Vietnam (46%) and Thailand (36%), we are nonetheless categorised within a punitive group of economies. This



underscores that Asean economies are facing heightened scrutiny," he said in a statement.

FMM welcomes the government's proactive measures, particularly the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry's continued engagement with US authorities and the establishment of the National Geo-economic Command Centre (NGCC) as a central coordinating platform.

"These are timely and strategic steps towards ensuring a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach in addressing the impact of the US tariff measures."

"In complementing these efforts, FMM strongly recommends the inclusion of industry representation, particularly FMM, in the NGCC and its associated high-level task forces. This will help ensure that ground-level business realities, supply chain disruptions, and sector-specific vulnerabilities are accurately reflected in the development and execution of mitigation strategies," Soh said.

He said Malaysia must maintain a liberal import policy with a 5.6% average "most-favoured-nation" tariff, duty-free access for over 50% of products, and a trade-weighted tariff of just 3.3%, demonstrating the country's commitment to open markets through World Trade Organi-

zation compliance and 16 trade agreements – clear evidence against protectionism that should qualify for reciprocal tariff reconsideration.

Further, he said Malaysia must remain committed to strategic US cooperation on semiconductors, investment screening, and export controls through bilateral and regional frameworks, demonstrating the country's shared dedication to rules-based trade and supply chain resilience.

"Collectively, these measures would demonstrate Malaysia's alignment with US trade priorities and may offer a pathway toward the reconsideration or reduction of the current tariff classification."

"Looking ahead, FMM stresses that long-term resilience will depend not only on external diversification but also on sound domestic policies."

"Malaysian exporters are expected to face strong pressure from US importers to reduce their export prices in order to offset the 24% tariff imposed, further squeezing manufacturers' profit margins," Soh said.

He said countries that are heavily impacted by the US tariffs may start diverting their goods to Malaysia and the Asean region, leading to a potential influx of cheaper imports.

This, he added, could result in unfair competition for local industries if not carefully monitored and addressed through appropriate safeguards.

## ACCCIM concerned, warns of trade disruption, impact on businesses

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) express its dissatisfaction over the United States' decision to impose reciprocal tariffs averaging 24% on Malaysia with effect on April 9, given its disruption to trade between two countries and hurting businesses and exports.

In a statement, the ACCCIM, with over 110,000 members across 13 states, questioned how the United States Trade Representative derived that Malaysia currently has imposed an average tariff of 47% charged on US goods, including currency manipulation and trade barriers. It noted that Malaysia was removed from the US Treasury Department monitoring list for currency manipulation as of November 2024.

"We are concerned that the tariff actions and retaliation among major economies could spark a global trade war that can disrupt supply chains, slow global economic growth, and lead to increased costs for consumers and businesses," ACCCIM said.

ACCCIM said the US and Malaysia have enjoyed a mutually beneficial trade relationship for decades.

In 2024, the US was the third largest trading partner of Malaysia, accounting for 11.3% of Malaysia's total trade. It was Malaysia's second largest export destination (13.2%

share) and was Malaysia's third largest importer (9.2% share).

In February 2025, the US displaced China as Malaysia's largest export market (14.8% share).

Overall, the US was the third largest foreign investor in all economic sectors with a total approved investment of RM29.7 billion or 17.4% of total foreign investment in 2024.

ACCCIM president Datuk Ng Yih Png said these unnecessary and unreasonable tariffs will impact domestic businesses and exporters, hurting the Malaysia-US bilateral relationship.

"The chamber calls for a more collaborative approach to address the trade imbalance, emphasising engagement and seeking reasonable solutions through consultations and joint efforts. The challenges ahead are daunting for our businesses. The ACCCIM will continue to work collaboratively with the government in developing strategies to mitigate the impact of tariffs," he said.

Ng said businesses are seeking financial support and capacity building development programmes in finding alternative suppliers, expanding into new markets beyond the US and encouraging domestic trade and production.

He urged businesses to have a better understanding of tariff implications, stay agile, plan forward, manage costs and explore opportunities to diversify their markets.



# Auto ConneXion widens local footprint

► Sime Darby's distributor of Ford vehicles introduces nine new showrooms and upgrades facilities nationwide

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Sime Darby Auto ConneXion Ford (Auto ConneXion), the sole distributor of Ford vehicles in Malaysia, sustained its sales momentum in 2024, reflecting consumer confidence in the brand.

Among the year's key highlights were the successful launches of the Ford Ranger StormTrak limited edition and the XLT Plus Special Edition, with both models gaining significant interest in the market.

Auto ConneXion has also established a strong presence across Malaysia, introducing nine new showrooms and upgraded facilities nationwide.

Among its latest facilities are Millennium in Kuantan, 25 centres in Kapit and Mukah, as well as the largest 3S showroom in Penang.

Sime Motors managing director of Southeast Asia Jeffrey Gan said 2024 has been a significant year for Auto ConneXion.

"As the sole distributor of Ford vehicles in Malaysia, our achieve-

ments marked by multiple industry awards and improved customer experience, reflect our dedication and quality of service.

"Our continued investment in strengthening our presence through showroom expansions and facility upgrades demonstrates our long-term vision and positive outlook for the market," he said in a statement.

Several dealerships have undergone Ford Signature upgrades, bringing a refreshed customer experience at the Seremban (Trio Mantap), Kuala Terengganu (I-Expert), Kuala Lumpur (Capital Intertrade), Klang (Semangat Anggun), Sibit (Sibu Ngu Bothers) showrooms and the largest 3S showroom in Penang.

To complement this expansion, service-only facilities have been established in Kapit and Mukah to cater to the specific needs of customers in East Malaysia.

Plans are also underway to establish new 3S centres in 2025,

namely Supreme Priority Kluang in Johor and Millennium Automart Jalan Kuching in Kuala Lumpur.

In addition, several facilities are set to be upgraded including ALV Auto World, Trio Mantap Kajang, Tugu Etika and TB Automotive by year-end.

Auto ConneXion's strategic expansion and the implementation of the enhanced Ford Guest Experience digital processes at the dealer level ensure optimised efficiency across its branches in Ara Damansara, Petaling Jaya, Kuching and Penang.

Moving forward, Supreme Priority Kluang, Sing Kwang Melaka, Boston Auto Kota Kinabalu, and I-Expert Kuala Terengganu are targeted for completion by the first half of 2025.

Auto ConneXion managing director Turse Zuhair said the company's highly trained team of sales and after-sales professionals ensures that customers receive outstanding service and technical expertise at every touchpoint.

"With a strategic focus on innovation and service upgrades, Auto ConneXion will continue to set new benchmarks, and we are optimistic in sustaining this momentum in 2025, building on Ford's leadership position as the number one pickup truck brand in Malaysia," he said.

## AirTrunk, Johor agency sign deal on recycled water supply to data centres

**JOHOR BAHRU:** Hyperscale data centre specialist AirTrunk has established a partnership with Johor Special Water (JSW) to jointly develop a recycled water supply to AirTrunk's Johor data centre campuses, JHB1 and JHB2.

The recycled water supply scheme is the largest of its kind in Malaysia to date and reinforces AirTrunk's commitment to the sustainable use of resources and circularity.

The initiative will see recycled water locally produced from unused wastewater and will involve significant investment in the development of treatment and supply infrastructure.

The recycled water will be used to meet the operational needs of AirTrunk's data centres in Johor conserving vital water resources for local communities.

AirTrunk country head (Malaysia) Pei Jet Lim said this initiative with JSW exemplifies AirTrunk's dedication to sustainable operations.

"Using recycled water, we conserve resources and support Johor's environment and community."

"AirTrunk is also working with local contractors to develop this initiative, in alignment with our approach to prioritise local employment and sourcing," she said in a statement.

JSW is a wholly owned entity of the Johor state government

through Permodalan Darul Ta'zim.

Access to this alternative water supply complements the energy-efficient design of AirTrunk's campuses, including the innovative liquid cooling system implemented at JHB1 since 2024.

The approach boosts operational efficiency while also promoting the sustainable management of Johor's water resources.

Importantly, the water initiative addresses calls from the federal and Johor state governments for alternative water solutions to alleviate pressure on water supplies.

AirTrunk is collaborating with JSW and several local companies to deliver the project.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi welcomed AirTrunk's innovative approach to sustainable water management in Johor. "This initiative addresses environmental concerns and also brings significant economic benefits to the state."

AirTrunk founder and CEO Robin Khuda said the company recognise that water is a precious resource, and its sustainable management is crucial as Malaysia cements its position as a rising digital hub.

"We are developing innovative solutions to ensure we use water as productively as possible. This initiative complements the other sustainability programmes we have put in place," he said.

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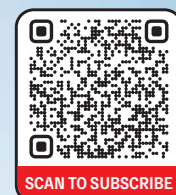
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# Trump's sweeping tariffs stoke global trade war

➤ Stock markets sink, China and EU vow countermeasures

**BRUSSELS:** President Donald Trump's move to slap a 10% tariff on most goods imported to the United States, as well as much higher levies on dozens of rivals and allies alike, has intensified a global trade war that threatens to stoke inflation and stall growth.

The sweeping penalties announced against the serene backdrop of the White House Rose Garden on Wednesday immediately unleashed turbulence across world markets and drew condemnation from other leaders now facing the end of an era of trade liberalisation that has shaped the global order for decades.

As Asia digested the news yesterday, stock markets in Beijing and Tokyo sank to multi-month lows, with US and European stock futures also pointing to sharp losses as investors scrambled to the safety of bonds and gold.

Now facing 54% tariffs on exports to the United States, the world's No. 2 economy China vowed countermeasures, as did the European Union – Washington's friends and foes united in criticism of measures they fear will deal a devastating blow to global trade.

"The consequences will be dire for millions of people around the globe," EU chief Ursula von der Leyen said in a statement, adding the 27-member bloc was preparing to hit back if talks with Washington failed.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent earlier warned that any such retaliatory moves would only lead to escalation.

Among close US allies, the European Union was targeted with a 20% rate, Japan with 24%,

South Korea with 25% and Taiwan with 32%.

The base tariffs go into effect on April 5 and the higher reciprocal rates on April 9.

Trump said the "reciprocal" tariffs were a response to duties and other non-tariff barriers put on US goods.

He argued that the new levies will boost manufacturing jobs at home.

"For decades, our country has been looted, pillaged, raped and plundered by nations near and far," Trump said.

Outside economists have warned that tariffs could slow the global economy, raise the risk of recession, and increase living costs for the average American family by thousands of dollars.

Canada and Mexico, the two largest US trading partners, already face 25% tariffs on many goods and will not face additional levies from Wednesday's announcement.

Trump's top economist, Stephen Miran, told Fox Business on Wednesday the tariffs would work out well for the US in the long run, even if they cause some initial disruption.

"Are there going to be short-term bumps as a result? Absolutely," Miran, the chairman of Trump's Council of Economic Advisors, said.

The reciprocal tariffs do not apply to certain goods, including copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber, gold, energy and "certain minerals that are not available in the US," according to a White House fact sheet.

Following his remarks, Trump also signed an order to close a trade loophole used to ship low-value packages – those valued at US\$800

(RM3,500) or less – duty-free from China, known as *de minimis*.

The order covers goods from China and Hong Kong and will take effect on May 2, according to the White House, which said the move was intended to curb the flow of fentanyl into the US.

Chinese chemical makers are the top suppliers of raw materials purchased by Mexico's cartels to produce the deadly drug, US anti-narcotics officials say.

A Reuters investigation last year showed how traffickers often route these chemicals through the US by exploiting the *de minimis* rule.

Trump is also planning other tariffs targeting semiconductors, pharmaceuticals, and potentially critical minerals, the official said.

Earlier in the day, the administration said a separate set of tariffs on auto imports that Trump announced last week will take effect today.

Trump previously imposed 25% duties on steel and aluminum and extended them to nearly US\$150 billion worth of downstream products.

Tariff concerns have already slowed manufacturing activity across the globe, while spurring sales of imported products as consumers rush to make purchases before prices rise.

Now as the reality of the new tariffs sink in, companies around the world must weigh up how to adjust, with their options limited and unpalatable for their customers.

"This is how you sabotage the world's economic engine while claiming to supercharge it," said Nigel Green, CEO of global financial advisory deVere Group.

"These tariffs will push prices higher on thousands of everyday goods – from phones to food – and that will fuel inflation at a time when it is already uncomfortably persistent," – Reuters

## In symbolic rebuke, Senate votes to block duties on Canada

**WASHINGTON:** A handful of Senate Republicans broke ranks with US President Donald Trump on Wednesday, joining Democrats to pass a measure that would block his tariffs on Canadian imports.

The resolution, supported by four Republicans and all of the chamber's Democrats, has virtually no chance of becoming law.

But it marks a rare, albeit symbolic defeat for Trump on Capitol Hill, where his Republican Party controls both chambers and he has seen little pushback to his rampaging first months in office.

The Senate voted 51-48 to overturn the national emergency at the border which Trump declared earlier this year, which he has used to justify saddling Canadian imports with 25% tariffs.

But it was a purely symbolic dissent, as House Speaker Mike Johnson, a close Trump ally, is expected to block any vote on the resolution.

Trump took to his Truth Social media platform to slam the legislation as a Democratic "ploy" and make clear it is dead on arrival in the House.

"The House will never approve it and I, as your President, will never sign it," he posted.

The four Republican senators who voted to pass the measure were Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Susan Collins of Maine – viewed as the two most-centrist party members – as well as Kentucky's two senators, Mitch McConnell and Rand Paul.

Republicans have a 53-47 majority in the Senate.

The Senate vote occurred shortly after Trump rolled out his plans to slap fresh import tariffs on products from countries around the globe, an announcement that sent stock markets tumbling. – AFP

## US levies take aim everywhere, including uninhabited islands

**WASHINGTON:** The world's remotest corners could not hide from US President Donald Trump's global tariffs onslaught on Wednesday – even the uninhabited Heard and McDonald Islands.

The Australian territory in the sub-Antarctic Indian Ocean was slapped with 10% tariffs on all its exports, despite the archipelago having zero residents – other than many seals, penguins and other birds.

Strings of ocean specks around the globe, including Australia's Cocos (Keeling) Islands and the Comoros off the coast of Africa, were likewise subjected to 10% new tariffs.

Another eye-catching inclusion in the tariffs list was Myanmar, which is digging out from an earthquake that left nearly 3,000 people dead, and whose exports to the US will now face 44% in new levies.

Britain's Falkland Islands – population 3,200 people and around one million penguins – got particular punishment.

The South Atlantic territory – mostly famous for a 1982 war fought by Britain to expel an Argentinian invasion – was walloped with tariffs of 41%.

Argentina only faces 10% new tariffs.

According to the Falklands Chamber of Commerce, the territory is ranked 173 in the world in terms of global exports, with only US\$306 million of products exported in 2019. – AFP



Trump holding a chart as he announces reciprocal tariffs in the Rose Garden. – AFP/IC

## American business groups voice dismay

**WASHINGTON:** President Donald Trump's tariff announcement on Wednesday was widely panned by US business lobbying groups, who voiced concern about the impact of the sweeping new duties on their operations.

During a speech in the White House's Rose Garden, Trump unveiled a baseline 10% tariff against almost all US trading partners in the world from April 5, and an additional top-up rate from April 9 for other countries currently imposing tariff and non-tariff barriers against American companies.

Trade groups reacted with dismay to the measures, which would see most goods imported

from China, for example, facing an additional tariff totaling 34% on top of existing levies.

"Applying new tariffs at this scale will create change and disruption that restaurant operators will have to navigate to keep their restaurants open," the National Restaurant Association said in a statement.

"The stakes for manufacturers could not be higher. The high costs of new tariffs threaten investment, jobs, supply chains and, in turn, America's ability to outcompete other nations and lead as the preeminent manufacturing superpower," said Jay Timmons, the president of the National Association of Manufacturers.

Alongside China, the European Union, India,

and several other top US trading partners will also face new tariffs of at least 20% from April 9.

"These broad tariffs are a tax increase that will raise prices for American consumers and hurt the economy," US Chamber of Commerce chief policy officer Neil Bradley said in a statement.

In a recent analysis, Yale University's Budget Lab estimated that a 20% across-the-board tariff on imports could cost the average US household at least US\$3,400 (RM15,072) – a painful cost-of-living adjustment for most Americans.

"President Trump's sweeping global and reciprocal tariffs are massive tax hikes on Americans that will drive inflation, kill jobs on

Main Street, and may cause a recession for the US economy," Consumer Technology Association chief executive Gary Shapiro said in a statement.

National Association of Home Builders chairman Buddy Hughes, who said Trump's tariff announcement would "undoubtedly" raise some construction costs while the US wine Trade Alliance said in a statement that the measures on imported wines would harm American businesses "far more" than their foreign counterparts.

Alliance for American Manufacturing president Scott Paul was more upbeat, calling Trump's announcement "a necessary step in the right direction". – AFP



# US seeks to hurt China with 'all-round blockade'

➤ No place to hide for Chinese exporters offshoring production

**BEIJING:** Chinese outdoor furniture maker Jin Chaofeng set up a factory in Vietnam last July to escape higher American tariffs. Now he is looking to close it, as Washington imposes steep levies on Hanoi and the rest of the world.

"I've done all this work for nothing," Jin said, adding that foreign trade would become a "very thin-margin" business, just like the demand-starved Chinese market.

No other country comes close to matching China's annual sales of more than US\$400 billion (RM1.7 trillion) in goods to the United States each year.

President Donald Trump just hiked tariffs by an extra 34 percentage points on those goods.

His world-wide tariffs strike at the core of Chinese exporters' two main strategies to blunt the impact of trade war – moving some production abroad and increasing sales to non-US markets.

The sweeping tariffs could deal a lasting blow to global demand.

China is more exposed to the risk of shrinking world commerce than any other nation, with economic growth last year relying heavily on running a trillion-dollar trade surplus.

Kaiyuan Securities expects the new tariffs could slash Chinese exports to the United States by 30%, cut overall exports by more than 4.5%, and drag economic growth by 1.3 percentage points.

"It's an all-round blockade against China," said Yuan Yuwei, hedge fund manager at Water Wisdom Asset Management, who said he was bullish on gold and shorting China and Hong Kong stocks as a result.

Ahead of Trump's re-election in November, many Chinese manufacturers were already relocating some production facilities to Southeast Asia and other regions.

