



More Malaysians investing in gold as safe-haven asset

Demand surged over past five years, fuelled by strong cultural ties, rallying prices, and shifting consumer preferences post Covid-19 pandemic: Jeweller

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Teacher held over alleged sexual harassment

Police say student and former student claim in their reports that suspect had sent them obscene messages and invited them to engage in sexual acts.

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'Stunting strikes hardest in child's first 1,000 days'

Nutritional interventions that start only at school-going age usually too late to reverse physical and cognitive impacts, says expert

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CIVIC DUTY ... Cpl Mahamat Udin, 59, is given a hand on his way to the Third Battalion of General Operations Force's Senior Officers Recreation Hall in Bidor, Perak, during early voting for the Ayer Kuning state by-election yesterday. — **BERNAMAPIC**

Special Dewan sitting on tariffs

Economists call for multi-pronged strategy to weather looming storm, including direct engagement with US; diversifying Malaysia's trade portfolio; and rally neighbouring countries to act in concert and strengthen regional resilience.

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Selangor Sultan, Tengku Permaisuri visit Pak Lah's grave

KUALA LUMPUR: Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah and Tengku Permaisuri Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin visited the grave of former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at the Heroes Mausoleum yesterday.

The Royal Couple arrived at the mausoleum at 9.30am and poured scented water and scattered flower petals on the grave.

Sultan Sharafuddin and Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin also joined *tahill* prayers led by the Mufti of Selangor Datuk Dr Anhar Opir.

Also present were Tun Abdullah's son, Tan Sri Kamaluddin, daughter Nori, and son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin.

Before leaving, the Royal Highnesses also visited the graves of Malaysia's second and third prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein and Tun Hussein Onn, and second deputy prime minister Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman.

Tun Abdullah, the country's fifth prime minister and fondly known as Pak Lah, passed away at the National Heart Institute on April 14, aged 85. — Bernama

Call for contingency plans, bold policies amid tariff shock

► May 5th special Dewan sitting crucial moment to deliberate smart proactive strategies to chart way forward: Economists

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: As Malaysia prepares for a special Dewan Rakyat sitting on May 5 to address the US-imposed 24% tariffs, economists are calling for a robust, multi-pronged strategy.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's Putra Business School Assoc Prof Dr Ida Md Yasin emphasised the need for layered contingency planning.

"Diplomacy should be our first line of defence. According to the Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry, Malaysia's Plan A involves direct engagement with the US — seeking either a reduction or exemption from the tariffs."

However, Ida cautioned that the country must be ready with fallback

plans if negotiations fail.

"We can't rely on a single track. If Plan A doesn't succeed, there must be a Plan B, and even a Plan C."

"At the end of the day, we don't control the policy decisions of another nation."

She also stressed the importance of diversifying Malaysia's trade portfolio beyond the US, which currently ranks as the country's third or fourth largest trading partner by value.

"If the US is retreating, that signals hesitation in continuing trade. But there are over 200 countries out there — if one door closes, we knock on the other 199 (doors)."

"This is the time to build a long-term strategy that curbs over-dependence on any single partner."

Ida expressed confidence that the upcoming parliamentary sitting would

deliver substance, not just sound bites.

"I believe we'll see at least two or three concrete strategies put forward to chart the way ahead."

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan's Prof Datuk Dr Nik Maheran Nik Muhammad warned that the tariffs could hit key sectors hard — particularly the electronics and semiconductors, which underpin Malaysia's exports and employment.

She noted that even if Malaysia isn't directly targeted, the ripple effects could be significant due to the nation's critical role in the global supply chain.

"Much of our exports go to countries like China, which are directly impacted by US tariffs. If their trade slows, we're bound to feel the consequences."

"This interconnectedness makes it vital for Malaysia to assess and respond to both the direct and wider implications of US trade policy."

As the current Asean Chair, she said Malaysia is in a unique position to spearhead a collective regional response.

"We should rally neighbouring countries to act in concert and strengthen regional resilience."

Nik Maheran also underscored the need for Malaysia to reinforce its image as a stable, business-friendly hub.

"We must show the world that Malaysia is a reliable place to do business."

She also urged the government to raise the issue at global trade platforms such as the World Trade Organisation.

"We must speak out at international trade summits. It might not yield instant results, but it signals our commitment to fair trade and helps build global support."

Nik Maheran also called for bold policy moves — not mere political posturing.

She outlined several key priorities, among them — supporting impacted industries, helping businesses tap into new markets, attracting foreign investment, safeguarding jobs, upskilling the workforce and a national contingency plan for future global disruptions.

She also said the special sitting must serve as a turning point.

"MPs must use this opportunity to shield our economy, back industries and workers, and show real leadership."

Audit proposed to enhance understanding of national identity

KUALA LUMPUR: A national audit mechanism should be introduced to assess the level of understanding among individuals and institutions regarding the core values and national identity rooted in the Federal Constitution and *Rukun Negara*.

Psychological Operations Fellow at the Centre for Media and Information Warfare Studies UiTM, Dr Noor Nirwandy Mat Noordin said the audit should be conducted regularly to reinforce national awareness and prevent incidents like the recent display of an incomplete illustration of the *Jalur Gemilang*.

"The (national identity audit) algorithm must be actively promoted across all social media platforms by government agencies, private entities and all Malaysians to restore informal learning syllabi aimed at educating and cultivating a sense of national identity and responsibility."

"The initiative is in line with the Yang diPertuan Agong's call for serious attention to be given to such matters to avoid recurrence. The audit could help address the root causes of issues that threaten the nation's harmony."

His comment comes in the wake of an incident last week involving a Chinese daily that published an incomplete image of the Malaysian flag.

Noor Nirwandy suggested that special attention be given to the younger generation in the proposed audit, as their exposure to rapid technological developments and social media often left them disoriented and unable to distinguish between fact and misinformation.

He said if such an audit is

conducted regularly across all levels of society, including education on the symbolism of every element of *Jalur Gemilang*, it could foster a new culture of national pride and patriotism, Bernama reported.

"The *Jalur Gemilang* is not just a symbol of our country's sovereignty. It represents the dignity, honour and identity of the people and the nation under the umbrella of protection of the Yang diPertuan Agong."

Nor Nirwandy said a gaffe involving the national flag should not have occurred under any circumstance, as the flag reflects the identity of the people and commands respect from all institutions and individuals in the country.

"That's why it is vital for all Malaysians, as well as foreign entities doing business in the country, to understand and respect the meaning and significance of the national flag."

He further proposed the enactment of a specific law aimed at protecting the country's identity from any act that could tarnish or undermine it.

On April 15, *Sin Chew Daily* published an illustration of the *Jalur Gemilang* on its front page but the image of the flag was without the yellow crescent moon, a key element symbolising Islam, the official religion of Malaysia. Following backlash, the local daily issued an apology, attributing the mistake to a "technical error" and expressing regret over the incident.

On April 16, another media outlet, *Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, was asked by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) to explain a post on its official Facebook page that also depicted an incomplete *Jalur Gemilang*.



Saifuddin (right) getting acquainted with those present at the Home Ministry's monthly assembly. He had told reporters earlier that any form of negligence, carelessness or oversight that could cause public unease must be avoided.

— BERNAMAPIC

Probe into another faulty *Jalur Gemilang*

PUTRAJAYA: The Home Ministry is investigating a video clip that was widely shared recently, showing an incomplete version of the *Jalur Gemilang* displayed at a baby expo in the capital.

Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said it would be conducted in the same manner as the probe into a previous incident involving the publication of the faulty flag on the front page of a daily.

"I take this opportunity to remind all parties that the national flag is a symbol of our national identity, carrying deep meaning and significance."