Now their new factories face tariffs of 46% in Vietnam, 36% in Thailand and at least 10% anywhere else.

As Trump raised tariffs on China by 20 percentage points in February and March, the global salesforce of its manufacturers was in a rat race for new export markets in Asia, Latin America and elsewhere.

Now these economies are taking their own tariff hit, probably reducing their purchasing power, and their demand for Chinese goods.

Analysts say Washington's new measures are the type of punch and clinch on Beijing that could derail China's economic growth and its efforts to fight deflation.

"This will make it impossible for the 5%



Shipping containers from China, at the China Shipping (North America) Holding Company Ltd facility at the Port of Los Angeles in California. – REUTERS/SPIC

growth target to be achieved," said Zhiwu Chen, a finance professor at HKU Business School.

"China cannot get out of this deflationary situation anytime soon. This new tariff increase is definitely making things worse."

The external demand shock is feeding back internally, as producers are under pressure to cut costs.

Jerry Jiao, whose factory in China makes cast-iron bathtubs, said he had already "laid off some employees, reduced management costs, and cut down on various expenses" this year.

Li Zhaolong, the manager of a clothing factory in the southern city of Guangzhou, said he needed to rely more on domestic orders, but worried about subdued demand.

"You had one cake for one person before, but now five people want to eat it," said Li.

In 2023, about 145 countries traded more with China than with the United States, an increase of nearly 50% from 2008, according to research by investment bank Jefferies.

That is a measure of China's success over decades in developing competitive industries under a world trade order the United States created, but which it now considers unfair and a threat to its own security.

"We still need to diversify our export markets, support exports and encourage businesses to focus more on domestic sales," said a Chinese trade policy adviser who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"The risk of a global recession is real," however, he warned, adding: "If everyone submits, the United States will indeed profit, as if others are paying tribute. But if they resist and retaliate continuously, the US economy

won't be able to handle it."

For China, the other risk is that more of its trade partners will see its exporters competing ever more heavily on price in their markets and throw up trade barriers of their own to protect domestic industries.

"That is true both in Europe and many emerging market economies," said Louis Kuijs, S&P Global's chief Asia economist.

Domestic factors also add challenges to any Chinese plan to double down on foreign trade.

Many analysts say China's exporting prowess is also the result of government policies that disadvantaged households, leading to imbalances such as manufacturing overcapacity, slow domestic consumption and roads and bridges built to nowhere.

China's "mercantilism has led to financial repression, offering households low returns on savings to create cheap finance for favoured industries," said Shamik Dhar, senior adviser at Fathom Consulting.

"This has fuelled rapid economic growth but also capital misallocation, property speculation, and financial sector fragility."

Analysts expect Beijing to announce more stimulus soon. The measures could range from central bank interest rate cuts and liquidity injections to exporter tax rebates, property market support and perhaps even higher budget deficit and debt issuance than flagged at an annual Parliament meet in March.

Last month's "restrained" stimulus measures "were a calculation, not an oversight," said Ruby Osman, China expert at the Tony Blair Institute for Global Change.

"Beijing has purposefully kept more in reserve" – Reuters

comment publicly on the announcement, but exporters said they were disappointed and relieved in equal measure.

"The tariffs slapped on India are definitely both high and higher than expected, which will hurt demand for our exports," Ajay Sahai, director general of the Federation of Indian Export Organisations, told AFP.

But Sahai also pointed out that India was hit with lower levies than regional manufacturing competition.

"Many countries which we compete with globally, including China, Indonesia, and Vietnam etc have been hit harder than us."

"That opens up space for us to gain in terms of market share. But at the same time, if more countries retaliate and global trade gets hurt, this isn't good for anyone."

Global Trade Research Initiative, a New Delhi-based think tank, said the tariff shakeup "presents an opportunity for India to strengthen its position in global trade and manufacturing."

It added that India had been handed a "competitive advantage" in several key sectors, highlighting textiles and garments with high tariffs slapped on Chinese and Bangladeshi rivals. – AFP

## Thailand has 'strong plan' to handle tariffs: PM

**BANGKOK:** Thailand has a "strong plan" to handle new trade tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump and hopes to negotiate a reduction, the country's prime minister said yesterday.

Paetongtarn Shinawatra said the government would take steps to mitigate the impact of the 36% levy announced by Washington as part of sweeping tariffs that have sent global markets tumbling.

Trump escalated his trade war on Wednesday with 10% tariffs on imports from around the world and harsh extra levies on key trading partners.

Southeast Asian countries with a significant trade surplus with the United States came in for harsh treatment, with Vietnam being hit with a 46% levy and Cambodia 49%.

"We have a strong plan," Paetongtarn told reporters.

"We have prepared several steps, including sending our permanent secretary to talk with them ... I think we can still negotiate."

Thailand's Deputy Finance Minister Julapun Amornvivat said the government was not surprised to be hit with tariffs, though the level was higher than anticipated.

"We have to negotiate with understanding, not aggressive talk, but we have to talk which products they feel are unfair and we have to see whether we can adjust," he said in a video interview posted online.

Finance Ministry officials will meet to discuss steps to mitigate the immediate impact, he said, as well as drawing up guidelines for future negotiations.

"The goal is to develop a trade balance proposal that is substantial enough to incentivise the US to engage in negotiations with Thailand, ensuring minimal disruption to farmers, consumers, and businesses," Paetongtarn said in an X post yesterday.

The Thai government is ready to discuss trade balance adjustments with Washington at the "earliest opportunity," she said.

But analysts were sceptical.

"Thailand's negotiations may be ineffective since every country is affected by the tariffs," said Jitipol Puksamatanan, head of global investment strategy at Finansia Syrus Securities.

He suggested that Thailand should seek to expand exports to other countries, such as China.

Investment house CGS International said in a briefing note that it expected the tariffs to wipe between 0.9% and 1.2% off Thai GDP in 2025. – AFP

## EU to target American online services: France

**PARIS:** The European Union is "ready for a trade war" with the United States and plans to "attack online services" in response to Donald Trump's new tariffs, the French government spokesman said yesterday.

"We are pretty sure that we are indeed going to see an adverse effect on production," Sophie Primas told broadcaster RTL, expressing particular concern about the "strong" impact on wine and spirits.

"We have a whole range of tools and we are ready for this trade war."

"Then we will look at how we can support our production industries."

Trump "thinks he is the master of the world", Primas added.

"It is an imperialist stance that we had somewhat forgotten about, but which is returning with great force and great determination."

Primas said the EU was preparing a two-stage response, with "an initial response", to be put in place around mid-April, concerning aluminium and steel.

Then the EU will target "all products and services", with the measures probably ready at the end of April, she said, adding this was still being discussed.

"But we are also going to attack services. For example, online services, which are not taxed today but could be," Primas said.

The EU's response could also concern "access to our procurement contracts", she said.

President Emmanuel Macron will meet this week with representatives of French sectors "impacted by the tariff measures" announced by Trump, his office said. – AFP

## India eyes opportunity to gain market share

**MUMBAI:** India yesterday reacted cautiously to US President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs with exporters saying the flat 26% on exports imposed on fifth-largest economy could have been far worse.

Indian stocks fell at the open of trading yesterday, with the benchmark Nifty index trading nearly 0.3% down in morning trading.

Trump said that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a "great friend" but that he had not been "treating us right", speaking while unveiling the tariffs at the White House on Wednesday.

The Indian government has yet to



## Nintendo to launch Switch 2 console on June 5

**PARIS:** Nintendo's new Switch console will be launched on June 5, the Japanese video game giant said on Wednesday, starting the countdown for one of the most hotly awaited gaming launches in years.

Millions of fans tuned in on YouTube for an hour-long presentation about the Switch 2 – an update to the 2017 original model that has sold around 150 million units.

But shares in the Kyoto-based firm tanked nearly 6% in early Japanese trade yesterday, partly on profit-taking but also as investors apparently balked at the gadget's high price.

The shares' fall also followed US President Donald Trump's announcement of sweeping global tariffs, including 46% on Vietnam and 49% on Cambodia, where Nintendo has reportedly shifted an increasing amount of production in recent years.

The Switch 2 retains many of its predecessor's features, including its detachable "Joy-Con" controllers.

But it comes with a larger, higher resolution screen and quicker processing speeds.

After giving a glimpse of the new console in mid-January, Nintendo provided further details

about some of the changes including a "C" button that activates "GameChat", allowing players to speak with one another while playing.

"Even when you're apart, you can play games and hang out as if you were together in the same room," the firm said.

Nintendo also announced a new version of its best-selling Mario Kart game, *Mario Kart World*, which allows players to go exploring off-grid.

Other notable new games, intended to drive uptake of the more expensive hardware, include *Donkey Kong Bonanza* and *Kirby Air Riders*.

They will be priced around 30% higher than

existing Switch games, while the console will also be at least a third more than its predecessor.

The recommended retail price is listed as US\$449.99 in the US, £395.99 in Britain and €469.99 in France – which quickly became a sore point among commentators on game sites and forums.

The Switch 2 will have eight times the memory of the first Switch at 256 GB, and a screen that measures 7.9 inches versus 6.2 inches for the original.

Despite recent diversification efforts into movies and theme parks, Nintendo's core business still relies heavily on video games. – AFP

## Asian healthcare stocks defy market slump

### ▶ Trump temporarily exempts pharmaceutical products from tariffs

**MUMBAI:** Asian healthcare stocks surged yesterday, led by Indian generic drugmakers, defying the drop in the broader market, after US President Donald Trump's wide-ranging reciprocal tariffs exempted pharmaceutical products.

Trump imposed a 10% tariff on most US imports as well as much higher levies on dozens of rivals and allies alike, but temporarily exempted some goods, including pharmaceuticals, benefiting major exporters like India and Japan.

The US bought a third, or US\$9 billion (RM39 billion) worth, of all Indian pharma exports last fiscal year, most of which were of generic drugs that are cheaper, copycat versions of top-selling medicines.

Japan's exports to the US were about US\$6.34 billion in 2023, according to data and research firm OEC.

Indian pharma companies, which rely on the US for a major portion of their revenue, "can breathe easy for now," Jefferies' analysts said, but cautioned that tariffs at a later date could not be ruled out.

The country's pharma stocks index rallied more than 3%, set for its biggest one-day gain in 10 months, while the benchmark Nifty 50 was down 0.25%.

Sun Pharma, Cipla and Dr Reddy's, India's top three drugmakers by sales, gained between 3% and 6%.

In Japan, Takeda and Daiichi Sankyo advanced 2% and 2.7%, respectively, while the benchmark Nikkei index sank to an eight-month low.

The Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council of India, a government-backed trade body, said the US exemption would strengthen the healthcare partnership between the countries.

Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance secretary general Sudarshan Jain touted "the critical role of cost-effective, life-saving generic medicines in public health, economic stability, and national security."

Besides selling generic drugs in the United States, Indian firms also offer contract manufacturing services to American companies, a market that is expected to surge sevenfold by 2035, according to Boston Consulting Group. – Agencies

## Japan's Suntory aims to sell local to avoid US duties

**TOKYO:** Japanese drinks maker Suntory is looking to shift where it markets its spirits across the globe as it girds for a potential trade war, its new president said yesterday.

The company's soft drinks are mainly produced in their destination markets, but spirits such as tequila must be made in specific locations and are more vulnerable to excise duties, Nobuhiro Torii said.

That means making bourbon for the American market in the US, and Japanese whisky domestically for local consumption.

"We will produce and try to sell locally," said Torii, who took over as president at the closely held conglomerate on March 25.

"That's the key strategy with the tariffs," US President Donald Trump revealed on Wednesday a broad set of new tariffs on trading partners, including a 24% levy on Japanese goods.

Trade Minister Yoichi Muto said yesterday Japan is leaving all options open to respond to Trump's new tariffs.

The trade rift presents a dilemma for Japanese companies like Suntory, which has spent decades expanding its global footprint as a hedge against an ageing, shrinking consumer market at home.

The group also makes Orangina soda in Europe, as well as Pepsi drinks and canned coffee in Southeast Asia. – Reuters

## Wise targets double-digit pre-tax profit margin by 2026

**LONDON:** Wise plc expects to deliver underlying income growth of 15-20% and underlying pre-tax profit margin at the upper end of its target range in its 2026 financial year, citing strong progress on its "money without borders" vision.

The British money transfer firm, which hosted a London-based capital markets event yesterday, said it was targeting underlying pre-tax profit margin of 13-16% over the medium term and an underlying income compound annual growth rate of 15-20%.

"Wise customers have moved more than half a trillion across borders and trust us to now hold more than £20 billion of their money," the firm said in a statement.

Yesterday's presentation included preliminary figures for its 2025 financial year that showed 21% growth year-on-year in active customers to 15.5 million, a 22% rise in cross-border volumes to £145 billion and a 16% rise in underlying income to £1.36 billion.

Wise said it expects to share the outcome of a review of its listing arrangements with investors in the coming weeks. – Reuters



Nike shoes on display at a sporting goods store in New York. – REUTERS/SPIC

## Nike, Adidas and Puma shares slide after tariffs hit Vietnam

**HANOI:** Shares in Nike, Adidas and Puma dropped sharply yesterday after US President Donald Trump imposed a raft of new tariffs, including on Vietnam, Indonesia and China, key sourcing markets for the sportswear companies.

Vietnam was targeted with a 46% tariff rate, Cambodia with 49%, Bangladesh with 37% and Indonesia with 32%, while Trump hiked tariffs on China by an extra 34 percentage points, after earlier 20% tariffs.

The tariffs could wipe more than 10 percentage points off margins across the sector,

as well as hitting sales as inflation worries dent consumer spending, said Felix Dennl, analyst at Metzler in Frankfurt.

"Sporting goods companies are likely to respond with price hikes in the United States," Dennl said.

Frankfurt-listed shares of Nike were down 6.5% on the day, while Adidas shares dropped 9% to an almost one-year low and Puma shares fell 8.5%, hitting their lowest level since November 2016.

Nike produced half its footwear and 28% of

its apparel in Vietnam in its 2024 financial year, while Adidas relied on Vietnam for 39% of its footwear and 18% of its apparel last year.

Indonesia and Cambodia are also key manufacturing hubs for Adidas, producing 32% of its footwear and 23% of its apparel, respectively.

Other retailers that rely on Asian factories were also hit.

Shares in Sweden's H&M, which sources from China and Bangladesh mainly, were down 4.5%, while Zara owner Inditex fell 3%. – Reuters



# MARKET ROUND-UP: APRIL 3

## Bursa Trade Statistic






Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

3 APRIL 2025


Retail (21.80%)		Institution (37.25%)		Foreign (40.95%)	
Net (in RM mil.)		Net (in RM mil.)		Net (in RM mil.)	
<b>-1.55</b>		<b>+64.92</b>		<b>-63.38</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.)
394.34	395.89	707.63	642.71	710.41	773.78

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

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

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

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## Bursa Indices

INDEX		CHANGE
FBMEMAS	11,337.56	-52.76
FBMKLCI	1,518.91	-7.61
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	481.20	-3.31
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCT	149.79	-2.10
CONSTRUCTION	264.36	-0.07
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,498.91	-73.39
ENERGY	735.14	-9.91
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	484.15	+2.95
HEALTH CARE	1,874.99	+36.80
TRANSPORTATION & L	1,006.92	-11.67
PROPERTY	994.37	-2.65
PLANTATION	7,405.53	-2.58
FBMSHA	11,068.45	-66.52
FBMACE	4,708.31	-57.75
TECHNOLOGY	48.52	-0.80

**TURNOVER: 2.513 bil** **VALUE: RM1.811 bil**

## FBM KLCI dragged down by selling in key heavyweights

**BURSA** Malaysia ended lower yesterday, with the benchmark index declining 0.5%, weighed down by selected heavyweights led by Press Metal, IHH Healthcare, and Tenaga Nasional.

Press Metal shed 16 sen to RM4.87, IHH Healthcare dipped 14 sen to RM6.75, and TNB slipped 18 sen to RM13.58. These stocks resulted in a 6.12-point decline in the benchmark index.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI slid 7.61 points to 1,518.91 versus Wednesday's close of 1,526.52.

Losers thumped gainers 548 to 357, while 448 counters were unchanged, 994 untraded and eight suspended.

Turnover rose to 2.51 billion units valued at RM1.81 billion against Wednesday's 2.37 billion units valued at RM2.03 billion.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said the 24% US reciprocal tariff on Malaysia added pressure to its export-driven economy, particularly for the electronics and manufacturing sectors.

"The FBM KLCI remains well supported, but investor sentiment has become cautious due to foreign outflows. In comparison, other Asia-Pacific countries, such as Cambodia and Vietnam, which face even higher tariffs, are experiencing larger relative shocks," he added.

Heavyweights Public Bank added one sen to RM4.40, MISC jumped 17 sen to RM7.31, RHB Bank was flat at RM6.90, Maybank dropped six sen to RM10.26, TNB shed 18 sen to RM13.58, CIMB eased one sen to RM7.13, and Petronas Gas trimmed 10 sen to RM16.78.