"Any form of negligence, carelessness or oversight that could cause public unease must be avoided."

Saifuddin said this during a press

conference after the ministry's monthly assembly yesterday, Bernama reported.

The controversy arose after a display of the flag at the Singapore Lactation Bakes' booth during the TCE Baby Expo was circulated on social media.

The *Jalur Gemilang* shown behind the stage was reportedly without the crescent moon, prompting widespread public criticism.

Regarding the investigation into *Sin Chew Daily*, Saifuddin said it would be conducted responsibly and with wisdom, in accordance with existing laws.

"We received a response from the daily yesterday. We will review it first before taking further action."

On April 17, media outlets reported that the editor-in-chief and

deputy chief sub-editor of *Sin Chew Daily* had been detained to assist police investigation into the publication of an incomplete *Jalur Gemilang* on the daily's front page.

IGP Tan Sri Razarudin Husain confirmed the two individuals had been detained, but were released a few hours later.

The Chinese daily had published the flag on its front page as part of its coverage of Chinese President Xi Jinping's recent state visit to Malaysia. The missing crescent moon drew criticism from various quarters, including His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim.

Sultan Ibrahim had urged the newspaper's management and editorial team to be more sensitive and to thoroughly review all content prior to publication.

More M'sians investing in gold as safe-haven asset

➤ Surging prices and cultural trust drive demand, with local jeweller noting rising interest amid global uncertainty, shifting financial habits

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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AMPANG: As global uncertainties renew interest in safe-haven assets, more Malaysians are turning to gold – not just as ornamental pieces, but as a trusted form of savings and investment.

Homegrown jeweller Habib Jewels has seen a steady rise in demand over the past five years, driven by strong cultural ties, surging gold prices and shifting consumer preferences post Covid-19.

Group executive chairman Datuk Seri Meer Habib told *theSun* that gold remains deeply embedded in the purchasing habits of Malaysians, whether for milestone events, financial security or asset diversification.

"The motivation is deeply rooted in culture across all major ethnic groups in Malaysia. Long before formal banking systems were established, gold served as a trusted store of value.

"Families would buy gold to be sold later when funds were needed for the *hajj* pilgrimage, children's education or property purchases. To this day, gold remains a symbol of security and trust for many Malaysians," he said.

He added that gold-buying behaviour changed significantly during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

The resulting global economic disruptions and rising national debts prompted many to turn to gold as a hedge against inflation.

"Since January 2020, gold prices have surged by approximately 126%. In 2023 alone, prices increased by about 28%, and this year has seen even more dramatic growth, with a 31% rise recorded in just the first few months.

"Overall, prices have climbed about 44% since early 2024, making gold one of the most stable and high-performing assets in today's financial climate."

He noted that while younger Malaysians



Meer noted that while younger Malaysians were once more inclined towards cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, there is now a growing shift in preference towards gold. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

were once more inclined towards cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, there is now a growing shift in preference towards gold.

"This is quite a rare scenario where you're able to purchase something, enjoy wearing it and later sell it for a profit. That's the unique advantage of gold jewellery."

During the pandemic, many Malaysians withdrew their EPF savings, but those who chose to invest in gold have since seen significant returns.

"Even with gold prices at record highs, public confidence remains strong. Despite my own caution that prices may have risen too fast, Malaysians continue to invest. Their confidence has even surpassed my expectations."

While digital gold investments are gaining traction, Meer said many Malaysians still prefer physical gold due to the sense of security and tangibility it offers.

He attributed this preference to Malaysia's mature gold ecosystem, where gold remains highly liquid and can be easily sold at jewellery stores or even abroad.

"Habib's own gold bars, certified by the London Bullion Market Association, are internationally recognised and can be traded worldwide."

He described the current surge in gold

prices as unusual, driven by global factors such as inflation, pandemic-related debt and ongoing geopolitical tensions.

"China and Russia are buying more gold as confidence in the US dollar drops, especially after sanctions during the Russia-Ukraine war.

"Recent US trade policies and political uncertainties have further accelerated this trend. In times of uncertainty, gold remains a reliable safe haven."

Habib Jewels also introduced collectible gold wafers – an innovation now widely adopted across the industry.

He emphasised the brand's commitment to craftsmanship and its annual focus on promoting traditional Malaysian arts through limited edition 0.2-gram gold pieces.

This year, the focus is on the *wau* (traditional kite), with Habib creating designs inspired by the cultural symbol.

"It's not just about the gold value, but also the collectability and uniqueness that people find appealing."

"Habib is a proud Malaysian identity. We're as good as, if not better than, international brands. It's time Malaysians recognise the value in local craftsmanship, and Habib is committed to putting Malaysia on the map with our world-class jewellery designs."

National Workers' Day to be celebrated at Axiata Arena on May 1

PUTRAJAYA: The 2025 National Workers' Day celebration will be held at Axiata Arena, Bukit Jalil, in Kuala Lumpur on May 1, according to Human Resources Minister Steven Sim.

He said the celebration, themed Pekerja Kesuma Bangsa, is expected to attract 10,000 visitors and will be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"Today, we are holding a pre-launch for the 2025 Labour Day celebration and this year's programme will be held at Axiata Arena."

"The programme will begin on April 28 with a Labour Day carnival featuring various activities, including a career carnival, job fair, skills training and more," he said after attending the Human Resources Ministry's (Kesuma) monthly assembly and the pre-launch of the celebration yesterday.

One of the main attractions will be the Mega Career Carnival, offering 10,000 job opportunities in the private sector and government-linked companies as well as discounts of up to 50% on Royal Malaysian Police summonses.

"I am inviting the public to visit Axiata Arena starting April 28 to experience the excitement of the Labour Day celebration for themselves," he added.

When asked whether any major announcements are expected, Sim hinted that the prime minister is likely to unveil several new developments.

"Yes, but you have to wait. There will be several announcements in terms of policies and new programmes that may be announced by the prime minister and myself."

Meanwhile, Kesuma announced in a statement that it will launch the "MYFutureJobs application: A Progressive Step to Empower Job Seekers" in conjunction with the national-level celebration.

The mobile application is part of the ministry's broader push to digitalise the national labour system. – Bernama

MOH issues over 37,000 notices under Act 852

KUALA TERENGGANU: The Health Ministry (MOH) has issued 37,381 notices for various offences under the Control of Smoking Products for Public Health Act 2024 (Act 852) between Oct 1, 2024, when the Act came into force, and March 31.

Health deputy director-general (public health) Datuk Dr Norhayati Rusli said the notices were issued following 10,212 operations conducted nationwide.

She added that 116 cases have been brought to court for offences under several provisions of the Act, including Section 7(1) on the prohibition of advertising tobacco products, Section 9(1) on the prohibition of promotion or sponsorship, Section 10(1) on the prohibition of sales, Section 11(1) on the prohibition of selling imitation tobacco products and Section 12(1) on the prohibition of tobacco products as gifts.

During the same period, the ministry seized 11,563 smoking products valued at RM266,833.10.

"Previously, the MOH conducted educational enforcement involving 206,657 individuals engaged in the sale of cigarettes, to ensure they understand and comply with the provisions of Act 852," she said during the launch of enforcement operations under *Op Cakna Pengukuasaan Undang-Undang Kesihatan Awam Siri 2/2025* held on Monday. – Bernama

Visa exemption extended for five years to boost economy

PUTRAJAYA: The Visa Liberalisation Plan (VLP) for Chinese visitors has been extended for another five years, following its immediate positive impact on Malaysia's economy, according to Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

The decision was part of several memoranda of understanding and documents signed during Chinese President Xi Jinping's recent state visit to Malaysia, covering multiple areas of cooperation.