Among the actives, Top Glove advanced four sen to 84.5 sen, Supermax increased six sen to 77.5 sen, T7 edged up half-a-sen to 32.5 sen, Sapura Energy inched down half-a-sen to 4.5 sen, and V.S. Industry eased 2.5 sen to 82 sen. — Bernama

## Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWCM	0.065	-0.030	-31.58	1,536,447
HSI-CWCE	0.160	-0.040	-20.00	941,884
HSI-PWD2	0.080	+0.010	+14.29	852,434
VELOCITY-WB	0.045	+0.010	+28.57	612,000
TOPGLOV	0.845	+0.040	+4.97	578,478
SUPERMX	0.775	+0.060	+8.39	551,774
SAPNRG	0.045	-0.005	-10.00	478,618
T7GLOBAL	0.325	+0.005	+1.56	447,263
HSI-CWEO	0.095	-0.020	-17.39	420,674
HSI-CWEJ	0.110	-0.025	-18.52	369,073
VS	0.820	-0.025	-2.96	320,075
PERTAMA	0.090	-0.010	-10.00	310,593
HSI-PWD5	0.130	+0.025	+23.81	310,108
HARTA	2.020	+0.160	+8.60	257,145
T7GLOBAL-WD	0.060	-	-	255,059
HSTECH-H17	0.075	+0.005	+7.14	253,000
CIMB	7.130	-0.010	-0.14	252,510
MYEG	0.930	-	-	248,480
ELRIODE	0.465	-	-	248,308
KOSSAN	1.800	+0.160	+9.76	233,180



## Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
DLADY	29.880	+0.980	273
NIKKEI-HM	2.130	+0.230	75
MISC	7.310	+0.170	25,194
SP500-H53	1.130	+0.165	696
HARTA	2.020	+0.160	257,145
KOSSAN	1.800	+0.160	233,180
PERSTIM	2.150	+0.150	10
PANAMY	13.660	+0.140	122
NIKKEI-HK	0.625	+0.115	1,560
GESHEN	4.280	+0.110	109
HSI-PWFA	0.815	+0.100	65
VSTECs	3.000	+0.100	2,148
SCC	0.290	+0.095	4
HSI-PWFF	0.855	+0.085	85,784
TANCO-WC	1.700	+0.080	101,489
NDX-HK	0.665	+0.075	11,315
HSI-PWFE	0.625	+0.070	21,866
KAMDAR	0.260	+0.065	23,455
HSI-PWFO	0.435	+0.060	7,683
QUALITY	1.220	+0.060	1

## Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HARTA-C20	0.010	+100.00	22,988
HONGSENG	0.010	+100.00	18,341
KOSSAN-C72	0.020	+100.00	1,495
SKPRES-WB	0.010	+100.00	3
SUPERMX-C4H	0.010	+100.00	10,000
SUPERMX-C4P	0.020	+100.00	13,730
SUPERMX-C4R	0.030	+100.00	44,607
SUPERMX-C4N	0.065	+62.50	172,884
SUPERMX-C4K	0.070	+55.56	88,239
KOSSAN-C78	0.115	+53.33	2,650
FBMKLCI-HA2	0.015	+50.00	1,200
HM-WC	0.015	+50.00	670
INARI-C2Z	0.015	+50.00	1,241
MTRONIC	0.015	+50.00	494
PADINI-C16	0.015	+50.00	1
PCHEM-C1F	0.015	+50.00	15,101
SCC	0.290	+48.72	4
HARTA-C2S	0.090	+38.46	4,500
YENHER-WA	0.220	+37.50	1
COMFORT-WB	0.020	+33.33	14,015

## World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	42,225.32	235.36	0.56
S&P 500 [US]	5,670.97	37.9	0.67
NASDAQ [US]	17,601.05	151.16	0.87
NYSE [US]	19,532.75	134.47	0.69
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,191.02	-112.93	-2.13
FTSE 100 [UK]	8,490.23	-118.25	-1.37
DAX [GER]	22,021.90	-368.94	-1.65
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	34,735.93	-989.94	-2.77
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	2,568.61	-81.68	-3.08
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	22,849.81	-352.72	-1.52
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,861.50	-22.89	-0.59
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	183.49	0.02	0.01
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	3,342.01	-8.12	-0.24
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,486.70	-19.16	-0.76
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	76,302.63	-314.81	-0.41
ASX 200 [AUS]	7,859.73	-74.82	-0.94
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,052.69	-80.45	-0.99
FBM KLCI	1,518.91	-7.61	-0.5
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	3,944.82	-9.39	-0.24
WTI [US\$/BBL]	68.99	-2.72	-3.79
BRENT [US\$/BBL]	72.26	-2.69	-3.59
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	3,151.00	-15.2	-0.48
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	33.1	-1.54	-4.46
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	967.41	-9.84	-1.01
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	492.65	-11.4	-2.26
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,700.50	7.5	0.08
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	452.5	-5.25	-1.15
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	535.25	-4	-0.74
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	47.57	-0.93	-1.92
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	9,188.00	220	2.45
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	186.2	-7.6	-3.92

As at 5pm, April 3

## Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	70.100	-2.560	2,395
XIAOMI-C34	0.515	-0.305	2,000
HLFG	17.160	-0.260	713
HLIND	14.000	-0.260	741
F&N	23.900	-0.200	230
HSI-CWCN	0.370	-0.190	105
TENAGA	13.580	-0.180	18,219
HSI-CWCL	0.240	-0.175	2,144
VITROX	2.790	-0.170	20,708
AJI	14.340	-0.160	281
BURSA	7.800	-0.160	4,961
PMETAL	4.870	-0.160	68,571
HSI-CWCU	0.560	-0.150	890
CHINAETF-MYR	5.330	-0.150	335
GREATEC	1.560	-0.140	61,457
HLBANK	20.240	-0.140	5,911
HSI-CWCV	0.800	-0.140	60
IHH	6.750	-0.140	24,209
MSC-CS	0.200	-0.140	7,953
PENTA	2.780	-0.140	26,974

## Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
MYEG-C7G	0.005	-83.33	500
MAYBANKCIX	0.035	-76.67	10,000
VS-C95	0.065	-56.67	500
SIME-C90	0.020	-55.56	11,509
CIMB-C1P	0.005	-50.00	5,520
CIMB-C1W	0.005	-50.00	6,070
DAYANG-C45	0.005	-50.00	400
GENTINGC3L	0.005	-50.00	62,938
HARTA-C2P	0.005	-50.00	26,892
INARI-C3J	0.075	-50.00	2,300
NEXGRAM-WD	0.005	-50.00	3
OCR-WE	0.005	-50.00	1,300
PCHEM-C1D	0.005	-50.00	5,052
SIMEPROP-C36	0.010	-50.00	1,770
SUPERMX-C4J	0.005	-50.00	15,030
TOPGLOV-C4R	0.010	-50.00	1,201
VS-C93	0.015	-50.00	5,000
ZENTECH	0.005	-50.00	360
HSI-CWCL	0.240	-42.17	2,144
NIKKEI-CM	0.035	-41.67	400

# MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

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

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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## Government tops Q1 bond issuances with RM51.5 billion

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government remained the top overall bond issuer with RM51.5 billion, while CIMB Bank Bhd led corporate bond issuances at RM2.87 billion, according to Bond Pricing Agency Malaysia Sdn Bhd's (BPAM) Bond League Tables for Q1'25.

The BPAM report showed that Cagamas Bhd dominated the sukuk segment with RM6.23 billion.

The report, released quarterly, serves as a vital resource for market participants aiding in research, marketing, and strategic profiling, and showcasing key trends and top performers in Malaysia's bond market in Q1 of this year.

In trading activity, the government recorded the highest volume at RM331.05 billion, followed by Cagamas in corporate bonds (RM0.94 billion) and Danalinfra Nasional Bhd in sukuk (RM5.97 billion).

Malaysian Trustees Bhd retained its position as the top bond trustee, handling RM18.69 billion across 137 issues, while CIMB Investment Bank Bhd was the top lead arranger by value (RM17.06 billion), and Maybank Investment Bank Bhd led by number of issuances, standing at 135.

Compared to Q4'24, the government increased bond issuances by RM20 billion, Cagamas's sukuk issuances rose by 40%, and government bond trading volumes grew by 34%.

BPAM, established in 2004 and accredited by the Securities Commission Malaysia, continues to provide critical pricing and benchmark services to over 130 financial institutions, reinforcing transparency in the fixed-income market. As of June 30, 2021, BPAM officially becomes a wholly owned subsidiary of RAM Holdings Bhd.

## Ringgit closes slightly higher against dollar in late comeback

**THE** ringgit, which faced pressure against the US dollar following US President Donald Trump's announcements on global reciprocal tariffs, closed relatively stable yesterday, said an analyst.

At 6pm, the ringgit traded marginally higher at 4.4400/4460 against the greenback from Wednesday's close of 4.4510/4565.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the ringgit traded weaker in the morning session against the US dollar to RM4.4822 but regained ground by late afternoon.

He said traders, investors, and analysts were weighing the potential fallout due to the tariff announcements.

"In response, the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry expressed openness to engage in discussions with the US, signalling Malaysia's pragmatic stance. A tit-for-tat approach, after all, could backfire-import tariffs essentially function as a domestic tax burden."

Meanwhile, the ringgit traded lower against major currencies yesterday.

It declined against the Japanese yen to 3.0289/0332 from 2.9783/9821, weakened against the euro to 4.8969/9035 from 4.8098/8157 and decreased against the British pound to 5.8470/8549 from 5.7632/7703 on Wednesday.

On the other hand, the local note was higher against Asean currencies except for the Singapore dollar.

It rose against the Thai baht to 12.9529/9769 from 13.0260/0490, and gained against the Indonesian rupiah at 265.1/265.6 from 266.3/266.7.

However, the ringgit fell against the Singapore dollar to 3.3229/3276 from 3.3150/3193 at Wednesday's close. — Bernama

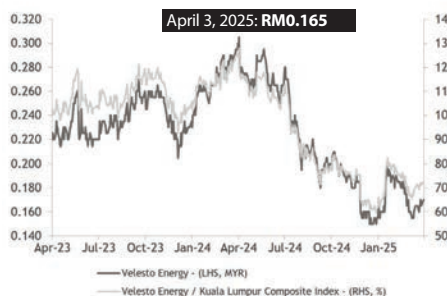
## Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.5475	4.4135	4.4035
1 Australian Dollar	2.8690	2.7520	2.7360
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3750	3.2760	3.2680
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1890	3.1040	3.0920
1 Euro	4.9570	4.7980	4.7780
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6180	2.5210	2.5050
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3750	3.2760	3.2680
1 Sterling Pound	5.9350	5.7500	5.7300
1 Swiss Franc	5.2120	4.9930	4.9780
100 UAE Dirham	125.2600	118.8000	118.6000
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.8210	3.5580	3.3580
100 Chinese Renminbi	63.0000	60.3400	N/A
100 Danish Krone	68.1200	62.6900	62.4900
100 Hongkong Dollar	59.0400	56.1100	55.9100
100 Indian Rupee	5.4100	5.0800	4.8800
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0284	0.0257	0.0207
100 Japanese Yen	3.0720	2.9750	2.9650
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	44.8600	41.2600	41.0600
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6500	1.5500	1.3500
100 Philippine Peso	8.0600	7.6000	7.4000
100 Qatar Riyal	126.1500	119.7600	119.5600
100 Saudi Riyal	122.5800	116.3600	116.1600
100 South Africa Rand	24.9600	22.5500	22.3500
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5800	1.4500	1.2500
100 Swedish Krona	47.5100	43.2600	43.0600
100 Thai Baht	13.8000	12.2400	11.8400

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

## Velesto Energy Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM0.19



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

**WE** gathered that Velesto's tenderbook increased by >30% to RM4.3 billion in Jan 2025 (from RM3.2 billion in July 2024), due to an increase in tenders for N3 & N8 in Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam. Winning regional jobs could re-rate Velesto's share price as it could lift its utilisation rates and offer earnings visibility from 2H'25 till end-2026. We believe such wins would demonstrate that Velesto is regionally competitive and should be able to mitigate concerns of fewer domestic jobs amid expectation of a Petronas capex downcycle.

Based on Velesto's media release on Feb 27, the group expects its N5 rig to commence work by June 2025. We expect this to be a LT job from an oil major with local operations, which could last till end-2026. As updated by Velesto, our revised blended UR assumptions for FY25-26 tweaked to 74%/81% (from 76%/81% previously) to account for slightly longer idle periods for N3 & N5, while N8's job has been extended by another 2 months by Carigali-Hess.

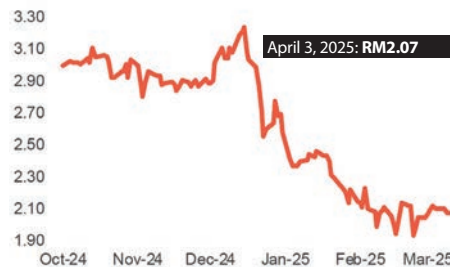
On March 25, Velesto announced a proposed capital reduction exercise, to position for increased future distribution to shareholders. As at end-FY24, the group has fully repaid its term loans and is now in a net cash position of RM69.6 million (5% of current market cap).

Key risks include: (i) a severe decline in crude oil prices; (ii) the group not being able to secure contracts, resulting in a decline in utilisation rates; and (iii) not being able to lock-in higher DCRs for future jobs.

BUY with RM0.19 TP. — **Maybank Investment Bank, April 3**

## IJM Corporation Bhd

Outperform. Target price: RM3.80



Source: PublicInvest Research

**IJM Corp** has signed a 20-year lease with international law firm Simmons & Simmons LLP (Simmons & Simmons), making them the anchor tenant at 25 Finsbury Circus, UK. Under the lease, Simmons & Simmons will occupy 62% of the building across multiple floors, with the option to increase its space to up to 80%. This lease highlights the property's strong appeal and is expected to enhance IJM's international investment property portfolio, generating a steady stream of recurring income.

25 Finsbury Circus, formerly known as 1-5 London Wall Buildings, is located in London's central business district. It was acquired for £72.5 million (RM417 million) in Feb this year, and is undergoing a comprehensive £150 million (RM853 million) refurbishment and reconfiguration which will increase its total footprint by 26%. Upon completion, the Grade II-listed building will feature approximately 378,000 sq ft of gross internal area and net lettable area of 251,068 sq ft, with a projected GDB of approximately £420 million.

Simmons & Simmons is a global law firm with 129 years of history, 21 offices worldwide, over 1,300 lawyers and 1,000 business services professionals.

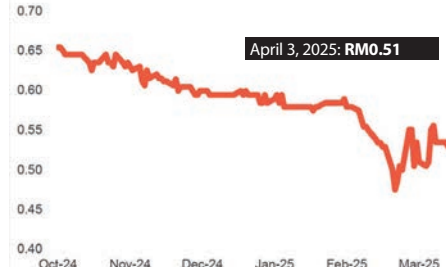
The 20-years lease offers stable and recurring income, and paves way for redevelopment works to begin. Although the lease details are still light at this juncture, we estimate the asset could yield about 7%, based on the prime rents ranging from £88 psf to £150 psf.

While we view this development positively, we keep our estimate unchanged for now, pending the completion of the refurbishment, which is expected to take 36 months.

OUTPERFORM with RM3.80 TP. — **PublicInvest Research, April 3**

## Optimax Holdings Bhd

Outperform. Target price: RM0.83



Source: PublicInvest Research

**OPTIMAX'S** revenue grew 9.2% YoY to RM34.3 million in Q4'24, driven primarily by higher surgical volumes from newly established satellite clinics. Despite the topline growth, core net profit declined 3.3% YoY to RM3.1 million, attributed to increased marketing efforts aimed at raising awareness for the newly launched satellite clinics. Meanwhile, PBT declined 3.8% YoY, primarily due to higher operating costs associated with newly licensed ACCs and satellite clinics, including pre-operational staff expenses and depreciation charges. The group's overall utilisation rate remained steady at 60%.

Optimax aims to accelerate growth in its foreign patient segment, with contribution to revenue rising steadily from 10% in FY23 to 15-20% in FY24, with a target of reaching 30% in FY25. Optimax is capitalising on the growing demand for medical tourism by attracting foreign patients. Typically, this segment is more profitable as it could fetch 10-15% premium pricing compared to local patients. In Cambodia, where operations commenced in May 2024, Optimax is currently performing an average of four surgeries per month, with 10-15 cases per surgical round. Based on our channel checks, the group charges a 30-40% premium for Cambodia patients relative to local pricing for refractive surgery.

Optimax is expanding its presence into Jakarta, Indonesia, having secured five shop lots totaling approximately 10,000 sq ft, with operations targeted to commence by end of FY25. The group is required to recruit Indonesian doctors exclusively, as Malaysian doctors are permitted to practice in Indonesia for a maximum of four years.

OUTPERFORM with RM0.83 TP. — **PublicInvest Research, April 3**



ONE of the most stressful and frustrating parts of travelling is the planning. Doing all the research, scrolling through reviews, comparing your options, it can make your head spin, especially if you are gearing up for a festive family trip.

Here is the good news: It has already been done. All you have to do is book the flights and pack the bags!

#### Check into plush hospitality

For your stay, look no further than Royal Plaza On Scotts. Not only is it a 100% halal-certified hotel, but it is also an absolute haven for Muslim travellers and it has just about everything a family could need. Its location on Orchard Road makes it accessible – the rooms are gorgeous, large and comfortable and you can have an easy, delicious breakfast at its halal buffet before heading out on the own.

Once you are done exploring the city, you will love coming back and tucking the kids in before relaxing in the walk-in rainshower and sinking into the plush beds.

#### Roller disco fun

While the kids are full of energy and buzzing, strap on some wheels and have a blast whizzing around at Hi Roller Indoor Skating Rink. At this roller disco straight out of the 70s, you can have a good time gliding (and possibly falling) together.

Parents can enjoy the nostalgic vibes while kids can pick up an exciting new skill and potentially a future hobby. But, do not fret if you have no idea how to skate, because there are certified instructors available – so, anyone can learn.

#### Refuel with good grub

After all that adrenaline, it is time to grab a bite and at the Summer Folks Cafe and Steakhouse, there is an option for everyone.

Whether you opt for the brunch classic of the simple steak and eggs, splash out for the grilled Angus striploin or try out the refreshing and bright summer salad, you are sure to have a lovely lunch.

For the kids, there is an adorable mini-me menu that includes a Junior Tomato Pasta set and even a Custard French Toast set for your little ones with a sweet tooth!

#### Dine surrounded by nature

Alternatively, for a refined culinary

# Family holiday fun in Singapore

► Head across to Lion City for Muslim-friendly vacation



Royal Plaza on Scotts.

experience out in nature (especially if you opted for the Waterplay activities), head over to The Halia at Singapore Botanic Gardens. With lunch being served on weekdays from 12pm to 4pm, and brunch being offered on weekends and public holidays from 10am to 4pm, this eatery offers a gorgeous view of the plants and flowers in the Botanic Gardens that children will love exploring while you wait for your food to arrive.

With highlights such as the tangy, saucy chilli crab spaghetti and the BBQ pulled beef dip served with bread and prawn crackers, you will have a hearty family meal with a menu large enough to accommodate even the pickiest of eaters.

#### Splashing good time

After your meal, you can cool off at the newly renovated Waterplay. Located in the Singapore Botanic Gardens at the Jacob Ballas Children's Garden, this water park has just completed its



renovation period.