Among them was a joint visa exemption agreement for holders of public affairs and ordinary passports, signed by Saifuddin and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

"We will extend it for the next five years, and after that, there will be an option to renew it for another five – allowing Chinese nationals to stay in our country for up to 90 days as tourists."

"And China will reciprocate with the same arrangement for us," he said after the Home Ministry's monthly assembly yesterday.

The VLP is aimed at boosting national income and will be supported by enhancements to immigration facilities for travellers from Europe, Southeast Asia, the Middle East and West Asia.

China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian said the joint visa exemption would deepen exchanges and cooperation, further strengthening the China-Malaysia community with a shared future.

Saifuddin noted that the arrangement has already shown results, with tourist arrivals from China increasing.

According to Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry data, Chinese tourists spend an average of RM7,000 during their stay in Malaysia.

"So when we look at the arrival numbers, it's clear this is a formula with immediate economic benefits and significant impact," he added.

As of April this year, Malaysia has recorded about 900,000 tourist arrivals from China.

More than four million Chinese tourists visited the country last year.

He stressed that tourism is an important economic contributor due to its immediate impact compared with investments.

In a separate development, Saifuddin launched the Investigation and Complaints Management System (Speaks) designed to simplify the process

of lodging complaints against Royal Malaysia Police personnel.

"Anyone wishing to file a complaint against enforcement officers can now do so through the Speaks platform, provided they include complete details such as the time, location, individuals involved and nature of the incident," he said.

The platform will channel complaints to the Independent Police Conduct Commission (IPCC), enabling timely and appropriate action to be taken.

On MyDigital ID, Saifuddin, who also chairs the Cabinet Committee on MyDigital ID – announced that the ministry will table amendments to the National Registration Act to support its legal framework.

"Our task is to present these amendments in Parliament to ensure the application, use and transactions involving Digital ID are recognised as legally valid," he explained.

He added that the National Registration Department has been appointed as the lead agency for MyDigital ID pre-registration to accelerate enrolment nationwide. – Bernama



School meals alone **not enough** to combat stunting

➤ Expert urges focus on nutrition in first 1,000 days as long-term impact persists beyond schooling age despite support programmes

■ BY **QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI**
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PETALING JAYA: An expert has warned that stunting – a silent crisis that begins in the womb and strikes hardest in the first 1,000 days – leaves lifelong scars that school-based feeding programmes alone are powerless to reverse.

Although school menus are designed by licensed dietitians and typically include rice, vegetables, protein and milk, the meals also serve as a nutritional safety net for children from low-income households, whose diets may lack essential nutrients at home.

Universiti Teknologi Mara Faculty of Applied Sciences senior lecturer Dr Azizah Othman said existing school meal programmes, while beneficial, are not sufficient to fully address stunting among pupils.

“By this age, stunting has often already occurred, so nutritional interventions that begin only at school-going age are usually too late to reverse the physical and cognitive impacts.

“Stunted growth has long been considered permanent after the age of two, but new research shows partial recovery is possible even after the age of five with proper diet and healthcare,” she said.

Azizah stressed that although early intervention remains the most effective strategy, efforts after age five can still significantly improve a child’s health and development, underscoring the need for continued support for stunted children at all ages.

She explained that while full height restoration to genetic potential becomes less likely with age, targeted interventions, such as nutrient-rich supplements, infection control and a healthier diet, can promote catch-up growth in muscle mass, organ function and cognitive performance.

“Parents and teachers can spot early signs of stunted growth by monitoring physical development and daily behaviours. A consistently modest height gain for age, reflected in static growth charts or clothing that is not quickly outgrown, is a key red flag.

“A child who avoids nutritious food, eats slowly, falls sick often, tires easily during play or appears smaller than peers may be showing signs of poor growth,” she added.

While low weight-for-age is not always a direct indicator, Azizah noted that persistent underweight combined with developmental delays, such as late motor milestones, should raise concern.

She said poor growth is primarily caused by prolonged protein deficiency, which disrupts cell development and hormone production, along with shortages of essential nutrients such as iron (for brain function and oxygen flow), zinc (for

DNA and immune health), and calcium or vitamin D (for bone development).

“These deficiencies often occur together, creating a cycle where poor nutrition reduces appetite and absorption, while frequent infections, worsened by a weakened immune system, further drain nutrients.

“To prevent these gaps from becoming permanent, it is vital to bridge them with diverse diets, supplements and effective infection control,” she said.

Azizah acknowledged that Malaysia has introduced several measures to combat stunting, led by the Health and Education Ministries under the National Plan of Action for Nutrition of Malaysia 2016 to 2025, which adopts a life-course approach to improving national nutrition.

Initiatives such as the *Rancangan Makanan Tambahan* programme provide nutritious meals to primary school pupils from low-income families, while nationwide nutrition education and health campaigns aim to raise awareness.

“However, despite these efforts, stunting remains a pressing concern, particularly in rural and underserved communities.

“Strengthening inter-agency collaboration, prioritising early-life nutrition and addressing social determinants such as poverty and education will be key to achieving lasting progress,” she said.

In March, the Education Ministry reported that more than 90,000 pupils aged between 10 and 12 were affected by stunted growth last year, based on findings from the National Physical Fitness Standard and Body Mass Index analysis.

Penang urged to lead shift to innovation-driven economy

GEORGE TOWN: Human Resources Minister Steven Sim has urged Penang’s semiconductor and advanced technology industries to reimagine the state’s future amid global economic uncertainty, calling for a bold shift from a traditional manufacturing hub to a high-value, innovation-driven economy.

In a statement, the Human Resources Ministry outlined a vision to move beyond the conventional “Made in Penang/Malaysia” branding to a new paradigm – “Made by Penang/Malaysia” – with emphasis on homegrown innovation, technology ownership and talent development.

Sim called on industry leaders to adopt what he termed “strategic optimism” in the face of global headwinds, encouraging them to turn uncertainty into opportunity and accelerate Malaysia’s transition into a resilient, innovation-led economy.

“This vision centres on nurturing local talent, developing homegrown technology, and attracting strategic investments.

“We want Penang-based companies not only to serve global supply chains, but also to innovate, design and own technologies backed by Malaysian expertise,” he said.

Acknowledging the challenges faced by the sector, the statement noted that the government is implementing targeted strategies to strengthen the national economy, including internal consolidation, regional integration and international diversification.

Sim’s remarks were made in conjunction with two industrial dialogues hosted by InvestPenang over the weekend. The sessions were attended by Deputy Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Liew Chin Tong, InvestPenang CEO Datuk Loo Lee Lian and over 30 stakeholders from the semiconductor and high-tech sectors, including representatives from multinational corporations and local SMEs.

The dialogues addressed the impact of global economic shifts and Malaysia’s long-term position within the global value chain.

As Malaysia assumes the Asean chairmanship this year, Sim also highlighted the country’s role in leading efforts to strengthen Asean as a cohesive economic bloc.

He referred to a recent joint statement by the Asean Economic Ministers reaffirming the region’s commitment to navigating global market volatility collectively.

Sim added that while Malaysia continues to engage with traditional trade partners, it is also expanding its reach by deepening ties with emerging global players such as BRICS, the European Union, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership member states and its Asean neighbours.

“This strategy is not only about building trade resilience — Malaysia can also leverage its non-trade strategic advantages.

“Our strategic location, multicultural society and position as a stable middle power continue to attract global investors looking for neutrality and certainty,” he said.

Echoing Sim’s remarks, Liew said the evolving global trade environment presents an opportunity for Penang and Malaysia to shift from an FDI-driven, outsourced manufacturing model to a more self-sufficient, innovation-based economy.