All of the new-and-improved features and amenities in the space are themed after the water cycle, where the kids can learn and play by exploring simulated rain with umbrella fountains and a splash bucket, or watch water flow

from hill to ground in the splash zones. The park is suitable for children aged between two and 12, who must be supervised by an accompanying adult at all times, but the best part of all is that admission does not cost a single cent.

#### Shoppers' paradise

Now that everyone's bellies are full, it is the ideal time for some retail therapy.

For your next open house, you have to make sure the whole family has a matching set of outfits, right?

With that in mind, head over to Baju by Oniatta, open from 12pm to 6pm, Tuesday to Saturday.

This outlet truly revives the art of *batik*, marrying style and heritage to create stunning, wearable pieces for the modern Muslimah.

Each piece, uniquely and vibrantly patterned, tells a story of cultural pride and artistry, celebrating sustainable craftsmanship to boot.

In addition, its Galeri Tokokita space is designed to educate and honour the cultural legacy of artisans in the broader Indonesian and Malay world, so it is a good learning opportunity for the little ones.

#### Sweet endings

After such a long day, it is time for a little sweet treat. For desserts that are equal parts Instagram-worthy and irresistibly tasty, Boms & Buns has you covered.

Open from 11am to 7pm on weekdays and 9am to 7pm on weekends, this dreamy eatery offers piping hot, beautifully baked buns and delightfully light, airy *choux* pastry "boms" to satisfy even the pickiest of snackers.

A pro-tip: Pop by from Thursday to Sunday, where they put out a roster of ever-changing "Special Bakes".

Not to mention, with ready-made sets such as the Bombag, holding two pairs of Nutella and raspberry lychee "boms", you have got the ideal gifts to bring back for friends and relatives.

At the heart of it all, no matter where you go or what you do, you can be sure that you and your family will go on amazing adventures and make wonderful memories just about anywhere in the Lion City.

The best part? There is still so much to explore, and more and more hidden Muslim-friendly gems are popping up every day. Guess it is already time to plan a return trip!



Summer Cafe and Steakhouse.



The Halia at the Singapore Botanic Gardens.



Boms & Buns.



Baju by Oniatta.





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# From pixels to paradise

**N**EW ZEALAND is calling, and for the first time ever, you can explore it like never before – first in *Minecraft*, then in real life. In a collaboration between Tourism New Zealand, Warner Bros Pictures and Mojang Studios, a new *Aotearoa New Zealand Minecraft* DLC (downloadable content) has transformed six of the country's most breathtaking locations into an interactive adventure.

Whether it is rafting through glowworm-lit caves, spotting rare birds on a predator-free island or paddling a traditional Maori *waka* along golden coastlines, this world-first destination DLC allows players to experience the wonders of New Zealand in-game – before taking that next step to visit them in real life.

Explore the six iconic locations – both in *Minecraft* and in real life:

## 1. Waitomo Caves (Waikato) – Glowworms and underground thrills

The word “Waitomo” comes from the Maori words *wai* (water) and *tomo* (hole), describing the caves’ underground rivers that flow beneath the limestone landscape.

### Minecraft experience:

- 🔥 Navigate a 2D platform-style cave parkour run.
- 🔥 Take photos of stunning stalactites, stalagmites, and glowworm constellations.
- 🔥 Finish with a black water rafting experience, floating through an illuminated underground river.

### Real-life adventure:

- 🔥 Waitomo Glowworm Caves tour: Embark on a guided tour through the Waitomo Glowworm Caves, marvelling at thousands of glowworms that create a starry underground sky.
- 🔥 Ruakuri Cave exploration: Discover the intricate limestone formations and underground waterfalls of Ruakuri Cave, accessible via a unique spiral entrance.
- 🔥 Black-water rafting: For thrill-seekers, experience black-water rafting through subterranean rivers, navigating through a labyrinth of caves illuminated by glowworms.

## 2. Rotorua (Bay of Plenty) – Geothermal wonders and Maori culture

Rotorua is home to the largest active geyser in the Southern Hemisphere, Pohutu, which erupts up to 20 times a day!

### Minecraft experience:

- 🔥 Run through bubbling geothermal pools and erupting geysers while collecting items.
- 🔥 Watch a once-dormant geyser explode into life as you explore.
- 🔥 Maori *pou* (carved posts) tell Maori stories about the land along the walking paths.

### Real-life adventure:

- 🔥 Wai-O-Tapu Thermal Wonderland: Explore the vibrant geothermal features of Wai-O-Tapu, including the Champagne Pool and Artist's Palette, showcasing a spectrum of colours due to mineral deposits.
- 🔥 Te Puia: Visit Te Puia to experience Maori culture, including traditional carving and weaving, and observe the famous Pohutu Geyser.
- 🔥 White-water rafting at Tutea Falls: Drop down the world's highest commercially rafted waterfall! This 7m drop is an adrenaline-pumping experience that makes Rotorua a top global rafting destination.

## 3. Kapiti Island (Wellington) – New Zealand's ultimate wildlife sanctuary

Kapiti Island is home to over 1,200 little spotted



➤ Play New Zealand in *Minecraft*, then visit for real

People paddling a *waka* near Split Apple Rock.



A seal rests at Abel Tasman.

kiwis, making it one of the best places in the world to see them in the wild!

### Minecraft experience:

- 🔥 Players begin in Okupe, searching for native bird species such as the tui, kereru and the rare kokako.
- 🔥 Some birds will be harder to find, requiring players to adjust the time of day by resting in their hut.

### Real-life adventure:

- 🔥 Kapiti Island Nature Reserve: Take a guided tour and spot rare native birds such as the kaka, hiihi, and takahē.
- 🔥 Maori heritage: Learn from Kapiti Island's *mana whenua* (traditional land guardians) about the island's rich history and conservation efforts.

## 4. Abel Tasman (Nelson/Tasman) – Golden beaches and *waka* journeys

Abel Tasman is home to the clearest waters in New Zealand – Waikoropup Springs has visibility as clear as distilled water!

### Minecraft experience:

- 🔥 Players paddle a *waka tuarua* (double-hulled canoe) through Rakaurua, navigating seal colonies, orca pods and penguin spots.



Kayaking in Torrent Bay at Abel National Park.

- 🔥 A *haka* rhythm game tests their skills in Maori traditions.
- 🔥 The journey ends in a stunning cutscene, flying over Waikoropup Springs, where *Huriwai*, a *Mareikura* (spiritual being), shimmers on the waters.

### Real-life adventure:

- 🔥 Sea kayaking: Paddle through golden beaches and turquoise waters, encountering fur seals, dolphins and blue penguins.
- 🔥 Abel Tasman Coast Track: Hike one of New Zealand's great walks, passing stunning beaches only accessible by foot or boat.
- 🔥 *Waka* tours: Join a guided *waka* journey, learning about Maori paddling traditions and legends.

## 5. Takapo/Tekapo (Mackenzie) – The world's best stargazing spot

Tekapo is part of the Aoraki Mackenzie International Dark Sky Reserve, one of the largest dark sky reserves in the world, where you can see the Milky Way with the naked eye!

### Minecraft experience:

- 🔥 Players drive a 4WD up Cass Valley, reaching different mountaintop observatories.

- 🔥 Each location features a telescope challenge, where players must align their scope to find constellations.
- 🔥 The Dark Sky Project building offers high-resolution imagery of real Tekapo night skies.

### Real-life adventure:

- 🔥 4WD adventures: Explore the Mackenzie high country, home to alpine lakes and breathtaking mountain views.
- 🔥 Mount John Observatory: Join a stargazing tour, where you can observe planets, galaxies and shooting stars through high-powered telescopes.
- 🔥 Tekapo Springs: Soak in natural hot pools under the night sky for a truly magical experience.

## 6. Doubtful Sound – Hidden Fiordland treasure

Doubtful Sound is known as the “Sound of Silence” – it is so remote that there are no towns, roads or phone signal, just pure wilderness.

### Minecraft experience:

- 🔥 Players skipper a boat from a top-down perspective, navigating around rocks, dolphin pods and seals.
- 🔥 At special points of interest, the game shifts to a first-person view, allowing players to photograph the fiords' dramatic landscapes.
- 🔥 The adventure ends in a breathtaking cutscene, where *Paikea*, the legendary whale rider, appears on the back of a whale.

### Real-life adventure:

- 🔥 Fiordland cruise: Explore 40km of dramatic cliffs, mirror-like waters and cascading waterfalls.
- 🔥 Wildlife encounters: Spot bottlenose dolphins, fur seals and Fiordland crested penguins.



Mount John Observatory.

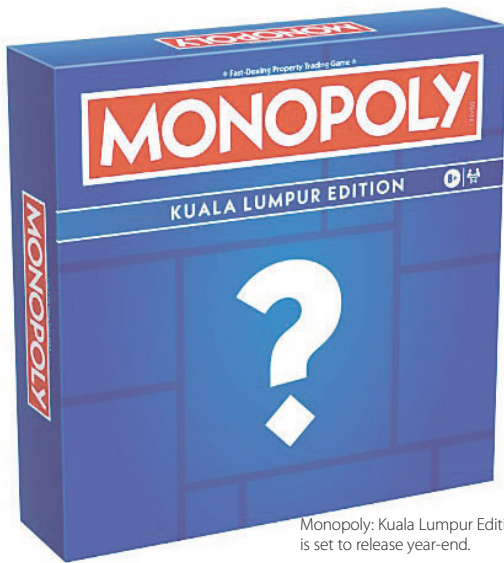


Tekapo Springs.



A vessel sails through Doubtful Sound.





Monopoly: Kuala Lumpur Edition is set to release year-end.

# Monopoly boost for Visit Malaysia 2026

➤ Iconic board game gets KL edition

**T**OURISM Malaysia is collaborating with Winning Moves to produce Monopoly: Kuala Lumpur Edition board game.

The Monopoly: Kuala Lumpur Edition is set to release at the end of 2025 in conjunction with the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign.

The launch of these special edition boards will feature

Malaysia's iconic attractions that showcase a unique way for tourists to connect with the country's rich heritage by focusing on the capital city of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur.

"We are partnering Monopoly to bring a piece of Kuala Lumpur to life through this interactive board game. Hence, this collaboration allows us to reach a wider audience and inspire future travellers by sharing the beauty and adventure of Kuala Lumpur in a completely new way," Tourism Malaysia director general Datuk Manoharan Periasamy said.

This initiative not only ignites curiosity about Kuala Lumpur's

diverse landscapes, lively culture and dynamic communities but also motivates more visitors to explore the city. By promoting Kuala Lumpur through this collaboration, this is seen as a significant step forward in achieving the goals of VM2026.

Winning Moves partnerships manager Jennifer Lau emphasised that the Kuala Lumpur edition will not only be highlighting the city's landmarks but also celebrates its unique identity and vibrant energy.

"We are working with local stakeholders to make this edition a true reflection of the city," she said.

## About 70% of travellers miss sakura bloom

**SPRING** is the season of fleeting beauty and new beginnings where travellers chase the magic of cherry blossoms (also known as sakura), but for seven in 10 travellers from Malaysia, the dream of witnessing sakura in full bloom turns into disappointment, according to a survey by Klook.

Despite planning their trips around the forecasts, the unpredictable shifting weather can affect bloom conditions, which means many arrive too early or too late. But, the charm of cherry blossoms is evident, with nine in 10 travellers planning to catch them this year.

### Japan remains on top

Japan remains as the ultimate destination for cherry blossoms this year, favoured by 78% of travellers. However, the influencing powers of social media have inspired 68% to consider other destinations for their next cherry blossom trip – such as South Korea, Taiwan and Mainland China.

Mainland China saw a seven-fold

increase compared with previous years and emerged as a top destination for 2025, just slightly behind Japan. Interestingly, more than half of spring travellers from Malaysia (57%) are unaware that Mainland China boasts its own season of cherry blossom.

### Cherry blossom struggle

Even with forecasts, cherry blossoms have only a 10-day viewing window, compounded by the recent temperature fluctuations. Japan saw unusual weather patterns, including warmer summers and delayed winters in 2024. This caused Japan's sakura to bloom 15 days later and Mount Fuji was snowless in November, a first in 130 years. Therefore, travellers this year are planning with uncertainty.

### Top challenges when planning a cherry blossom trip:

- Predicting the bloom timing
- Finding best spots for bloom
- Crowded locations

Despite these challenges, the

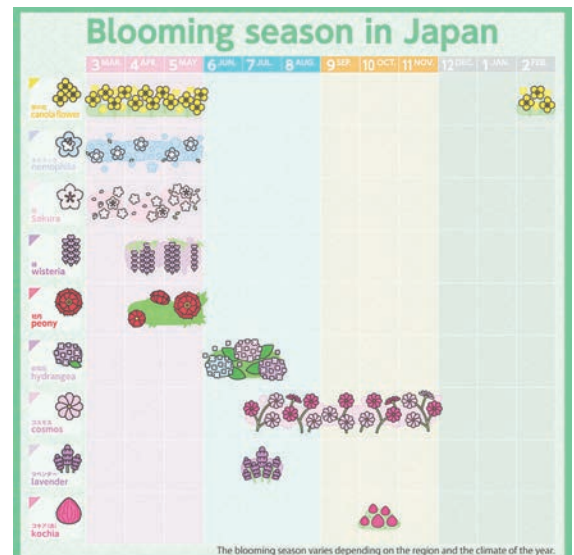
Sakura season is upon us! As visitors flock to Japan to see mesmerising cherry blossoms, did you know there are plenty of other beautiful blooms found in Japan all year round?

This infographic (right) highlights the peak flowering periods in Japan, from cherry blossoms, peonies and wisterias to lavender fields. It provides a quick and accessible guide for nature lovers, travellers and those planning their seasonal visits to Japan.

desire for fleeting experiences is top of the travellers' list.

The survey indicated a 33% increase in spring bookings to North Asia in March 2025, making it one of the most popular seasons to visit.

One in three travellers from Malaysia (35%) are also willing to spend at least 20% more on cherry blossom experiences compared with other activities.



This schedule will help visitors plan their visit to coincide with booking season across Japan.

## Tourist, locals marvel at Tokyo's cherry blossom trees

**TOURISTS** and Japanese locals marvelled at Tokyo's cherry blossom trees earlier this week at the peak of the annual spring season that traditionally represents fresh starts but also life's fleeting impermanence.

Crowds flocked to the city's top locations to take photos and hold picnics under the flowering dark branches bursting with pink and white sakuras.

"Honestly it feels pretty amazing to be here. It is better than we expected. And it only comes around every once in a while and only for a short span of time."

"It is an ephemeral experience and we are pretty happy that we got to be here and to witness it in full bloom too," Filipino tourist Christian Sioting said.

The Japanese Meteorological Agency (JMA) on Sunday declared the country's most common and popular *somei yoshino* variety of cherry blossom tree in full bloom.

Although this year's blooming dates are around the average, the JMA

said climate change and the urban heat island effect are causing sakura to flower approximately 1.2 days earlier every 10 years.

"Seeing photos is another thing, but being here, (to) really see the sakura (with) your eyes. It is really amazing," said Hongkonger Ralf Ng.

A weak yen is attracting more visitors than ever to Japan, with national tourism figures released in January showing a record of about 36.8 million arrivals last year.

Tokyo resident Kayoko Yoshihara, 69, organises annual flower-viewing picnics with her friends, including one held last week as the sakura trees began to bloom.

"After enduring the cold winter, the sakura bloom makes you feel like you are motivated to head towards summer," she said.

Nurse Nanami Kobayashi, 31, said the peak of the blossom season left her without words.

"When the trees are at full bloom, it is so beautiful that you just become speechless," she said. – AFP



Crowds flock to the city's top locations to take photos and hold picnics under Tokyo's cherry trees. – AFP/IC





**I**N just a few weeks, the US tourism outlook has clouded as a result of some of President Donald Trump's policy decisions, which have angered some foreign visitors and prompted fear of a surge in prices and a stronger dollar.

Foreign traveller arrivals in the US are expected to decline by 5.1% in 2025 compared with last year, against a previously projected increase of 8.8%, Tourism Economics said in a report published last month.

Their spending is expected to slide 10.9%.

Since the report's publication, "the situation has deteriorated further", and the outcome will likely be even worse, Tourism Economics president Adam Sacks said, citing the effects of antipathy towards the US.

In recent weeks, the Trump administration has slapped tariffs on Canada, Mexico and China – and threatened to impose them on the EU. A sweeping plan to curb immigration has intensified.

Government bodies such as the US Agency for International Development have been decimated, thousands of civil servants from lawyers to park rangers have been laid off and Trump has drawn up controversial plans for the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

"A situation with polarising Trump administration policies and rhetoric will discourage travel to the US.

"Some organisations will feel pressure to avoid hosting events in the US or sending employees to the US, cutting into business travel," said Tourism Economics, a subsidiary of Oxford Economics.

The World Tourism Forum Institute said a mix of stringent immigration policies, strong dollar and global political tensions could significantly affect international arrivals, "potentially reshaping the nation's tourism sector for years to come".

Among residents of 16 European and Asian countries surveyed by YouGov in December, 35% of respondents said they were less likely to come to the US under Trump, while 22% were more likely.

For tourists from France, Uzbekistan and Argentina interviewed by media in New York's Times Square, Trump's stance has not prompted their plans.

Marianela Lopez and Ailen Hadjikovakis, both 33, nevertheless



Foreign traveller arrivals in the US are expected to decline by 5.1% in 2025, compared with last year. – AFP/PIIC

## Tourists shun America

► Visitors avoid country after Donald Trump's polarising policies

used their European passports rather than their Argentine ones to avoid any problems at the border.

"We were a bit scared about the situation, but we did not change our plans," said Lopez.

The Lagardere family, who came from France, said it had not impacted their plans either.

The Americans "elected this president. It is democracy. If they are not happy, they will change it in four years," said Laurent Lagardere, 54.

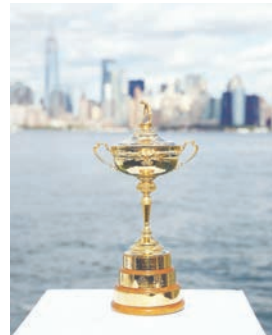
"He is who he is" and avoiding the US "will not change anything", Lagardere added.

Some 77.7 million foreign tourists were expected in 2024, up 17% year-on-year, according to the National Travel and Tourism Office, which does not yet have final figures for last year.



Trump's policies have cast a shadow across the American tourist industry.

– PIC FROM FACEBOOK  
 @DONALDJTRUMP



Sporting events such as the Ryder Cup may be affected by the downturn in tourist arrivals.

– PIC FROM FACEBOOK  
 @RYDERCUP

Tourists from Western Europe, who made up 37% of visitors in 2024, are the most likely to choose other destinations, along with Canadians and Mexicans.

The US Travel Association warned in early February that customs tariffs would deter Canadians, the largest contingent of foreign tourists in the US with 20.4 million in 2024.

According to Statistics Canada, the number of Canadians returning from the US fell 23% in February year-on-year, the second consecutive monthly decline.

In New York, which welcomed 12.9 million foreign travellers in 2024, the effect is already noticeable, with Canadians cancelling tour bookings and a drop in online searches for hotels or Broadway shows, NYC Tourism president Julie Coker revealed.

She lowered her forecast for the year in February but said so far, only Canadians are saying no to Trump's America.

"We are not currently seeing anything from the UK or Europe", because it is too early, she said.

"We are definitely watching that very closely."

But British and German authorities have just warned their nationals to be extra vigilant with their travel documents, citing the risk of arrest.

United Airlines has noted a "big drop" in travel from Canada to the US as well as a decline in demand for domestic travel, as have several competitors.

According to Tourism Economics, the tourism sector could lose about US\$64 billion (RM284 billion) in revenue this year due to the decline in international and domestic travel.

Americans now appear frozen by the economic outlook, and terms such as recession and inflation also scare tourists, along with the risk of a stronger greenback, experts pointed out.

"This will make the US more expensive for inbound travelers, dampening visitor volume and average length of stay," noted Tourism Economics.

Professionals also fear the effects of tightening immigration policy on major sports events hosted by the US, such as the Ryder Cup (2025), FIFA World Cup (2026) and the 2026 Summer Olympics in Los Angeles. – AFP

## Winter lake creates Saudi watersports oasis

**T**HE ear-splitting roar of his jet ski fills the air as Hamza al-Hamm thunders past, kicking up plumes of water – not at the beach, but in the heart of the Saudi Arabian desert.

Sand-caked SUVs ring the temporary lake, formed by winter rains, as Hamm zips across the impromptu watersports centre doing doughnuts.

Women in the traditional face-covering *niqab* sit on rugs by the shore, watching the action.

The lake, surrounded by sand dunes near the small desert city of Zulfi, lasts only about three months a year.

"One day, my friends challenged me to ride a jet ski," said Hamm, who started out on a borrowed machine.

Since then he has bought his own, gradually becoming one of a rare breed – an expert jet-skier who lives in the desert.

Zulfi's lake, more than 200km northwest of the capital Riyadh, appears every winter, giving desert-dwellers the chance to take part in a sport usually associated with seaside resorts.

The rare phenomenon draws not only locals such as Hamm, in his 40s, but also visitors from as far away as Kuwait, Qatar and the UAE.

Meshaal al-Otaibi, who came with a caravan from the Saudi town of Taif, more than 700km away, said he had to see the lake for himself.

"When I heard about the lake on YouTube, about people gathering there and water activities, I could not resist," he said.

Zulfi, which sits in a dip between sand dunes and mountains, "is an ideal trap for rainfalls pouring over the mountains", according to scientist Alain Gachet.

"That is why the lake is seasonal in

The lake, surrounded by sand dunes near the small desert city of Zulfi, lasts only about three months a year. – AFP/PIIC



Zulfi, which is located on the deepest part of this depression," said Gachet, whose French-based company Radar Technologies International specialises in untapped natural resources.

When it forms, the lake offers a welcome respite in a country where intense heat limits outdoor activities for much of the year.

Issam Hamad, another Saudi who

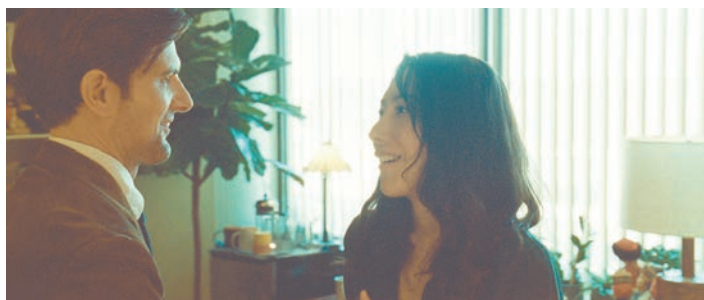
was visiting with his family, said it was relaxing just to be outside.

"Some watch, others do watersports" but everyone enjoys the fresh air, he said. – AFP





This season delves into the mystery of what else lies beneath the Lumon Industries building.



The second season is focused on what Lumon is doing to Gemma (right) and Mark's efforts to save his wife.

# Satire masterclass on corporate greed

## TV SHOW REVIEW

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

**I**F there was a form of technology that allows you to “sever” your consciousness into two through an invasive brain surgery, where a new one for the workplace is created, while you retain the original consciousness for your personal life, would you go under the knife for it?

The perks are great. Once you clock in, your “work-self” wakes up and completes whatever your company asks of them for the typical eight office hours and once they clock out, you wake up to continue the rest of the day.

A complete split between the two, you retain no memories of work, relationship with colleagues, office politics and so on, while the other has no memories beyond what they do at work. It is an easy paycheck, but here is the thing: That other consciousness sharing your body has no rights.

They are corporate slaves. Their world is the workplace. Their religion is their company's dogma. Their gods are their bosses.

If under any unfortunate situation where they or you are fired, they will go to sleep permanently. In other words, their consciousness “dies”. Would you be able to accept the ethics and morality behind such a situation?

### Dark, twisted narrative

After ending the first season on a seat-gripping cliffhanger and then, racking up an impressive amount of Emmy Award nominations, *Severance*'s second season once again shows

## ➤ Deeper dive into *Severance*'s office nightmare



Tramell Tillman's Seth Milchick (left) carries the management-side of the show's corporate satire.

— ALL PICS FROM APPLETV

why it is one of the 21st century's most monumental television shows.

The second season goes further into the history of Lumon Industries, their inner workings and what the shady corporation wants from Mark Scout's (Adam Scott) Macrodata Refinement team, comprising Helly Riggs (Britt Lower), Irving Bailiff (John Turturro) and Dylan George (Zach Cherry).

The season also dives deeper into the first season's big revelation that “outie” Mark's (“outie” refers to the original people, while

“innie” refers to the second consciousness at work) wife, Gemma (Dichen Lachman) is alive, with Lumon covering up her death in order to use her “innie” in illegal experiments.

*Severance*'s second season has one extra episode compared with the first season and show creator Dan Erickson somehow pulls off the Herculean feat of proportionally expanding on all the main characters even more than he and the writers did for the previous season, all while still satirising corporate culture.

### Stellar performances

A minor complaint with the first season, in relation to Helly and Dylan not receiving much development, is rectified in this season. For example, while the big mystery of who is Helly's “outie” was solved in the first season's finale, this season goes into how different they are and it gives a lot of room for Lower to demonstrate masterclass acting, shifting and contorting the subtlest changes from body posture to the way her face structurally changes between Helly and Helena.

Very likely to end up getting another Emmy nomination, Scott, who was known for sitcom roles, has to juggle between two dramatic phases of “outie” Mark, before and after Gemma's “death” and “innie” Mark. It is hard to verbally explain why it is great because his performance has to be watched to be appreciated.

If the first season saw a lot of naturally comedic talent turning in a spellbinding dramatic, serious performance, *Severance*'s latest season is no different. This also applies to the direction, with Ben Stiller once again directing a bulk of the season's episodes.

Who knew the funny guy from *Zoolander*, *Tropic Thunder*, *Meet the Parents* and countless other comedies had it in him to turn regular corporate office scenes into looking as menacing as a Stanley Kubrick film?

Though the second season thankfully does not end on a massive cliffhanger, it certainly leaves several doors open for how Erickson will progress the story particularly as *Severance* needs to end with the fall of Lumon, which is the only logical end to the show's satire of greedy, inhuman corporations.

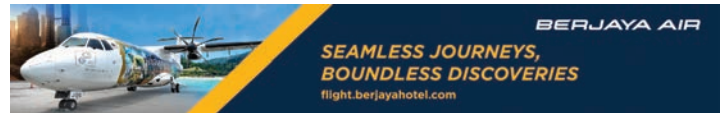
*Severance* is streaming on Apple TV+.

(From left) Dylan, Mark, Helly and Irving's 'work retreat' episode is right out of a corporate nightmare.



The second instalment explores what Lumon Industries wants from characters such as Mark (left) and Irving.





# Everybody dance now

► Genre-bending DJ Boris Brejcha returns for Pinkfish Arena

**B**ORIS Brejcha is returning to these shores, following a year of festival stages and global tours, for a more intimate experience with Pinkfish Arena: Boris Brejcha in Malaysia.

Kicking off Pinkfish Arena's first show of the year, the genre-defining headliner will take over Mega Star Arena in Kuala Lumpur on April 30.

The inaugural Pinkfish Arena featured Andrew Rayel, joined by



Brejcha has played in notable music festivals such as Tomorrowland and Coachella.

Giuseppe Ottaviani and Billy Gillies captivating over 3,000 dance music fans with a night of trance rhythms and top-tier production.

Building on that excitement, this upcoming show offers audiences the rare chance to experience Brejcha up close in a redefined arena setting, complete with stunning visuals, lights and immersive production.

What began as a childhood hobby at 12, Brejcha has evolved into a venerated DJ who has been making strides at music festivals such as EDC Mexico, Tomorrowland and Coachella, alongside sold-out world tours.

He has pioneered his own genre, named "high-tech minimal" that is a

fusion of deep basslines, complex melodies and hypnotic energy. Now, with his Venetian mask and signature ducks, he is ready to take Kuala Lumpur on an unforgettable sonic journey.

After the success of the last Pinkfish Arena, its founders Rohit Rampal and Kesavan Purusotman shared: "Pinkfish Arena is all about delivering an intimate yet electrifying experience – think up-close energy with high-impact production."

"This time, we are doing it with Brejcha."

They added that it is an immersive journey designed for true dance music lovers.



The show will take place at Mega Star Arena, KL on April 30.

## Singaporean R&B indie singer drops new EP *It's Pouring*

**SINGAPOREAN** indie R&B singer Rhyu is back with more sentimental and heartbreaking songs in her new EP *It's Pouring*, which introduces four new songs that convey love and yearning.

A labour of love for Rhyu, *It's Pouring* marks an important milestone in her creative journey, as it reflects her outlook on love and life as she turns 21 this year.

From groovy R&B love songs to wistful ballads about heartbreak, the EP represents the singer's growth over the past two years.

*It's Pouring* consists of five songs, including Rhyu's latest single *For It's You and Me*. For the latter, it serves as the opening track to the EP and introduces a new sound for her discography with vibrant instrumentals.

The opener sets the tone for the four new songs. *Precious* sees Rhyu ruminating over her feelings about longing to be treasured by someone whose love is unquestionable and carefree, while *Can't Tell* captures the other side of the coin to the latter track, capturing the feeling of uncertainty in a relationship.

Meanwhile, *Song No. 2* is the successor to Rhyu's single *Melt* as a continuation of the heartbreaking ballad about unrequited love and coming to terms with it. Finally, *Forever Person* is laid-back, with harmonies and rhythmic melodies to present a more mature form of love.

Over the years, the singer has



Rhyu hopes *It's Pouring* will bring comfort to its listeners.

performed many shows across Singapore, including Arts After Dark for Singapore Art Week, All Things New for the Esplanade and Girls To the Front for NME. She has also

opened for Taiwanese acts Shallow Levee and Cicada for their shows in Singapore.

*It's Pouring* is available on streaming platforms.

### ALBUM REVIEW

## Symphonic goth metal rules

**CRADLE** of Filth was formed in Suffolk, England in 1991 and has its roots in the nascent black metal scene. But even back then, the band's ambition was a step above the run-of-the-mill face painters.

While adhering to the look and style of the genre, the band's ambitious sound included symphonic, goth and synth elements. This was fully realised on the outfit's first two records, *Cruelty and the Beast* and *Dusk and Her Embrace*, both of which are rightfully lauded as landmark metal releases.

Many hardcore fans of black metal will dismiss Cradle of Filth as commercial sycophants, sucking the genre's best elements and watering it down for mass consumption. With each release being accompanied by slick video productions that highlighted the band's sexy vampire aesthetic, there was a feeling that this was metal designed for the Buffy generation.

Truth be told, Cradle of Filth's sound has more in common with traditional heavy metal from the 80s, as the influences of Iron Maiden and Judas Priest loom large. And so is the case here on its 14th album, *The Screaming of the Valkyries*, released last month.

The symphonic and goth influences are used to cloak the tunes with a veneer of smoothness that allow them to soar into the stratosphere in ways few bands can manage.

The guitar solos are bear the hallmarks of 80s greats as each melodious hook is executed with precision as well as brilliance. The female vocals, which are very much part of the Cradle sound, is beautifully delivered by Zoe Marie Federoff who is also the band's new keyboard player.

She also happens to be the spouse of new guitarist Donny Burbage. The band's lead vocalist Dani Filth said the latest album is a celebration of life and this is evident from the opener *To Live Deliciously*.

Its galloping bass line and crunching riffs will have listeners swirling their heads in excitement from the get-go. It is all systems go as *The Trinity of Shadows* and *Malignant Perfection* continue to assault ear drums with finely crafted metal.

These are songs designed for festival mosh pits, not some dank underground club. It is symphonic metal of the grandest scale equalling the likes of Dimmu Borgir for scope and ambition and it should be no surprise as the band has spent decades honing its sound.

There is nothing lo-fi or remotely black metal about Cradle these days, except maybe the use of corpse paint for stage dramatics. And, accepting that will allow listeners to enjoy this latest album for what it is – a great metal album full of bombast, great riffs and quality tunes.

This may be the closest the band has come to emulating the incredible tower of sound heard on its first two albums. And, that is saying something.

Alas, the much talked about collaboration between Dani Filth and ginger crooner Ed Sheeran is not on this album. The world awaits with bated breath but in the meantime, *The Screaming of the Valkyries* is well worth the attention of any metalhead who values 80s-style song craft with modern day production values.

*The Screaming of the Valkyries* is big, bombastic and ultimately, great fun. – by **R. BALA**



Cradle of Filth's new album is bombastic and fun.

– PIC FROM FACEBOOK @CRADLEOFFILTH





# theSun Classified

FRIDAY | APR 4, 2025

T: 03-7784 6688 F: 03-7785 2625 E: sunconnects@thesundaily.com



## WE ARE HIRING

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- Conceptualise, plan and execute creative and innovative marketing campaigns to enhance brand visibility and engagement.
- Create, develop and continuously improve marketing material, presentations and proposals that showcase our products/services effectively.

**Requirements**

- SPM level with at least two years of experience.
- Diploma or Bachelor's degree in business, marketing or other related fields.
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply, training will be provided.
- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing.
- Possess own transport and willing to travel.
- Able to start work immediately.

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### 2 MEDIA SALES Representative/Agent (Freelance)

**Requirement**

- Minimum one year sales experience in classified ad, print and digital advertising.
- Those without sales experience but with media advertising knowledge may also apply.
- Attractive commission package and incentives.
- Able to start immediately.
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Send in your CV with your photo via email to : [thesun.hr2@gmail.com](mailto:thesun.hr2@gmail.com)

## NOTICE OF PRE-QUALIFICATION AND TENDER

Prima Avenue and DPC (Block G, H, I) Management Corporation as the project owner, wishes to invite prospective Contractors to participate in the Tender for the works package stated in the table below.

TITLE OF TENDER	COLD WATER PIPE REPLACEMENT FOR DPC (BLOCK G, H, I) AT JALAN PUJ 1/37, DATARAN PRIMA, 47301 PETALING JAYA, SELANGOR
<b>CONTRACTOR'S QUALIFICATION</b>	<b>1. Malaysian Contractors</b> • Registered with Construction Industry Development Board Malaysia (CIDB) • Grade: G2 or higher • Specialization: B10, CE20, CE21
<b>TENDER CRITERIA</b>	<b>1. General Scope of Works:</b> To replace existing buried 150 mm mains cold water supply pipe and tap off to 30 existing water meter stand assemblies with new pipes, new water meter stands, new water meters and lockable ball valves for 150 existing property parcels. The Contractor will be fully responsible for the management, scheduling, and coordination of the whole works. <b>2. Proven track record in installing buried Ductile Iron, HDPE, MSCL water pipes of at least 150 mm diameter or larger.</b> Strong financial background and capacity to undertake the project.
<b>TENDER TIMELINE</b>	<b>1. Collection of tender documents</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Tender documents to be collected upon presentation of photocopies of current CIDB G2 or higher certificate and Specialization B10, CE20, CE21 classifications from:- <b>PRIMA AVENUE AND DPC (BLOCK G, H, I) MANAGEMENT CORPORATION</b> MANAGEMENT OFFICE, A-01-34, Menara Prima, Jalan PUJ 1/39, Dataran Prima, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel : 03 - 7887 4996 / 03 - 7887 3997 / 016 323 8208 Email : manager.primaave2021@outlook.com</li></ul> <b>2. Tender Clarifications and Site Visit (Compulsory)</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>10.30 am, Tuesday, 8-April-2025 at above office</li></ul> <b>3. Tender Submission</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Submission Deadline: 3:00 pm Tuesday, 15-April-2025 at above office</li><li>Document Submission: Hard Copies Only in SEALED envelope with company stamp affixed on all filled in pages</li></ul>

**Note:**

- Prima Avenue and DPC (Block G, H, I) Management Corporation reserves the right at its sole and absolute discretion, to accept or reject any submission and/or to annul and withdraw the Pre-Qualification process and reject all submissions, without assigning any reason whatsoever to any and all participants and without thereby incurring any liabilities to the affected participants or any obligations to inform the participants the grounds for the action. Only successful prequalified participants will be notified.
- Prima Avenue and DPC (Block G, H, I) Management Corporation shall not for any reason and/or under any circumstances and/or at any stage whatsoever be responsible for any and all costs, expenses and claims incurred by the participants in preparing, responding to, completing, and submitting the tender documents. All risks associated with the preparation, response, completion, and submission of the tender documents shall be borne and addressed solely by each participant.