Loo noted that companies are currently reassessing their strategies in response to rising global uncertainties. — Bernama

No approval for new pig farms in Muslim-majority areas

IPOH: The Perak government has not approved any new pig farms in areas with a majority Muslim population, according to State Human Resources, Health, Indian Community Affairs and National Integration Committee chairman A. Sivanesan.

He said most existing farms are long-established operations located on private land and were set up before the introduction of modern farming guidelines.

“As chairman of the Pig Farm Restructuring Committee, I have worked closely with the Veterinary Department, Health Department, local councils, land offices and other stakeholders to take more decisive action,” he said during the winding-up debate on the royal address at the Perak State Legislative Assembly sitting on Monday.

Sivanesan reported that 30 pig farms had been shut down due to legal enforcement, disease outbreaks or land ownership and usage issues. This has reduced the total number of farms from 115 at the end of 2022 to 85 currently. The farms that were closed are permanently shut and will not be allowed to resume operations.

He also dismissed allegations of widespread illegal pig farming in Perak, emphasising that all 85 operational farms are licensed by the state’s Veterinary Services Department.

As a long-term solution, the state government is undertaking a legalisation and restructuring exercise, which includes relocating farms to approved zones and ensuring full compliance with the Modern Pig Farming concept. — Bernama



UNINVITED GUESTS ... A group of silver leaf monkeys seen near the venue of the Asean Women Parliamentarians Meeting under the 45th Asean Inter-Parliamentary Assembly general assembly in Kuching, Sarawak yesterday. — **BERNAMAPIC**

Chicken factory shut due to odour pollution

ALOR SETAR: A chicken processing factory in Kulim has been subjected to Equipment Operation Detention (POK) action by the Department of Environment (DOE) for causing odour pollution and discomfort to nearby residents.

Kedah DOE director Sharifah Zakiah Syed Sahab said the action was taken under Section 38(1)(a) of the Environmental Quality Act 1974 following a complaint regarding foul odours emitted by the factory.

Acting on the complaint, a DOE team visited the premises and found that the pollution originated from piles of chicken slaughter waste and chicken cages stored at the site.

“The factory was issued the POK order for failing to provide an industrial effluent treatment system on its premises,” she said in a statement.

With the enforcement of the POK action, the factory is required to take immediate steps to halt the pollution. — Bernama

Cops confirm arrest of teacher over sexual harassment

Two victims aged 15 and 25 lodge police reports, suspect held for four days

ALOR SETAR: Police have confirmed the arrest of a male teacher from a private school near here who is suspected of sexually harassing several students.

Kota Setar police chief ACP Siti Nor Salawati Saad said the 34-year-old suspect was detained at 4.45pm on Saturday.

"Police have received two reports of sexual harassment involving the suspect, lodged by two victims aged 15 and 25, at the Alor Setar police station.

"The first report, received on April 18, was lodged by a former student who claimed that

the teacher had sent her obscene messages and invited her to engage in sexual acts.

"She came forward after learning that he had allegedly behaved similarly towards other students."

Siti Nor Salawati said the second report was lodged on April 19 by another victim, who claimed she had received obscene messages and was asked to send nude photos and engage in sexual acts with the same teacher.

She said the suspect has been remanded for four days to assist with the investigation.

The case is being investigated under Section 509 of the Penal Code and Section 15(a)/11 of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017, Bernama reported.

In a separate case in Terengganu, police arrested a woman suspected of scolding and assaulting her young daughter at a laundromat in Chukai last Wednesday.

Kemaman police chief Supt Mohd Razi Rosli

said the 45-year-old was arrested at her home at 7.27pm on Monday.

He said the arrest was made after a CCTV recording was widely shared on social media showing a girl being scolded and assaulted by a woman believed to be her mother at a laundromat.

"Investigations revealed that the woman acted in such a manner – scolding and hitting the child – out of concern for her daughter's safety as the child had been running in front of the shop and was at risk of being hit by a vehicle."

He said an initial medical report found that the victim sustained minor injuries to the middle of her forehead and is currently under the care of her father.

"Police are urging witnesses to come forward or contact the Kemaman district police headquarters operations room at 09-859 2222 to assist with the investigation," he said.

Group wanted for armed robbery

SHAH ALAM: Police are tracking a group of men suspected of committing a robbery while armed with a *parang* at a flower shop in Jenjarom, Kuala Langat near here.

Kuala Langat deputy police chief DSP Mohd Sufian Amin said this followed a report by a woman at 4.50pm on Monday claiming that she was robbed at the flower shop at 1.30pm.

According to the report, the woman claimed that a group of men, with their heads covered and armed with a *parang*, arrived in a white car and approached her in the shop.

"One of them pointed the *parang* at her before snatching a gold necklace, worth RM4,000, she was wearing."

Mohd Sufian said the victim, who was with her child in the shop, was not harmed.

He said police have opened an investigation paper under Section 395/397 of the Penal Code and urged those with information regarding the incident to contact the Kuala Langat district police headquarters operations room at 03-3187 2222 to assist in the investigation. – Bernama

MACC to quiz Ismail Sabri again tomorrow

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) will recall Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob tomorrow to resume recording his statement as part of ongoing investigations into alleged corruption and money laundering.

Its chief commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki said the upcoming session pertains specifically to the former prime minister's asset declaration submitted under Section 36(1) of the MACC Act 2009.

"He is being recalled to continue providing his statement," Azam said briefly after attending the 11th Certified Integrity Officer Convocation Ceremony yesterday.

The Bera MP is under investigation over alleged corruption and money laundering involving the acquisition and use of funds for the promotion and publicity of the Keluarga Malaysia programme during his tenure from August 2021 to November 2022.

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

On March 3, Azam was reported as stating that Ismail Sabri is a suspect in a corruption and money laundering case, following the discovery of about RM170 million in multiple currencies and 16kg of gold bars during a MACC raid at a designated safe house.

The MACC has reportedly frozen 13 bank accounts to facilitate the investigation.

On the illegal encroachment of land in Raub, Pahang, Azam confirmed that the MACC opened an investigation on the matter in 2021 and will continue its investigation in light of recent developments.

"Our focus will be on two aspects. First, the



Ismail Sabri is under investigation over alleged corruption and money laundering involving the acquisition and use of funds during his tenure from August 2021 to November 2022. – BERNAMAPIC

element of corruption concerning how the illegal land encroachments occurred over a certain period. Second, issues of governance within the district office and the Land and Mines Office."

On April 14, the Sultan of Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah took a firm stance that there should be no unlawful encroachment of land in the state and appropriate action must be taken

against those involved.

Previously, an enforcement operation at durian orchards in Raub drew widespread attention after some growers expressed grievance over the destruction of their crops, Bernama reported.

However, the Pahang government denied any violation of a court order with the felling of about 200 Musang King durian trees in Sungai Klau, Raub on April 8.

Engineer loses RM1.1m in investment scheme

KUANTAN: An engineer has lost more than RM1.1 million after falling victim to a non-existent investment scheme promoted through a website.

Pahang police chief Datuk Seri Yahaya Othman said the 36-year-old man became interested in the scheme and began investing through an online platform on Dec 3 last year.

He said the victim made 19 transactions involving seven bank accounts, using his savings as well as loans from family and friends to invest.

"He only received a return of RM15,032.53 before the platform's administrator began giving various excuses to block the withdrawal of more than RM4 million, which was allegedly the profit from the investments."