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF NIPPON CARBON DIOXIDE (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 20070102141 (179256-7)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

At a General Meeting of the Company duly convened and held electronically via video conferencing at Level 5, Tower 2, Avenue 5, Horizon 2, Bangsar South City, 59200 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur on 28 March 2025, the following special resolutions were duly passed:

**RESOLVED:-**

1. THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Mr. Wong Mui Kiat (NIC No. 800429-14-5204) or No. 9, Jalan S1/16A, Taman Selayang Indah, 68100 Batu Caves, Selangor Darul Ehsan be and is hereby appointed as the Liquidator for the Company for the purpose of winding up of the Company.
2. THAT the Liquidator be authorised pursuant to Section 456 of the Companies Act, 2016 to exercise the powers laid down in Eleventh Schedule of the Companies Act, 2016.
3. THAT the Liquidator be authorised to distribute either in cash, specie or in kind any surplus assets of the Company (whether due to the contributory of the Company in accordance with her respective rights and interests therein).

The Board of Directors  
Dated this 4th day of April 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF NIPPON CARBON DIOXIDE (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 20070102141 (179256-7)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Creditors of the above-named Company which is being wound up voluntarily are required to send in their names and addresses of their debts or claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to:-

The Liquidator  
NIPPON CARBON DIOXIDE (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD.  
Registration No.: 20070102141 (179256-7)  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)  
Level 5, Tower 2, Avenue 5, Horizon 2, Bangsar South City, 59200 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur

and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, or by their solicitors or personally, to come in and prove their debts and claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

WONG MEE KIAT  
Liquidator  
Dated this 4th day of April 2025

### 322 Notices

**In the Matter of the Companies Act, 2016**  
**And**  
**In the Matter of FORUM DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 199601005439 (377785-7)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 439(2) of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special Resolution set below were duly passed by the members of the Company on 27-03-2025.

"That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Mr. Tan Mong Nguan from Advance Management Services, Sdn. Bhd. 10701008990 (55183-M) be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator of the Company for the purpose of such winding-up at a fee to be approved by the Director."

That the Liquidator be empowered to distribute part or the whole of the Company's assets either in cash, specie or in kind in pursuance to Section 456 of the Companies Act, 2016.

That the said Liquidator be indemnified by the Company against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred or sustained by him in the execution and discharge of his duties in relation thereto."

Dated: 04-04-2025

Fum Ah Mann  
Director

**In the Matter of the Companies Act, 2016**  
**And**  
**In the Matter of FORUM DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 199601005439 (377785-7)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Creditors of the above-named Company which is being wound up voluntarily are required to send in their names and addresses of their debts or claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to:-

Too Mong Nguan (Liquidator)  
Suite 19-C20, 19th Floor, Menara Zurich, No. 15, Jalan Dato' Abdullah Tahir, 03030 Johor Bahru, Johor

and if so required by notice in writing from the aforesaid Liquidator, or personally or by their solicitors required to write in and prove their debts and claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

Dated: 04-04-2025  
Too Mong Nguan (Liquidator)

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND**  
**BIO-METRIC ART SDN. BHD.**  
**(Company No. 201401071116)**  
**11903202-4**  
(Incorporated in Malaysia)  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

At Members' Meeting of the above mentioned Company duly held at 51-17-E, Menara BHL, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10550 Georgetown, Penang on 27th March 2025 at 10:00 a.m., the following resolutions were duly passed:

**SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016.

**ORDINARY RESOLUTIONS**

THAT Mr. Tiong Hui Bin of 51-17-E, Menara BHL, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10550 Georgetown, Penang be appointed as Liquidator of the Company, to act for the purpose of the members' voluntary winding up.

TAT-KEE YAW  
Secretary

Dated this : 04th April 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND**  
**BIO-METRIC ART SDN. BHD.**  
**(Company No. 201401071116)**  
**11903202-4**  
(Incorporated in Malaysia)  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016, a meeting of the members and creditors of BIO-METRIC ART SDN. BHD. (Company No. 201401071116) (1063202-4) will be held at 51-17-E, Menara BHL, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10550 Georgetown, Penang, on 28th April 2025 at 10:00 a.m. for the following purposes:-

- (i) To lay before the meeting the Company's Statement of affairs;
- (ii) To accept the submission of claims from any creditors by way of proof of debt under Companies Act, 2016
- (iii) To consider any other matter

TIONG HUI BIN  
Liquidator

Dated this : 04th April 2025

A member and creditor entitled to attend and vote at the meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his stead. The proxy form must be deposited at the above address not less than 48 hours before the time appointed for holding the meeting or any adjournment thereof.

### 322 Notices

## LOST CERTIFICATES

The following Share Certificates have been reported lost or destroyed

Certificate No	Name	No Of Share
2087	LAM SOON (M) BHD FOO SIANG BOON @ FOO YOUNG SOONG	3 x 1000
20347 - 20348	LAU BENG CHANG	6 x 1000
16922 - 924 31877 - 879	TANG CHUI HOAH @ TAN OI WANG	2 x 1000
29314 - 315	KLUANG RUBBER COMPANY (MALAYSIA) BERHAD	
477 - 483	WONG PENG TUCK	NA

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that if within fourteen (14) days from the date hereof, no claim or representation in respect of such certificates is made to the Directors, they will then proceed to issue replacement certificates and the original certificates will be deemed cancelled and void.

REGISTRARS  
BOARDROOM SHARE REGISTRARS SDN (378993-D)  
Date: 04.04.2025

### FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358696-H)

NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAAN UNTUK DILELONG SEPETI SEDA ADA TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG : East Coast Region Kota Bharu, Kuantan & Termerloh 09-04-2025 (Rabu) Pukul 11.00pagi

TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Pukul 9.00pagi - 4.00petang)

PERTANYAAN (Tel): Kota Bharu 07-7747972, Kuantan 017-4973133, Termerloh 012-428 7538

FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) En Mohd Fawzi Bin Ibrahim (33056)  
b) M Muzamir Bin Haji Mohamed (0172042)

Alamat : Lot 5198 Petak 41, Jalan 20, Kawasan Perindustrian Pengkalan Chepa Fasa 2, Pengkalanchera, 6100 Kota Bharu.

Lot 10869, Lot 10870 & Lot 10871 Jin Tanah Putih, Tanah Putih 25100 Kuantan

PTS101 & S1102, KAMPUNG MEGAT SEGAMA, 28000 TEMERLOH

SILA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : [www.focalpark.com.my](http://www.focalpark.com.my)

Item	Reg No	Jenis & Model	Tahun
AM1	WLH9412	HONDA ACCORD 2.4 (A)	2003
AM2	CW0499	NISSAN GRAND LIVINA 1.6 (A)	2011
AM3	VL4725	PERODUA BEZZA 1.0 (A)	2018
AM4	VBG4238	PROTON IRIZ 1.6	2018
AM5	BNH6152	BMW 525I E60 2.5i	2008
AM6	CD8772	NAZA FORTE (A) 1.6i	2012
AM7	DCX6498	PERODUA BEZZA 1.3 (A)	2016
AM8	DOY6092	PERODUA BEZZA 1.3 (A)	2021

(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perlelongan akan dilelong semula pada 16-04-2025)

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF TELC ENGINEERING CENTER (MALAYSIA) SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 201401011410 (1087486-P)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

At a General Meeting of the Company duly convened and held electronically via video conferencing at Unit No. 8-3A-1, Northpoint Office, Mid Valley City, No. 1, Midval Street, Putra Ulu, 52200 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur on 28th April 2025, the following special resolutions were duly passed:

**RESOLVED:-**

1. THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Wong Mui Kiat (NIC No. 9, Jalan S1/16A, Taman Selayang Indah, 68100 Batu Caves, Selangor Darul Ehsan be and is hereby appointed Liquidator for the Company for the purpose of winding up of the Company.
2. THAT the Liquidator be authorised pursuant to Section 456 of the Companies Act 2016 to exercise the powers laid down in Eleventh Schedule of the Companies Act 2016.
3. THAT the Liquidator be authorised to distribute either in cash, specie or in kind any surplus assets of the Company as he thinks fit to the contributory of the Company in accordance with her respective rights and interests therein.

The Board of Directors  
Dated this 4th day of April 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF BSI ADMIN SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 201801020821 (128240-8)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

At a General Meeting of the Company duly convened and held at Level 5, Tower 2, Avenue 5, Horizon 2, Bangsar South City, 59200 Kuala Lumpur, W.P. Kuala Lumpur on 1 April 2025, the following special resolutions were duly passed:

**RESOLVED:-**

1. THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Wong Mui Kiat (NIC No. 9, Jalan S1/16A, Taman Selayang Indah, 68100 Batu Caves, Selangor Darul Ehsan be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator for the Company for the purpose of winding up of the Company.
2. THAT the Liquidator be authorised pursuant to Section 456 of the Companies Act 2016 to exercise the powers laid down in Eleventh Schedule of the Companies Act 2016.
3. THAT the Liquidator be authorised to distribute either in cash, specie or in kind any surplus assets of the Company as he thinks fit to the contributory of the Company in accordance with her respective rights and interests therein.

The Board of Directors  
Dated this 4th day of April 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF BSI ADMIN SDN. BHD.**  
**REGISTRATION NO.: 201801020821 (128240-8)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Creditors of the above-named Company which is being wound up voluntarily are required to send in their names and addresses of their debts or claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to:-

The Liquidator  
BSI ADMIN SDN. BHD.  
REGISTRATION NO.: 201801020821 (128240-8)  
Level 5, Tower 2, Avenue 5, Horizon 2, Bangsar South City, 59200 Kuala Lumpur.

and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, or by their solicitors or personally, to come in and prove their debts and claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

WONG MEE KIAT  
Liquidator  
Dated this 4th day of April 2025

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF TRANS-ORIENT (M) SDN. BHD.**  
**Registration Number : 19680100626 (8220-W)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 439 (2) of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by the Members of the Company on 28th day of March 2025.

**MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP AND APPOINTMENT OF LIQUIDATOR - SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

RESOLVED THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Dato' Seri Mustafa Ali R. Jumabohy of 26 Jalan Jesselton, 10450 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, who has given his consent to act, be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up with all powers given by Section 456 and Section 457(1) of the Companies Act, 2016.

RESOLVED THAT the Liquidator be and is hereby authorised to divide all or such part of the surplus assets of the Company as he shall think fit to the members of the Company.

Dated this 4th day of April 2025

Dato' Lubna Binti Nazer Moaraj  
Director

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND**  
**IN THE MATTER OF TRANS-ORIENT (M) SDN. BHD.**  
**Registration Number : 19680100626 (8220-W)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE is hereby given that the Creditors of TRANS-ORIENT (M) SDN BHD Registration Number : 19680100626 (8220-W) which is being wound up voluntarily are required to send in their names and addresses of their debts or claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the Liquidator of the said Company, and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, either by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice and in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

Dated this 4th day of April 2025

Dato' Seri Mustafa Ali R. Jumabohy  
Liquidator  
26, Jalan Jesselton  
10450 Georgetown  
Pulau Pinang

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND**  
**R. JUMABOHY & SONS (M) SDN. BHD.**  
**Registration Number : 19560100067 (2780-D)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to Section 439 (2) of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by the Members of the Company on 28th day of March 2025.

**MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP AND APPOINTMENT OF LIQUIDATOR - SPECIAL RESOLUTION**

RESOLVED THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Dato' Seri Mustafa Ali R. Jumabohy of 26 Jalan Jesselton, 10450 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, who has given his consent to act, be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up with all powers given by Section 456 and Section 457(1) of the Companies Act, 2016.

RESOLVED THAT the Liquidator be and is hereby authorised to divide all or such part of the surplus assets of the Company as he shall think fit to the members of the Company.

Dated this 4th day of April 2025

Dato' Lubna Binti Nazer Moaraj  
Director

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND**  
**R. JUMABOHY & SONS (M) SDN. BHD.**  
**Registration Number : 19560100067 (2780-D)**  
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE is hereby given that the Creditors of R. JUMABOHY & SONS (M) SDN. BHD. Registration Number : 19560100067 (2780-D) which is being wound up voluntarily, are required within one month from the date hereof to send their names and addresses and particulars of their debts, claims, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the Liquidator of the said Company, and if so required by notice in writing by the Liquidator, either by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice and in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

Dated this 4th day of April 2025

Dato' Seri Mustafa Ali R. Jumabohy  
Liquidator  
26, Jalan Jesselton  
10450 Georgetown  
Pulau Pinang

# Red Bulls' Tsunoda not feeling pressure

■ BY SCOTT HUNT

**YUKI TSUNODA** insists he is not feeling pressure to hit the ground running at Red Bull following their decision to axe Liam Lawson after just two races.

The New Zealander was ditched after a disappointing second outing in China, having crashed out on his debut for the team in the season-opening Australian Grand Prix.

Tsunoda, who was overlooked in favour of Lawson when Sergio Perez was replaced in December, swaps places to move up to the senior team from Racing Bulls ahead of his home race in Japan this weekend.

While admitting he has had no assurances from team principal Christian Horner over how

long he will be given to prove himself alongside four-time world champion Max Verstappen, Tsunoda is relaxed as he steps into a new car.

"I didn't get any specific races or time that I have to prove myself," Tsunoda said.

"He (Horner) is being very supportive to me and he just mentioned the expectation from himself for what he wants me to achieve.

"Pressure will always come once you hit the track. For now, really relaxing somehow – it feels similar to when I was at Racing Bulls, when I enter hospitality I was only thinking about breakfast."

He continued: "So far I am not feeling pressure, those things will come naturally anyway. I hope I can do a bit different to

other drivers.

"He (Horner) wants me to be as close to Max as possible and support him in the race. Their main priority is Max, which I understand because he is a four-time world champion."

Red Bull's move to replace Lawson after just two races, having chosen him in December, has raised questions over the decision-making process – with motorsport advisor Helmut Marko admitting mistakes had been made.

"For me it was brutal last year when they chose Liam instead of myself," Tsunoda added.

"I am sure Liam understands how quickly things change under our structure. It is one of the reasons why we succeed but also why we tend to get more tension with those situations." – The Independent

# Gateway to Masters

Bulk of field bears down on Texas for last ticket to Augusta

**T**HE Valero Texas Open, which tees off overnight at TPC San Antonio, occupies a unique position on the PGA Tour calendar.

For the 20-odd golfers in the field who are already invited to next week's Masters, it's a tune-up. For everyone else, winning in Texas is the final path to make it to Augusta National.

While the likes of Sweden's Ludvig Aberg, Japan's Hideki Matsuyama, Patrick Cantlay, Tony Finau and Jordan Spieth may rightfully have their minds on next week, the rest of the field has to focus on the top spot to make their Masters dream come true.

Akshay Bhatta knows the feeling. At just 22 years old last year, Akshay led the Texas Open after each of the first three rounds.

Then he went to a playoff on Sunday, defeating Denny McCarthy for the win that punched his plane ticket to Augusta.

Bhatta recommended younger players not focus

too much on the objective while on the course.

"I think it depends on how you look at it," he said. "Last year the Masters was such a long shot for me. I had my eyes set on trying to get into the US Open based off of world ranking."

"It's something you really got to kind of keep off your mind and try to play this golf tournament and see where you end up at the end of the week."

Akshay has three top-10 finishes in his past four starts. Cantlay has a pair of top-fives this year, while Texas native Spieth will look for his second win at TPC San Antonio after capturing the 2021 title.

Also competing are two-time winners Corey Conners of Canada (2019, 2023) and Zach Johnson (2008, 2009).

As far as the contingent of golfers hoping to qualify for the Masters, perhaps n o

one is easier to root for than Gary Woodland.

The 2019 US Open champion underwent brain surgery in 2023. His T2 finish at last week's Houston Open (behind only Min Woo Lee of Australia) was by far his best result since his return to competitive golf.

"Last week, on Sunday especially, it was the first time really probably since the US Open that I was in control, complete control," Woodland said.

"I was in control of my emotions, I was in control of my thoughts, and that's been a battle for me over the last couple years."

Woodland said he cannot afford to look ahead to Masters qualification.

"My brain's different, it is," he said. "I'm still recovering, I'm still healing. I don't have the luxury to think ahead because if I do, if I even think to the past, my brain's going to shut down."

"Obviously, we all want to be in the majors. I've been a staple in the majors really since 2011, and that's what I'm out here to do is to play and win those tournaments, but right now I'm trying to focus and get through today." – Field Level Media



## Siraj, Buttler guide Gujarat to easy win

**ENGLAND'S** Jos Buttler hammered an unbeaten 73 to lead Gujarat Titans to a thumping eight-wicket win over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in the Indian Premier League yesterday.

Chasing 170 for victory, Gujarat depended on a 75-run second wicket stand between Buttler and opener Sai Sudharsan, who hit 49, to achieve the target with 13 balls to spare in Bengaluru.

Pace bowler Mohammed Siraj set up Gujarat's second successive victory with figures of 3-19 from his four overs to help restrict Bengaluru to 169-8.

It was Bengaluru's first defeat of the season after two wins as home fans left the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium disappointed.

Siraj, who played seven seasons in the red of Bengaluru, was named player of the match against his former franchise.

Gujarat began their reply cautiously against a disciplined bowling attack, and seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar dismissed skipper Shubman Gill for 14 in the fifth over.

The left-handed Sudharsan hit regular boundaries, and along with Buttler, put on a quickfire stand to

get the Titans' chase back on track.

Australia pace bowler Josh Hazlewood denied Sudharsan his fifty but Buttler kept calm, and partnered by impact substitute Sherfane Rutherford (30), steered the team to victory in an unbeaten stand of 63.

Buttler never allowed the pressure to mount on the visitors as he hit five fours and six sixes, including a reverse ramp that went behind the wicketkeeper in his 39-ball knock.

West Indies left-hander Rutherford hit the winning six to cap off a dominant show in their third match of the season.

"I really enjoyed it. I thought the bowlers did a fantastic job. If we had fielded a bit better, looking at myself there, we would be chasing a few (runs) less," said Buttler.

"But it's a nice clinical win and well deserved. There was a bit in the wicket and the openers played really sensibly to take the sting out of that and set up the chase."

"I was trying to play with a lot of freedom and intent. I've had a few months of unenjoyable cricket, so I was trying to give my best and I'm excited to be here." – AFP/Reuters

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF HALLMARK VENTURES SDN BHD (201001015733 (899975-M)) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP) NOTICE OF RESOLUTION**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company held at 568-8-25 (Level 8), Kompleks Mutiara 3-1/2 Mile, Jalan Ipoh, 51200 Kuala Lumpur on the 4th day of April, 2025 the Special Resolution was duly passed:-

HALLMARK VENTURES SDN BHD be wound up voluntarily and that JUSTIN WONG CHIEN FEI be appointed liquidator for the purpose of winding up the company.

JUSTIN WONG CHIEN FEI  
Kuala Lumpur

Dated this 4th day of April, 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF HALLMARK VENTURES SDN BHD (201001015733 (899975-M)) NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the creditors of the abovementioned Company which is being wound up voluntarily, are required on or before 4th day of May, 2025 to send their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company, and if so required in writing prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefits of any distribution made before such debts are proven.

JUSTIN WONG CHIEN FEI  
Liquidator

No. 74G, Jalan Molek 2/2,  
Taman Molek,  
81100 Johor Bahru, Johor

Dated this 4th day of April, 2025

### 322 Notices

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR IN THE STATE OF WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR (COMMERCIAL DIVISION) COMPANIES WINDING-UP NO.: WA-28NCC-138-02/2025**

In the Matter of Section 465(1)(e) and (h) and Section 466(1)(a) of the Companies Act 2016

AND

In the Matter of First Milestone Sdn. Bhd. (Company No. 201601007625 (1178553-T))

AND

In the Matter of the Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

BETWEEN

CONTRACT SOLUTIONS I PT (LLP NO.: LLP0000284-LGN) ... PETITIONER

AND

FIRST MILESTONE SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO.: 201601007625 (1178553-T)) ... RESPONDENT

**ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION**

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the above-named Company by the High Court was, on the 3rd day of February 2025, presented by Contract Solutions I PT (LLP NO.: LLP0000284-LGN), the above said Petitioner and that the said Petition is directed to and heard before the Court sitting at the High Court of Malaya at Kuala Lumpur at Wilayah Persekutuan, on the 28th day of May 2025 at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon; and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his Counsel for that purpose and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at 8-07-01, Gateway Kiaras No. 1, Jalan Desa Kiara, 50480 Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.

The Petitioner's solicitors are Messrs. Kuruvilla, Yeoh & Benjamin, address is at D4-U5-07, Solaris Dutamas Block D4, No. 1, Jalan Dutamas 1, Off Jalan Dutamas, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Signed,  
Messrs. Kuruvilla, Yeoh & Benjamin  
Solicitors for the Petitioner

**NOTE**—Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named solicitors for the Petitioner notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their Solicitors (if any) and must be served, or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above named not later than twelve o'clock noon of the 27th day of May 2025 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the Petition).

Reference: EWK/81/2024  
Telephone: 03-7726 3464  
E-Mail: general@yblegal.com

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF PROMENADE HOLDINGS SDN BHD (201001038127 (820051-M)) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP) NOTICE OF RESOLUTION**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that at the Extraordinary General Meeting of the Company held at No. 7-1, Jalan 109F, Plaza Damaru 2, Taman Damaru Desa, 58100 Kuala Lumpur on the 4th day of April, 2025 the Special Resolution was duly passed:-

PROMENADE HOLDINGS SDN BHD be wound up voluntarily and that YAM LEE YEE be appointed liquidator for the purpose of winding up the company.

YAM LEE YEE  
Kuala Lumpur

Dated this 4th day of April, 2025

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF PROMENADE HOLDINGS SDN BHD (201001038127 (820051-M)) NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN** that the creditors of the abovementioned Company which is being wound up voluntarily, are required on or before 4th day of May, 2025 to send their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company, and if so required in writing prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefits of any distribution made before such debts are proven.

YAM LEE YEE  
Liquidator

B 103, Pangsapuri Jasmine Court,  
Bandar Puchong Jaya,  
47100 Puchong, Selangor

Dated this 4th day of April, 2025

### 322 Notices

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR IN THE STATE OF WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR (COMMERCIAL DIVISION) COMPANIES WINDING-UP NO.: WA-28NCC-267-03/2025**

In the Matter of Section 465(1)(e) and (h) and Section 466(1)(a) of the Companies Act 2016

AND

In the Matter of BIT Group Sdn. Bhd. (Company No. 199501032575 (361777-4))

AND

In the Matter of the Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

BETWEEN

MISA RESOURCES SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO.: 199801006982 (463109-M)) ... PETITIONER

AND

BIT GROUP SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO.: 199501032575 (361777-4)) ... RESPONDENT

**ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION**

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the above-named Company by the High Court was, on the 5th day of March 2025, presented by MISA Resources Sdn. Bhd. (Company No.: 199801006982 (463109-M)), the above said Petitioner and that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at the High Court of Malaya at Kuala Lumpur at Wilayah Persekutuan, on the 18th day of June 2025 at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon; and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his Counsel for that purpose and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at No. 64-1, 1st Floor, Jalan 2/23A, Off Jalan Genting Klang, Taman Danau Kota, Setapak, 53300 Kuala Lumpur.

The Petitioner's solicitors are Messrs. Kuruvilla, Yeoh & Benjamin, address is at D4-U5-07, Solaris Dutamas Block D4, No. 1, Jalan Dutamas 1, Off Jalan Dutamas, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Signed,  
Messrs. Kuruvilla, Yeoh & Benjamin  
Solicitors for the Petitioner

**NOTE**—Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named solicitors for the Petitioner notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their Solicitors (if any) and must be served, or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above named not later than twelve o'clock noon of the 18th day of June 2025 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the Petition).

Reference: EWK/125/2024  
Telephone: 03-7726 3464  
E-Mail: general@yblegal.com

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF EAE HOLDINGS SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO. 830545-T) (IN MEMBERS VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)**

The following Special Resolution was duly passed by the members of EAE HOLDINGS SDN. BHD., on the 3rd April 2025 in accordance with Section 439 of the Companies Act, 2016:

"That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439 of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Mr. Wong Eng Kin of No 5, Jalan 1/15, Seksyen 1, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are by their Solicitors or personally to come in and prove their debts and claims at or at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they shall be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts or claims are proven."

Dated this: 3rd April 2025

Signed  
.....  
(FOO PAK 5001)  
DIRECTOR

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF EAE HOLDINGS SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO. 830545-T) (In Members Voluntary Winding Up)**

Notice is hereby given that the creditors of the above named Company, which is being voluntarily wound up, are required on or before 5th May 2025 (30 days from advertised date) to send in their names and addresses with particulars of their debts and claims and of any security held by them, and the names, addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned Liquidator at No 5, Jalan 1/15, Seksyen 1, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are by their Solicitors or personally to come in and prove their debts and claims at or at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they shall be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts or claims are proven.

Dated this: 3rd April 2025

Signed  
.....  
WONG ENG KIN  
Liquidator



## Buruk, Mourinho altercation in fiery Istanbul derby

**JOSE MOURINHO** was involved in a bizarre exchange with Galatasaray boss Okan Buruk during the latter stages of the Istanbul derby.

The former Chelsea boss was in the losing dugout as Fenerbahçe slipped to a narrow defeat at the hands of their biggest rivals.

Victor Osimhen scored two early goals from the penalty spot to hand victory to Galatasaray, with Sebastian Szymanski pulling one back for the hosts.

Tempers flared after the final whistle, with Mourinho and Buruk involved in an ugly exchange which prompted a scuffle on the pitch.

The pair appeared to be discussing something when Mourinho grabbed the nose of his rival, sending him crashing to the floor.

Buruk stayed on the ground clutching his face as Mourinho was pulled away by a member of his coaching team.

Both sets of players then got involved in a shoving match, with emotions running high in the aftermath of the incident.

Police intervened to restore order and a total of four red cards were shown to the worst offenders.

Mert Hakan Yandas, Salvatore Foti, Kerem Demirbay, and Baris Alper Yilmaz were all dismissed for their involvement in the melee, though Mourinho escaped immediate punishment. He may well receive a retrospective ban.

It did not mark the first time that Mourinho had lashed out at an opposing manager.

During his time in charge of Real Madrid, he poked Barcelona assistant coach Tito Vilanova in the eye during a ferocious touchline brawl.

A decade later, the Portuguese boss admitted that he was in the wrong and insisted that if he could turn back time and handle things differently, he would have done.

"I was the one in the wrong," he said. "I shouldn't have done what I did. Of course not, that negative image stays forever. Tito had nothing to do with it. I apologise to him."

"I was a victim of myself. If I could, this would be one of the things I would never repeat."

"Before that, I had been winning, winning and winning. I got into this state that if I wasn't winning, it seemed like the end of the world to me." – Express Newspapers

# Flick mutes treble talk

... after Barcelona beat Atletico to set up cup final 'Clasico' against Real Madrid

**B**ARCELONA manager Hansi Flick was keen to keep talk of trophies in check after his side booked their spot in the Copa del Rey final against rivals Real Madrid with a hard-fought 1-0 win at Atletico Madrid yesterday.

Barcelona are on a 21-game unbeaten run across all competitions and are the only team in Europe's top-five leagues yet to lose in 2025 as they bid for three titles playing some of the best football the fans have seen this season.

But Flick remained cautious about their chances of winning the treble and urged his players to maintain a next-game mentality, warning that the club has little margin for error.

"I know everyone wants us to talk about the final, it's a *Clasico*, I get that, but I don't live in the past or in the future and our focus should be Betis, who are our next opponents in LaLiga," Flick told a press conference.

"Yes, we are in a great moment but I've been in

this business enough time to know how everything can change in a heartbeat, so we need to keep focused."

"Dreaming is allowed but first we need to work really hard and stay focused so we can keep that dream alive."

Barcelona are top of the LaLiga standings with 66 points, three ahead of Real, with third-placed Atletico six further points back in the title race with nine games left.

Real will travel to London to face Arsenal in the Champions League quarterfinals next week while Barca will host Borussia Dortmund.

They will meet in the Copa del Rey final on April 26 before they clash again at Barcelona on May 11 in a game that could decide the LaLiga title.

"Tonight I'll stick with this formidable win which made me really happy," Flick said.

"Everyone can be proud of this team, we coaches are proud of this team. I am always positive, so I won't deny that I had great expectations for this team when I arrived last year."



Barcelona's Ferran Torres (centre) scores their first goal. – REUTERS/SPIC

## SHORTS

### Inter, AC Milan level in Italian Cup semifinal

**INTER MILAN** and AC Milan's Italian Cup semifinal was left finely balanced yesterday after the two giants of Italian football played out a 1-1 draw at the San Siro.

Hakan Calhanoglu's strike in the 67th minute made sure that Inter would head into the tie's second leg later this month with the scores level.

Turkey captain Calhanoglu's low shot squirmed past Milan goalkeeper Mike Maignan and cancelled out Tammy Abraham's brilliantly taken opener which was netted a minute after halftime.

"It was an even game. Milan had a few chances and so did we, but in the second half we played a bit better," said Calhanoglu.

"It was important to not lose today because we still have the other match to play."

Sergio Conceicao's Milan are ninth in Italy's top flight, 20 points behind Inter and nine from the Champions League positions, and came into yesterday's match under pressure following their defeat at Napoli on Sunday.

"It was a good game against a difficult opponent. We had to play well defensively and that's what we did, so

I'm happy," said Conceicao.

"I'm happy with the approach to the match and we have to keep it up."

### Stuttgart down Leipzig to reach German Cup final

**STUTTGART** set up a German Cup final clash with third-division Arminia Bielefeld after a 3-1 win over RB Leipzig yesterday.

Under the watchful eyes of Jurgen Klopp, the new head of global football for Leipzig's owners Red Bull, the visitors were outclassed by a strong Stuttgart side.

Goals from Angelo Stiller, Nick Woltemade and Jamie Leweling took Stuttgart to victory, putting them on track for a first German Cup triumph since 1997.

The victory continues Stuttgart's rise since former Leipzig youth-team coach Sebastian Hoernes took over in April 2023.

"We're going to Berlin," Hoernes told Germany's ZDF. "Unbelievable. The lads are unbelievable... it's incredible. It's a dream to travel to Berlin."

"We rewarded ourselves with goals at the right moment and when we needed to we defended with passion."

Three-time winners Stuttgart have not qualified for the final since 2013, when they lost to a treble-bound Bayern, and last won in 1997.

## Rashford progressively getting better at Villa, says Emery

**ASTON VILLA** boss Unai Emery believes Marcus Rashford is "progressively getting better" in all aspects of his game following his first Premier League goal for the club.

The on-loan Manchester United forward set Villa on course for a comprehensive 3-0 win over fellow European hopefuls Brighton with a 51st-minute finish at the Amex Stadium.

Rashford's milestone strike came three days after he claimed a brace in Sunday's 3-0 FA Cup quarterfinal success away to Preston.

"The most important thing is how he's feeling," Emery said of Rashford.

"How he's recovering confidence himself playing football, being focused only on football, being with his team-mates comfortable as well, identifying and understanding our style, our demands. Everything with him is progressively getting better."

England international Rashford raced clear to scuff beyond home goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen after

Villa countered from a Brighton corner.

Substitutes Marco Asensio and Donyell Malen sealed victory on the south coast as the visitors leapfrogged the Seagulls into seventh spot by extending their winning run to six games in all competitions.

Emery refused to be drawn on whether 27-year-old Rashford will remain at Villa Park next season and suggested it will depend on whether his side qualify for Europe – and which competition.

"It's not time to speak about it now," said Emery, who is preparing to begin a two-legged Champions League quarterfinal against Paris St Germain next week ahead of an FA Cup semifinal against Crystal Palace.

"It's not the same decision for different reasons. (It depends if) we are in the Champions League, we are in the Europa League, we are in the Conference League, (or) we are not (in Europe)."

"Of course he's performing well. He's here because he wanted to come here with us, to try to feel

"I told them that I was very happy, that if we played like we did that day we would win. We were brave and we knew how to suffer."

"It's not easy to keep a clean sheet in this stadium, Atletico are one of the best teams in Europe. So we should be really proud."

Eliminated from the Champions League, Atletico suffered another massive blow yesterday as they extended their winless run to six matches.

All signs now point to a fourth consecutive trophy-less season for Diego Simeone.

"The team has competed very well so far, in the Champions League we have competed very well, in the Cup too, we are having a good league season and we will continue, approaching it match by match," Simeone said at a press conference.

"We are trying to keep improving to get closer and closer to the teams above us and to accept the place we are."

"I have no other thought than to continue with the same work, focusing on continuing in the best way possible in what is ahead of us in La Liga, with our focus on Sevilla who are our next rival." – Reuters

# 'This one's for you'

BY ANDY HAMPSON

**JACK GREALISH** dedicated his goal to his late brother after scoring in Manchester City's 2-0 win over relegation-threatened Leicester yesterday.

The England international hit his first Premier League goal for 16 months, on his first start in the competition since last December, as City moved back into fourth with a comfortable success at the Etihad Stadium.

It came on the 25th anniversary of the death of his younger brother Keelan, who died at the age of just nine months.

Grealish said on the club's official website: "This day is always hard in the family, but I was happy to score."

"My mum and dad were here. This day is always difficult in the family. So to score and to win was brilliant."

Grealish has struggled for regular action this season due to the form of Jeremy Doku and Savinho.

All three of those players started against the

## Grealish dedicates City opener to late brother

Foxes and combined to set up Grealish's opener after just two minutes.

City manager Pep Guardiola said: "Jack is an incredible human being in terms of gestures and he's incredibly generous."

"I didn't know that. I can't imagine how tough (it was) but to be with his mum and dad, his sister and all the family, it's good."

"He scored a goal and made a good game. I'm happy for him. I know it's not easy when you don't play quite regularly."

Omar Marmoush added the second after 29 minutes and City then eased through the remainder of the game to push an ineffective Leicester, who remain 12 points off safety, closer to the drop.

Guardiola said: "It wasn't easy with 10 players behind the ball in the box and we missed the third goal to be more relaxed."

"But we didn't concede anything until near the end and I'm pleased for a good performance."

Guardiola also offered more clarification on the length of Erling Haaland's absence after the Norwegian suffered an ankle injury in Sunday's FA Cup quarterfinal win at Bournemouth.

The striker has since received specialist treatment from Dr Ramon Cugat in Barcelona.

He said: "He saw him and we expect



Manchester City's Jack Grealish celebrates after the match. - REUTERS/SPIC

five to six weeks."

Leicester boss Ruud Van Nistelrooy conceded his side's situation is bleak, but is not giving up yet.

The Dutchman said: "Of course we live in reality. We know what the situation is in the table, points wise - 12 points with eight games to play."

But mathematically, as I said before, it's not over and we have the responsibility to keep going."

Leicester have now lost seven in succession without scoring and Van Nistelrooy admitted they were never in their latest contest.

He said: "Of course at City away you want to have a good start, but before the half-hour we were 2-0 down it was going to be a long night." - The Independent

## McKenna calm about Ipswich escape bid

**KIERAN MCKENNA** was not getting too giddy dreaming of a miracle escape from relegation after Ipswich beat Bournemouth 2-1 to pick up their first Premier League win of 2025.

Goals from Nathan Broadhead and top-scorer Liam Delap did the damage as Ipswich put a further dent in Bournemouth's hopes of qualifying for Europe.

McKenna, whose side are still nine points adrift of 17th-placed Wolves who they play on Saturday, said: "We didn't lose belief at any point."

"We know the odds are heavily stacked against us and have been heavily stacked against us all season."

"Wolves are the only team anywhere near us of the teams at the bottom of the league, and they've had good results lately."

"We know there is still a chance there but, honestly, our focus isn't too much on talking about it."

"Our focus was on a nine-game block we had left and doing everything we can to play as well as we can and win as many of those games as we can."

Beyond that, we can't control it."

"If we beat Wolves on Saturday and then they win all their games, they'll finish above us so we can only control what we can control and tonight is a good start."

"Every win this season is going to be and was going to be special for us, so it's a special one again tonight."

"It is probably the performance I am really proud of, individually and as a team how we went about it."

"When you wait quite a while for a win, which can happen for us in this league, you really find out about the character of the individuals and the character of the group."

"The performance tonight shows how together everyone is and how everyone's still working and we got our reward."