He added that the victim, upon realising he had been deceived, lodged a police report at the Kuantan district police headquarters on Monday. – Bernama

Bid to smuggle teak saplings foiled

KOTA BHARU: The General Operations Force (GOF) Southeast Brigade has foiled an attempt to smuggle 5,000 merbau (Malacca teak) saplings during the Op Taring Wawasan, which was conducted in front of a school near Rantau Panjang.

Its commander Datuk Nik Ros Azhan Nik Ab Hamid said that in the 8.30pm incident on Monday, a team from the 7th Battalion, while on a routine patrol, stopped a lorry being driven suspiciously and discovered tree saplings believed to have been smuggled from a neighbouring country.

He said further inspection discovered that the saplings are suspected to be infected with pests and diseases, and the 42-year-old lorry driver failed to produce documentation or authorisation for transporting the plants.

"The total value of the seizure, including the lorry, is estimated at RM550,000 and the case is being investigated under Section 5 of the Plant Quarantine Act 1976.

"The suspect and seized items have been handed over to the Kelantan Agriculture Department for further action. The GOF will continue to intensify operations to address the smuggling of foreign plants, which pose a threat to the ecosystem and the safety of local crops." – Bernama

Online scams cost Pahang retirees over RM20m

KUANTAN: From 2022 to 2024, online scams have cost retired civil servants in Pahang more than RM20 million, affecting 302 individuals, the Pahang legislative assembly was told yesterday.

State Consumer Affairs and Human Resources Committee chairman Sim Chon Siang said in 2022, 85 retirees were scammed, incurring losses of more than RM8.9 million.

In 2023, 102 retirees were duped, with losses totalling RM3.7 million, while in 2024, 115 victims recorded losses of RM8.9 million.

"Over the same period, 5,658 individuals were targeted in online scams, with total losses reaching RM120 million," he said during the assembly sitting at Wisma Sri Pahang yesterday.

He was responding to a question from appointed assemblyman Datuk Wong Tat Chee, who asked how many people in Pahang have fallen victim to online scams in the past three years, and the total losses involving retired civil servants, Bernama reported.

In a separate development, state Agriculture, Agro-based Industry, Biotechnology and Education Committee chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Soffi Abd Razak said the state government has implemented the Pahang Hybrid School Pilot Project in six schools under the Education Ministry's Digital Education Policy.

He said each school was allocated five classrooms, bringing the total number of

classrooms involved to 30.

The schools selected for the project are Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Abdul Rahman Talib and SMK Sultanah Hajjah Kalsom in Kuantan, SMK Seri Jengka in Maran, SMK Padang Saujana in Jerantut, SMK Sulaiman in Bentong and SMK Agama Kuala Lipis in Lipis.

He was addressing Datuk Mustapa Long (BN-Padang Tengklu), who asked for the list of schools and the number of classrooms involved in the pilot phase of the policy, as well as the sources of funding to support the initiative.

He added the project also includes SMK RPS Betau in Lipis, a Kampung Angkat Madani school that has been allocated two classrooms.

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SCAN ME

Villagers **preserve heritage** through traditional game

► Playing *chapteh* together strengthens bonds and promotes important values, such as cooperation, focus, patience: Resident

TAPAH: While many traditional games are slowly fading into obscurity, the residents of Kampung Kassim in Tapah Road, within the Ayer Kuning state constituency, continue to keep their heritage alive by gathering almost every evening to play *chapteh*, also known as chicken shuttlecock.

Their laughter and shouts of encouragement as they pass the feathered shuttlecock, resembling a badminton birdie, fill the village with a lively and nostalgic atmosphere.

Like *sepak raga*, *chapteh* demands agility, balance and sharp reflexes as players use their feet to keep the shuttlecock in the air.

Food stall vendor Ismail Mohd Ali, 43, said aside from being an enjoyable way to stay active, the game promotes important values, such as cooperation, focus and patience.

"Playing together strengthens the bonds among villagers," he said, adding that the game has become a fun and relaxing way to unwind after a long day of work.

He shared that his love for *chapteh* began during childhood after watching his father play with fellow villagers.

"I have been playing since I was a boy. Seeing my father and his friends enjoying the game inspired me to pick it up. Now, when we see kids more engrossed in their phones, we feel compelled to keep this tradition alive."

Another local enthusiast Salleh Iman, 40, said interest in

traditional games, such as *chapteh*, could be cultivated among the young generation, if they are given the chance.

"Sometimes, children see us playing and get curious. That is when we step in to teach them. It is a great way to ensure this game does not vanish with time."

He said they introduce the game to children and teach them how to make the traditional *chapteh* using cork and real chicken feathers.

While such handmade shuttlecocks carry sentimental value, modern versions are widely available online at around RM35 each.

Lorry driver Abdul Khadir Ismail, 39, expressed hope that the traditional game could be revived and popularised through organised competitions, whether at the village, state or even national level.

He said sustaining interest in *chapteh* requires strong support from various quarters, including the government, schools and youth organisations.

"With the right collaboration, we could organise workshops or weekend activities. We are more than willing to go out and teach the younger generation, as long as the spirit and willingness are there."

He said *chapteh* should be more than just a pastime, Bernama reported.

It should be embraced as a symbol of village identity, a unifying force and a cultural heritage worth preserving for future generations, he added.



Abdul Khadir said sustaining interest in *chapteh* requires support from the government, schools and youth organisations. — **BERNAMAPIC**

Creative advocacy for environment

KUALA LUMPUR: Imagine walking through a bustling public space in Malaysia and spotting a man dressed in a traditional Japanese *kimono*, wooden clogs softly clacking as he bends down to pick up litter.

This may seem unusual but for Nik Ahmad Kashfi Nik Zamani, 30, it is his way of inspiring a cleaner and more mindful community.

Also known as Kay, this young man from Kota Bharu, Kelantan has been catching attention on TikTok through his account @kay.chanel52.

His videos present a blend of cultural uniqueness and environmental advocacy.

"It all started about three years ago. I had just started my TikTok account and wanted to create content about cleanliness. It frustrated me to see people littering."

He initially filmed his efforts in casual attire, picking up trash in public areas. However, he soon realised that a more striking approach could amplify his message.

"I heard from friends that the Japanese are famously disciplined about cleanliness, so I thought: 'Why not take a little inspiration from their culture?' It was not just about looking different; it was about sparking curiosity and starting conversations."

Dressed in his *kimono* and wooden clogs, and armed with a litter picker and a basket, Kay spends two to three hours a day collecting litter around popular spots in Kota Bharu.

"When people see me, they often stop and ask what I am doing. That is when I share the message that caring for our environment is a responsibility for everyone."

While some question Kay's choice of a foreign cultural identity to deliver his message, he remains focused on his mission.

"Some people ask why I use a different cultural image for this. For me, what matters is that the message of cleanliness reaches people and makes a difference." — Bernama

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Former S'pore first lady Noor Aishah dies at 91

SINGAPORE: Former first lady, Noor Aishah Mohammad Salim, widow of the country's first president Yusof Ishak, died yesterday at the age of 91.

The Prime Minister's Office said Noor Aishah died peacefully at Singapore General Hospital at 4.28am.

"The prime minister and his Cabinet colleagues are deeply saddened by the passing of Puan Noor Aishah Mohammad Salim, the wife of first president Yusof Ishak. They extend their deepest condolences to her family during this difficult time," it said.

She will be laid to rest at Kranji State Cemetery alongside her husband.

As a mark of respect, she will be accorded the honour of being borne on the Ceremonial Gun Carriage for her final journey from Masjid Ba'alwie to Kranji State Cemetery.

Noor Aishah was a pillar of support to the late president throughout his tenure from 1959 to 1970 – a pivotal period in Singapore's history.

"She was also deeply involved in charitable causes and championed social initiatives, particularly in support of women, children and the less privileged.

"Her grace, humility and unwavering dedication earned her the respect of Singaporeans from all walks of life and continue to inspire us today," the statement read.

In recognition of her contributions, Noor Aishah was awarded the Special Medal of Honour by the National Trades Union Congress in 1971 and was inducted into the Singapore Women's Hall of Fame in 2018.

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong also paid tribute to her in a Facebook post, saying her kindness and service had touched countless lives.

He noted that beyond the Istana, she devoted herself to community work through organisations such as the Singapore Red Cross and the Singapore Muslim Women's Association.

"May her legacy continue to inspire us all," he said.

Born on May 21, 1933, in Selangor, Noor Aishah spent her early years in Penang.

She married Yusof, then founder and managing director of *Utusan Melayu* in 1949.

In 1959, at the age of 26, she became Singapore's first lady when Yusof was appointed as the Yang di-Pertuan Negara and subsequently became the nation's first president. – Bernama

Vietnam social media users hit by crackdown

BANGKOK: Vietnam is targeting ordinary social media users for posts criticising the state in an expanding crackdown on dissent, Human Rights Watch (HRW) said yesterday.

Vietnam, a one-party state, has long sentenced bloggers and human rights activists to hefty jail terms, but now even those with no appreciable public profiles risk arrest if they voice a grievance against communist party officials, HRW said in a report.

Members of the public are being targeted through an expansion of the scope of Article 331 of the penal code, which centres on the "infringement of state interests", the report says.

Between 2018 and February 2025, Vietnamese courts convicted and sentenced at least 124 people to harsh prison terms under Article 331, according to HRW.

In the six years to 2017, only 28 were sentenced under equivalent laws, it said.

Vietnamese authorities "abuse the ... law not only to silence prominent activists and whistleblowers, but to retaliate against ordinary people who complain about poor services or police abuse", said Patricia Gossman, associate Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

Among those imprisoned under the article is Vu Thi Kim Hoang, a seamstress who allowed her partner to use her laptop at her home, where he discussed political issues on social media. For hosting him, she was jailed for two and half years. – AFP

Cardinals decide on Saturday for Pope's funeral

► Francis will be buried in Basilica of St Mary Major

VATICAN CITY: Pope Francis' funeral will be held on Saturday in St Peter's Square, Roman Catholic cardinals decided yesterday, setting the stage for a solemn ceremony that will draw leaders from around the world.

Francis, 88, died unexpectedly on Monday after suffering a stroke and cardiac arrest, the Vatican said, ending an often turbulent reign in which he repeatedly clashed with traditionalists and championed the poor and marginalised.

The pontiff spent five weeks in hospital earlier this year suffering from double pneumonia. But he returned to the Vatican almost a month ago and had seemed to be recovering, appearing in St Peter's Square on Easter Sunday.

The Vatican released photographs of Francis dressed in his vestments and laid in a wooden coffin in the chapel of the Santa Marta residence, where he lived during his 12-year papacy.

His body will be taken into St Peter's

Basilica today at 9am (3pm in Malaysia), in a procession led by cardinals, allowing the faithful to pay their last respects.

His funeral service will be held in St Peter's Square, in the shadow of the Basilica, on Saturday at 10am (4pm in Malaysia).

President Donald Trump, who clashed repeatedly with the pope about immigration, said he and his wife would fly to Rome for the service.

Among other heads of state set to attend were Javier Milei, president of Francis' native Argentina, Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

In a break from tradition, Francis confirmed in his final testament released on Monday that he wished to be buried in Rome's Basilica of St Mary Major and not St Peter's, where many of his predecessors were laid to rest.

His sudden death has set in motion ancient rituals, as the 1.4-billion-member Church started the transition from one pope to another, including the breaking of the pope's "Fisherman's Ring" and lead seal, used in his lifetime to seal documents, so they cannot be used by anyone else.

All cardinals in Rome were summoned to a meeting yesterday to decide on the sequencing of events in the coming days and review the day-to-day running of the Church in the period

before a new pope is elected. A conclave to choose a new pope normally takes place 15 to 20 days after the death of a pontiff, meaning it should not start before May 6.

Some 135 cardinals are eligible to take part in the secretive ballot, which can stretch over days before white smoke pouring from the chimney of the Sistine Chapel tells the world that a new pope has been picked.

At present there is no clear frontrunner to succeed Francis.

Pope Francis inherited a Church in disarray and worked hard to overhaul the Vatican's central administration, root out corruption and, after a slow start, confront the scourge of child abuse within the ranks of the priesthood.

He often clashed with conservatives, nostalgic for a traditional past, who saw Francis as overly liberal and too accommodating to minority groups.

Francis appointed nearly 80% of the cardinal electors who will choose the next pope, increasing the possibility that his successor will continue his progressive policies.

Many of the cardinals are little known outside their own countries and they will have a chance to get to know one another at meetings known as General Congregations that take place in the days before a conclave starts and where a profile of the qualities needed for the next pope will take shape. – Reuters



Thai parishioners praying at Saint Louis Catholic Church in Bangkok on Monday. – REUTERS/SPIC

Filipinos wrestle with death of pontiff

MANILA: Church bells rang out across the Philippines on Monday evening as Asia's bastion of Catholicism mourned the death of Pope Francis.

Residents in the capital were still processing the news and some rushed to cathedrals to pray.

Outside the Baclaran Church in metro Manila, 23-year-old Jeslie Generan said the reality of the pope's death was only just sinking in.

"I was shocked because I had already read that he was OK, he was no longer sick, that his condition improved," she said.

Inside the soaring cathedral, a framed portrait of the pope affectionately known as "Lolo Kiko", or "grandfather Francis", sat next to a

statue of Jesus, a candle to either side.

A handful of parishioners filed down after the sermon, kneeling and praying for Pope Francis in front of his picture.

"We feel the loss because he is the face of the Church," said parishioner Marlon Delgado.

"I was at first shocked and then a feeling of sadness overwhelmed me."

Jhayson Banquiles, 19, said the country's 85 million Catholics had lost the "voice of God".

Vincent Abrena, 38, said he had learned of the death at his office.

"That's why after work I rushed to Manila cathedral ... to pray for him."

Pope Francis, who appointed three of the 10 Filipino cardinals in Church history, visited the archipelago nation only once, when he led a

mass for survivors of *Super Typhoon Haiyan*.

He came just over a year after the most powerful storm in Philippine history devastated fishing and farming towns and left more than 6,000 people dead in November 2013.

Hundreds of thousands of people turned out for his arrival, chanting "long live the pope" as he disembarked only to be pelted with rains and heavy winds.

"When I saw in Rome that catastrophe (the typhoon), I felt I had to be here. And on those very days, I decided to come here. I'm here to be with you," he said as many in the crowd clutched crucifixes and wept.

On Monday, a video about his visit had garnered more than five million views within two hours of its posting by a news outlet. – AFP



US lawmakers push for deportee's release

Democratic delegation meets El Salvador officials

SAN SALVADOR: A delegation of Democratic lawmakers visited El Salvador on Monday in a new push to secure the release of a wrongly deported US resident at the centre of a mounting political row.

Kilmar Abrego Garcia was sent back to his country and remains imprisoned there despite the US Supreme Court ordering President Donald Trump's administration to allow his return to the United States.

"There is no reason for me to believe that our administration, the Trump administration, is doing anything to facilitate his safe return home, and that is simply unacceptable," congresswoman Yassamin Ansari told reporters after meeting US embassy officials.

"It isn't just about Kilmar. It is the fact that our government is relentlessly going after any immigrant that's trying to come to the United States or is in the United States without any regard for due process," the Arizona representative said.