Bournemouth midfielder Alex Scott had a shot cleared off the line seconds before Broadhead fired through the legs of Kepa Arrizabalaga to make it 1-0 in the 34th minute.

Delap's emphatic finish into the far corner at the end of a move that started with goalkeeper Alex Palmer doubled the lead on the hour. - The Independent

## Magpies boss Howe hails Tonali's 'big moment'

BY DAMIAN SPELLMAN

**EDDIE HOWE** hailed Sandro Tonali's shooting power after seeing him cap a fine display with a stunning winner to edge Newcastle into the race for Champions League qualification.

The 24-year-old Italy international brought an incident-packed encounter to a fitting conclusion with a 74th-minute piledriver which beat goalkeeper Mark Flekken from an improbable angle to hand the

Magpies a precious 2-1 home win over Brentford.

Bees boss Thomas Frank later described Tonali's winner as a "one in a million cross", but when asked about the goal afterwards, Howe said: "Let me say one thing about Sandro: he can hit a ball like no-one."

"When he strikes it, I fear for our goalkeepers' wrists sometimes because he can hit it that hard, so I wouldn't put it past him meaning that."

"It was a big moment in the game because we needed it. At that moment, the game was very much in the balance, so it's a big moment in our season."

Tonali himself, however, admitted there was an element of fortune to his decisive strike.

He said: "It was definitely a good shot - but it was 70% cross, I am going to be honest with you. It was perfect, the speed. I was a little bit lucky because the keeper was not in the goal."

A victory which lifted the Carabao Cup winners into fifth place left them very much in the hunt for the Champions League places.

Howe revealed he was unsure how his side would respond in the first game back since their big day at Wembley.

"I was really hoping the players would be professional, but Wembley behind them and move forward and work, and we did - and we had to work."

"I think it was a massive win in our season. Credit to everybody because that wasn't an easy game."

For Brentford boss Frank, it was a case of what might have been as his side fell on the wrong side of a series of pivotal moments, including a late claim for a second penalty for Bruno Guimarães' challenge on substitute Mikkel Damsgaard which went unanswered.

He said: "If you want to win a game like this - just like any game, but to win a tight game against a good team - you need some of the margins to go your way."

"Unfortunately, we got on the wrong end of that, but the performance, I'm very pleased with it." - The Independent



Brentford's Yoane Wissa (left) in action with Newcastle United's Sandro Tonali. - REUTERS/SPIC

## Saints not throwing in towel as relegation looms

BY ANDY SIMS

**SOUTHAMPTON** boss Ivan Juric vowed to keep fighting as relegation moved sharply into focus after Crystal Palace denied them only a third Premier League win of the season.

Substitute Matheus Franca's stoppage-time header, to secure a 1-1 draw for the Eagles, means Saints will be down at the weekend if they lose at Tottenham and Wolves beat Ipswich.

If relegation is confirmed on Sunday, Southampton will be the first team to be consigned to the drop with seven matches still to play.

Even the 2007-08 Derby side, the low bar by which all poor Premier League teams are measured, had six games left, as did Huddersfield in 2019 and Sheffield United four seasons ago.

Saints did at least move on to double figures for the season, but they are still one shy of Derby's record low total points tally of 11.

Juric, whose side led through Paul Onuachu's 20th-minute header, said: "I'm very proud of the way we played today and very disappointed we didn't get the win because we did almost everything good."

"I'm really sorry for the fans and the guys that they didn't win because I think they deserved it."

"It was just a moment. I kept feeling we were in control of the game, that we don't risk anything. They didn't create anything or were dangerous."

"I had a really good feeling and then they were good in the moment, they were good in the cross and other things."

"I think the players made a step forward, I had a very good feeling we could compete today."

"We gain one point, we have to prepare well the next game and if we play like this every game we will gain the points."

"We just have to find a way to perform on Sunday to make the fans happy and to try to do our best." - The Independent



## RESULTS & STANDINGS

### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE:

**Bournemouth 1** (Evanilson 67) **Ipswich 2** (Broadhead 34, Delap 60), **Brighton 0 Aston Villa 3** (Rashford 51, Asensio 78, Malen 90+10), **Liverpool 1** (Jota 57) **Everton 0**, **Manchester City 2** (Grealish 2, Marmoush 29) **Leicester 0**, **Newcastle 2** (Isak 45+2, Tonali 74) **Brentford 1** (Mbeumo 66-pen), **Southampton 1** (Onuachu 20) **Crystal Palace 1** (Franca 90+2).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	30	22	7	1	70	27	73
Arsenal	30	17	10	3	55	25	61
Nottm Forest	30	17	6	7	50	35	57
Man City	30	15	6	9	57	40	51
Newcastle	29	15	5	9	49	39	50
Chelsea	29	14	7	8	53	37	49
Aston Villa	30	13	9	8	44	45	48
Brighton	30	12	11	7	48	45	47
Fulham	30	12	9	9	44	40	45
Bournemouth	30	12	8	10	49	38	44
Brentford	30	12	5	13	51	47	41
Crystal Palace	29	10	10	9	37	34	40
Man Utd	30	10	7	13	37	41	37
Tottenham	29	10	4	15	55	43	34
Everton	30	7	13	10	32	37	34
West Ham	30	9	7	14	33	50	34
Wolves	30	8	5	17	41	58	29
Ipswich	30	4	8	18	30	63	20
Leicester	30	4	5	21	25	67	17
Southampton	30	2	4	24	22	71	10

### CHAMPIONSHIP: Derby 2 Preston 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TOP 6							
Sheff Utd	39	26	7	6	56	29	83
Leeds	39	23	12	4	78	27	81
Burnley	39	22	15	2	53	11	81
Sunderland	39	20	12	7	56	37	72
Coventry	39	17	8	14	56	51	59
West Brom	39	13	18	8	48	35	57

**COPA DEL REY** (Semifinals, 2nd leg): **Atletico Madrid 0 Barcelona 1** (Torres 27) - Barcelona win 5-4 on agg.

**ITALIAN CUP** (Semifinals, 1st leg): **AC Milan 1** (Abraham 47) **Inter Milan 1** (Calhanoglu 67).

**GERMAN CUP** (Semifinals): **Stuttgart 3** (Stiller 5, Woltemade 57, Leweling 73) **RB Leipzig 1** (Sesko 62).

**French Cup** (Semifinals): **Cannes 1** (N'Doye 52) **Reims 2** (Ibrahim 14, Teuma 58).

## TOUCHLINES

**ARSENAL'S** new sporting director **Andrea Berta** met with **Athletic Bilbao** winger **Nico Williams'** agent in recent days to discuss a summer move for the 22-year-old Spain international.

**MANCHESTER CITY** manager **Pep Guardiola** and former Brighton boss **Roberto de Zerbi**, who is currently with **Marseille**, are being considered as candidates by **AC Milan**.

**LIVERPOOL** and **Chelsea** want to sign 19-year-old **Bournemouth** defender **Dean Huijsen** this summer, but will face competition from **Real Madrid** for the Spain international.

**EGYPT** forward **Mohamed Salah**, 32, is set to extend his contract with **Liverpool** after months of speculation.

**MANCHESTER UNITED**, **Liverpool** and **Newcastle** are showing interest in **Como's** 19-year-old **Senegal** winger **Assane Dia**.

**NEWCASTLE** will renew their interest in **Crystal Palace** and **England** defender **Marc Guehi**, 24, in the summer.

## Nor Farah power naps her way to the top

EVERY athlete has their own strategy as they seek success at the international level and it is no different for national lawn bowls queen **Nor Farah Ain Abdullah**, who relies on a quick power nap to recharge her batteries before taking on her rivals.

Nor Farah, who emerged as world champion last year, admits that catching 40 winks is one of the ways she maintains her focus and re-energises herself during tournaments.

"Most athletes will avoid taking a nap before competing, but I will take a 15-minute nap to re-energise. When I wake up, I feel

fresh, ready to stretch and be in battle mode," she told *Bernama* recently.

Nor Farah got into this routine by accident when she fell asleep due to fatigue when competing in the 2022 **Kuala Lumpur Malaysia Games** (Sukma).

To her surprise, that short nap proved refreshing and helped her focus better during the competition and, since then, she has made sure to take her power nap before each game.

"I can sleep anywhere, be it on a chair or in the changing room. I only need to close my face with a towel or something and I'll be asleep for

about 15 minutes," said the youngest of six siblings.

Nor Farah said that national head coach **Zuraiddi Puteh** is aware of her routine but he does not stop her as he believes in the saying, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it".

This practice of taking power naps is not something new in the world of sports as even British snooker legend **Ronnie O'Sullivan** and Jamaican sprint sensation **Usain Bolt** have both attested to the benefits of catching a quick nap before competitions, citing improved focus and energy.

Scientific studies in sports also showed that taking a short nap

before any physical activity helps improve reaction time, mental clarity and physical endurance.

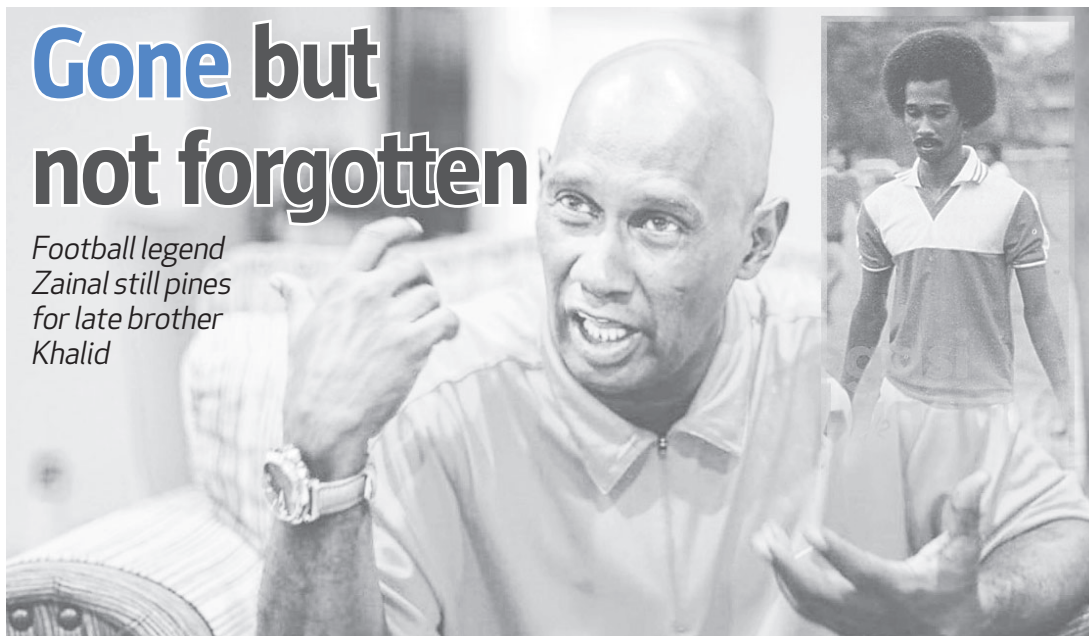
Nor Farah shot to fame when she won gold in the women's event at the 2024 **World Indoor Lawn Bowls Championships** in **Guernsey**, **Channel Islands**, in April last year.

Last month, the **Kuala Selangor**-born athlete continued to make **Malaysia** proud when she created history by moving up the ranks to become the world's No. 1 player.

Nor Farah is now preparing to defend her title at the 2025 **World Indoor Lawn Bowls Championships** in **Aberdeen**, **Scotland** from April 20-25. - *Bernama*

## Gone but not forgotten

Football legend **Zainal** still pines for late brother **Khalid**



IT MAY have been more than a year since the passing of national football legend **Khalid Ali**, but his absence is still deeply felt, especially among his fans and family members.

His younger brother, **Datuk Zainal Abidin Hassan**, also a former national player, said that his family continues to miss the constant chatter and jokes of **Khalid**, dubbed the family's "skipper", especially so during festive celebrations when they would all get together.

"This year marks the second **Aidilfitri** without **Khalid**. We still get together as usual but it's not the same because he was like the 'captain' of our family gatherings.

"His absence is deeply felt, so what I tell my family members is to continue praying for him," he told *Bernama*, his voice choked with emotion, when met recently.

According to **Zaina**, their mother's ancestral home at **Lorong Keramat Dalam 1**, **Kampung Datuk Keramat** in **Kuala Lumpur**, will continue to be a gathering place for their family, which now spans four generations.

However, the joy and laughter that once filled the house are now missing because it was **Khalid** who would usually be the life of the gatherings with his jokes, despite being a strict person who was the guiding figure in the family.

**Khalid** died on Feb 6 last year,

at the age of 66, at the **Universiti Malaya Medical Centre** in **Petaling Jaya** after battling lung cancer for about a year.

**Khalid** wore the national team jersey from 1977 to 1985, with his best achievement being helping the national squad qualify for the 1980 **Olympic Games** in **Moscow**, **Russia**.

"What I miss most about **Khalid** is that he would call me daily to invite me to go golfing. He wanted to teach me but I wasn't that interested... so, his wish never came true.

"Till today, I still regret not learning from him. He was a great golfer," said **Zainal Abidin**, who is also a **Football Association of**

**Malaysia** (FAM) executive committee member.

**Zainal Abidin** is not the only family member who shared **Khalid's** passion for football as their relatives - **Hanafiah** and **Abdul Rahman** - also played the game.

They all grew up under one roof and shared a common love for football, with each having represented **Selangor** and **Harimau Malaya** during the golden era of national football.

For **Zainal Abidin** and his other family members, **Khalid** was not just a great footballer but also a brother, a friend and a leader who left a lasting impact on their lives. - *Bernama*

## Are Pearly, Thinaah seeking independence?

SPECULATION is growing about another potential shake-up in **Malaysian badminton** following the recent split of the national mixed doubles pair **Chen Tang Jie** and **Toh Ee Wei**.

The grapevine suggests that the top women's doubles pair, **Pearly Tan** and **M. Thinaah**, are exploring opportunities outside the **Badminton Association of Malaysia** (BAM).

A source within the badminton fraternity said that the duo is rumored to be in discussions with potential sponsors beyond the national setup.

"Nothing is confirmed but there are talks that they are considering options outside **BAM**," said the source.

It remains unclear whether **Pearly** and **Thinaah** are bound by a long-term contract with **BAM** or if they are free to take an independent route. Should they choose to leave, they would not be the first top pair to do so.

Last year, the men's doubles duo **Goh Sze Fei** and **Nur Izzuddin Rumsani** left the national team to pursue an independent career after signing

with the equipment brand **Victor**.

Since then, they have won several **World Tour** titles and reached a career-high ranking of world No. 2.

**Pearly** and **Thinaah** were first paired in 2019 and are currently ranked No. 5 in the world.

Their notable achievements include winning three **World Tour** titles and becoming the first **Malaysian women's** doubles pair to reach the semifinals at the **Paris Olympics** last year. - *scoop.my*





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SCAN ME

**D**AVID MOYES bemoaned an "offside" goal that gave Liverpool a 1-0 win over Everton – but admitted James Tarkowski was lucky to avoid an early red card on a controversial night at Anfield.

Diogo Jota's 57th-minute goal gave Liverpool a 100th derby win and moved them a step closer to the Premier League title, but both sides were left unhappy with decisions from referee Sam Barrott and his assistants.

Jota took his goal, his first since January, in some style, but Moyes fumed over the build-up after his nine-match unbeaten run since returning to Everton ended.

Liverpool defender Stephen Warnock said: "This challenge is nasty from James Tarkowski. He wins the ball, but follows through on Alexis Mac Allister."

"Tarkowski knows exactly what he's doing in that situation. I think it is so dangerous. It is out of control from Tarkowski."

Slot, sent off for his protests when these sides met at Goodison Park in February, held his tongue.

"I don't want to comment on the situation because so many already did and even people who are not liking Liverpool a lot are saying how clear and obvious it was," he said.



# 'He's offside!'

*Moyes bemoans Jota winner as Liverpool edge bad-tempered derby*

Luis Diaz was in an offside position when Ryan Gravenberch played the ball forward, but Jota capitalised after Tarkowski cut out a pass heading in his direction.

"He's offside," Moyes said. "I've not sought an explanation. I've said to (the officials) I'm disappointed. I think it's quite an easy one to give."

"All our players are holding the 18-yard line and Diaz has come from behind and affects Tarky from behind."

"I'm really surprised it wasn't given, or maybe I'm not surprised... I don't think there's many managers who come here and think they get loads of decisions at Anfield."

"I wasn't sure how well the linesmen have done their jobs tonight. There were early flags, late flags, I didn't think they've done particularly well."

Moyes even got some sympathy from Liverpool boss Arne Slot.

"It was not offside according to the rules," the Dutchman said.

"Do I like the rules? No. I do not like the rule, it is not a rule that helps the team wanting to attack."

"So I hate that rule, but the execution of the rule was fortunately for us well done in that situation."

Before then the main talking point had been over Tarkowski's reckless early challenge on Alexis Mac Allister. The Everton defender clearly won the ball, but caught the Argentinian high on the back of the calf with his follow through.

Barrott showed a yellow, a decision quickly upheld following a VAR check, but one few agreed with. Former Everton hard man Duncan Ferguson said it was a "straight red all day" on *Sky Sports*.

Fellow pundit Gary Neville was convinced that Tarkowski should have been given his marching orders, describing the challenge as a "potential leg-breaker."

"I think he's very lucky there. There will be those saying it's a natural follow through. Trust me, being a defender, you do not need to follow through like that and with such force. It's high. Very lucky."

Meanwhile, on BBC Radio 5 Live, former

Moyes was more open in his view.

"I thought at the time it was a brilliant tackle for a derby game," he said. "You people are all asking for (physical play) and then when you get it you want a sending off, so be careful what you wish for."

"I thought it was a brilliant tackle, but since I've seen it and come back in we could have been lucky he didn't get a red. It looked high but it depends what era you want to watch your football in."

While he questioned the officials, Moyes had "no complaints" over the result away to a side now 12 points clear at the top, and Slot admitted Everton had made his players work hard for their win.

"It was hard fought but that is definitely not a surprise," he said. "Nine games unbeaten, Everton, they hardly concede a goal, hardly ever conceded a chance."

"We had to be there many times and you hope one time it will be enough, and it was for Diogo." – The Independent



Everton's James Tarkowski (right) fouls Liverpool's Alexis Mac Allister yesterday. – REUTERS/SPIC

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