Ansari was accompanied by fellow US House Democrats Robert Garcia, Maxwell Frost and Maxine Dexter.

Frost said there was "zero indication" that the Trump administration was trying to bring Abrego Garcia back.

"But we've got to be clear – this isn't just about him. This is also about every single person in the United States. The constitution applies to all people in our country. Due process applies to all people in our country," the Florida representative said.

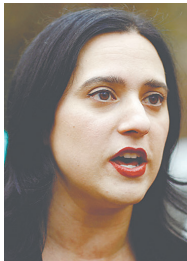
Frost said that Salvadoran President Nayib Bukele's administration had denied a request for the group of US lawmakers to meet the deported man.

The visit comes days after Democratic Senator Chris Van Hollen of Maryland, the state where Abrego Garcia has lived for years with his wife and child, arrived in the Central American country.

Van Hollen eventually managed to meet Abrego Garcia.



Protesters call for Kilmar's release in Washington, DC. – AFP/ICC



Ansari

Trump's administration has paid El Salvador millions of dollars to lock up nearly 300 migrants it says are criminals and gang members including Abrego Garcia.

The 29-year-old was detained in Maryland last month and expelled to El Salvador along with 238 Venezuelans and 22 fellow Salvadorans who were deported shortly after Trump invoked a rarely used wartime authority.

El Salvador's President Bukele has vowed not to return Abrego Garcia to the United States, but on Sunday proposed to Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro to exchange his countrymen for "political prisoners" in Venezuela.

Maduro responded on Monday in his weekly address by calling Bukele a "systematic and serial violator of human rights" and demanding the Venezuelans' "unconditional release".

The Trump administration admitted that

Abrego Garcia was deported due to an "administrative error", and the Supreme Court ruled that the government must "facilitate" his return.

But Trump has since doubled down, insisting Abrego Garcia is a gang member.

Bukele, who was hosted at the White House last week, said he did not have the power to return Abrego Garcia.

The migrant's supporters note he had protected legal status and no criminal conviction in the United States.

"My parents fled an authoritarian regime in Iran where people were 'disappeared' – I refuse to sit back and watch it happen here," Ansari said in a statement.

"What happened to Kilmar Abrego Garcia is not just one family's nightmare – it is a constitutional crisis that should outrage every single one of us," said Dexter, a congresswoman from Oregon.

Abrego Garcia told Van Hollen that he was initially imprisoned at the Terrorism Confinement Centre, a mega-prison for gang members, but was later transferred to a jail in the western department of Santa Ana. – AFP

Thai court convicts ex-prosecutors

BANGKOK: A court here yesterday convicted two former prosecutors for misconduct in connection with a high-profile hit-and-run case involving the fugitive heir to the Red Bull energy drink empire.

Vorayuth "Boss" Yoovidhya, the grandson of the late Thai billionaire Chaleo Yoovidhya who created the Red Bull energy drink, is accused of crashing his Ferrari into a policeman in 2012 and dragging his body under the vehicle for more than 100m before fleeing.

His whereabouts is unknown and he is likely living abroad, according to media reports.

A former deputy attorney-general who oversaw Vorayuth's case, Net Naksuk, and another prosecutor were sentenced to three and two years respectively yesterday after being found guilty of misconduct in helping Vorayuth avoid prosecution and deciding not to indict him.

Vorayuth, who was 27 at the time of the incident, was later charged with speeding, hit-and-run and reckless driving causing death. He ignored multiple court summons before authorities issued a warrant for his arrest five years after the incident.

He initially admitted to driving the car but denied other charges. The hit-and-run case has captured significant public attention in Thailand, stoking anger over a perception of impunity for the wealthy, with Vorayuth still at large, despite repeated promises from authorities to bring him to justice.

Six other defendants in the case, including former national police chief Somyet Poompanmoung, were acquitted due to insufficient evidence.

The two former prosecutors have denied wrongdoing and were appealing the verdict.

"The actions of the defendants undermined the credibility of the justice system," the court said. – Reuters

Myanmar rebels hand over city to govt

YANGON: A Myanmar armed group is preparing to hand a captured city back to the military in a Beijing-brokered deal, China's Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

The Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA) ousted Myanmar's military from the city of Lashio in August last year, capturing their northeastern command and a key trade route to China.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun told reporters the MNDAA is set to relinquish the city to the military without firing a shot.

"At the joint invitation of both sides, China recently dispatched a ceasefire monitoring team to Lashio, Myanmar, to oversee the ceasefire between the Myanmar military and the MNDAA and to witness the smooth and orderly handover of Lashio's urban area," he said.

China is a major ally and arms supplier of the government but also maintains ties with ethnic rebel groups that hold territory near its border like the MNDAA, which can muster around 8,000 fighters.

Monitors have said the fall of Lashio, about 100km from Chinese territory, was a step too far for Beijing, which balked at the prospect of instability on its borders.

A military source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said: "Some military officers have been transferred to Lashio in recent days. Some are on their way to Lashio already."

And a spokesman for the Lashio office of another group, allied with the MNDAA, said they were "seeing military vehicles in town".

In late 2023, the MNDAA and two other groups began an offensive which seized swathes of northern Shan state, including lucrative ruby mines and trade links.

Beijing has long been eyeing the territory for infrastructure investment. – AFP

Taiwan govt grapples with spending cuts

TAIPEI: Taiwan's Cabinet said yesterday it will ask the opposition controlled legislature to release more than US\$4 billion (RM17.52 billion) in funds frozen as part of a stand-off over this year's budget, which the government says could seriously affect their operations.

While the Democratic Progressive Party's (DPP) Lai Ching-te won the presidency in last year's elections, the party lost its majority in parliament.

Taiwan's main opposition party, the Kuomintang (KMT), along with the small Taiwan People's Party (TPP), control the most seats, and earlier this year voted through sweeping cuts to 2025's budget, saying they were targeting waste, and froze other funds saying they wanted greater oversight on spending plans.

In a statement, Cabinet spokesperson Michelle Lee said the government will ask parliament to unfreeze US\$4.25 billion in funds.

The Cabinet "hopes the Legislative Yuan can unfreeze it all in a short period of time to reduce the difficulties and inconveniences people have in their dealings with the administration", Lee said, using parliament's formal name.

The Cabinet will also seek a legal interpretation from the constitutional court on both the constitutionality of the budget as passed by lawmakers, and a separate legal amendment granting more money to local governments at the expense of the central government, Lee added.

The Defence Ministry has warned of a "serious impact" to security from the amended budget, saying it will require a cut in defence spending at a time when the island is facing an elevated Chinese military threat.

Taiwan's opposition has shown little appetite to seek compromise with the government on the budget issue, given they

are angered at a campaign led by civic groups and backed by senior DPP officials to recall a swathe of opposition lawmakers.

The KMT and TPP chairmen met earlier yesterday vowing to redouble efforts to work together against the "green communists", referring to the DPP's party colours, and will hold a joint protest on Saturday.

"We don't just want to take down Lai Ching-te, but the entire corrupt, arrogant and abusive system," KMT Chairman Eric Chu wrote on his Facebook page after meeting TPP Chairman Huang Kuo-chang.

Lai and the DPP's public approval ratings have remained relatively high.

A poll last week by Taiwan television station Mirror TV put the DPP's approval rating at 45%, relatively steady over the past year, with both the KMT and TPP on around 28%, both down compared with the year ago period. – Reuters

US universities condemn political interference

WASHINGTON: More than 100 US universities and colleges, including Ivy League institutions Princeton and Brown, issued a joint letter yesterday condemning President Donald Trump's political interference in the education system.

The move comes a day after Harvard University sued the Trump administration, which has threatened to cut funding and impose outside political supervision.

"We speak with one voice against the unprecedented government overreach and political interference now endangering American higher education," the letter read.

"We are open to constructive reform and do not oppose legitimate government oversight. However, we must oppose undue government intrusion," it said, adding: "We must reject the coercive use of public research funding."

Trump has sought to bring several prestigious universities to heel over claims they tolerated campus anti-Semitism, threatening their budgets, tax-exempt status and the enrolment of foreign students.

Several top institutions, including Columbia University, have bowed to demands from the administration, which claims that the educational elite is too left-wing.

In the case of Harvard, the White House is seeking unprecedented levels of government control over the inner workings of the country's oldest and wealthiest university.

The Harvard lawsuit filed in federal court in Boston said the government has launched a broad attack on funding for cutting-edge research at major universities. — AFP/Reuters

DOJ seeks to make Google sell Chrome, share data

Company plans to appeal proposal

WASHINGTON: Alphabet's Google needs strong measures imposed on it to prevent it from using its artificial intelligence products to extend its dominance in online search, a Department of Justice attorney said as a trial in the antitrust case began on Monday.

The outcome of the case could fundamentally reshape the internet by unseating Google as the go-to portal for information online.

The department is seeking an order that would require Google to sell its Chrome browser and take other measures to end what a judge

found was its monopoly in online search.

Now is the "time to tell Google and all other monopolists that there are consequences when you break the antitrust laws," David Dahlquist said during his opening statement.

The DOJ and a coalition of state attorneys general are pressing for remedies they believe will restore competition even as search evolves to overlap with generative AI products such as ChatGPT.

"This court's remedy should be forward-looking and not ignore what is on the horizon," he said.

Google's search monopoly helps improve its AI products, which are also a way to lead users to its search engine, he said.

Google has agreed to pay Samsung monthly to install

Google's Gemini AI app on devices, a deal that can be extended into 2028. The financial terms were not disclosed, but Dahlquist characterised the monthly amount as an "enormous sum".

Google's lawyer, John Schmiddlein, said the DOJ's proposals amount to "a wishlist for competitors looking to get the benefits of Google's extraordinary innovations".

AI competitors "would like handouts as well even though they are competing just fine," he said.

Google argues that its AI products are outside the scope of the case, which focused on search engines. Adopting the proposed remedies "would hold back American innovation at a critical juncture", Google executive Lee-

Anne Mulholland said in a post.

The company has said it will appeal once a final judgment is entered.

Antitrust enforcers have proposed far-reaching measures designed to quickly open the search market and give new competitors a leg up.

Their proposals include ending Google's exclusive agreements with tablet and smartphone makers like Apple to make Google the default search engine on their devices.

Google would also have to license search results to competitors, among other requirements. The DOJ has proposed that, if other remedies fail to restore competition, Google would be forced to sell its Android mobile operating system. — Reuters



Army excavators demolish a building in Beit Omar village north of Hebron in the West Bank on Monday. The buildings fall in Area C designated by the 1995 Oslo Accords as occupied territory which remains under full Israeli control. Under Israeli military law, Palestinians cannot build structures in the area without permits, which are typically refused, and demolitions are common. — AFP/IC

BRIEFS

DRONE STRIKE KILLS LEBANESE COMMANDER

BEIRUT: An Israeli drone strike south of the Lebanese capital killed a top commander from Jama'a Islamiya, the group said yesterday. The strike killed Hussein Atawi as he was driving from his home to his office in Beirut. Israel has continued to carry out strikes on Lebanese territory, mostly targeting fighters from Lebanese armed group Hezbollah or its arms depots. Israeli troops also still occupy five hilltop positions in southern Lebanon. Lebanon, Hezbollah and Jama'a Islamiya have condemned the strikes and Israeli troop presence, calling them violations of a truce and of Lebanon's sovereignty. Israel says the fighters and weapons pose a threat to its civilians. — Reuters

RUSSIAN COURT CUTS U.S. CONVICT JAIL TERM

MOSCOW: A court here ordered yesterday that the jail sentence of a US citizen convicted of drug trafficking be reduced to nine years from 12, the man's lawyer said. Robert Woodland was found guilty in July 2024 of attempting to sell drugs after he was arrested while transporting about 50gm of mephedrone to a safe cache in Moscow. It was not clear why his sentence was lowered. Woodland is one of at least 10 Americans still behind bars in Russia following a prisoner swap between Moscow and Washington earlier this month. — Reuters

Gaza aid blockade enters 50th day

GENEVA: The United Nations warned yesterday that Gaza was facing deepening hunger 50 days into a total Israeli blockade on all aid entering the territory.

"Gaza has become a land of desperation," said Philippe Lazzarini, head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees UNRWA. "Hunger is spreading and deepening."

UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric told a news conference: "Today marks 50 days since the Israeli authorities have blocked supplies of any kind."

Citing the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Dujarric said: "Since early March, not a single truck carrying food, fuel, medicine or any other essentials has been allowed in,

no matter how critical they are for people's survival."

Warning over the "dangerously low" food stocks, Dujarric said: "Rations have been cut. Critical medicines, vaccines, and medical supplies are all running low."

"Ambulances have had to scale back life-saving services because there's almost no fuel to power these ambulances. Cooking gas has disappeared. Bakeries have been forced to shut down."

He warned that "the impact of the continued blocking of aid is devastating. Children and adults alike are going hungry. Access to health care is falling apart," adding that "attacks on civilians, including emergency teams and aid workers, have surged again."

Following Israel's internal

investigation into an airstrike that killed aid workers in Rafah, Dujarric said: "It is clear that too many civilians, including aid workers, have been killed in Gaza."

"There needs to be accountability," he said, noting that a UN investigation would require a specific mandate.

On the ceasefire talks, Dujarric said: "All we can hope for is for an agreement to ensure humanitarian aid once again flows freely and unhindered into Gaza."

The Israeli army resumed its assault on Gaza on March 18, shattering a Jan 19 ceasefire and prisoner exchange agreement.

Overall, it has killed more than 51,200 Palestinians in Gaza since October 2023.

Israel halted the delivery of aid to

the enclave on March 2, hours after the end of the truce deal's 42-day first phase.

Gaza's civil defence agency said Israeli airstrikes since dawn yesterday killed at least 25 people.

Mohammad Mughayyir, a senior official with the agency, said nine people were killed and several wounded when an airstrike hit a house in the centre of Khan Younis.

Six more remained trapped under the rubble, he said.

Another nine were killed in strikes on Jabalia refugee camp in northern Gaza, Mughayyir said, including five when a tent housing displaced people was hit.

Five others were killed in a strike on a home in the Al-Shati refugee camp of Gaza City, he said, while two died in Rafah. — Bernama/AFP

Pope Francis - The people's pontiff

COMMENT

ROMAN Catholics around the world were delighted when Pope Francis marked Easter Sunday by blessing thousands gathered in Vatican City's St Peter's Square and then went on a surprise tour of the piazza in his open-topped Popemobile.

Hopes rose that the 88-year-old pontiff had recovered from the double pneumonia that had left him close to death in hospital.

Tragically, his appearance took on a different significance on Monday when the Vatican announced he had died hours later. In hindsight, it is remarkable that a frail pope was able to accomplish what he wanted to do on such a symbolic day.

To the end, Pope Francis was true to the causes he made a hallmark of his papacy - notably, the plight of migrants.

In his traditional message on Sunday, read out on his behalf, he lamented the "contempt" that is "stirred up at times towards the vulnerable, the marginalised and migrants". It came a day after he had met JD Vance, the US vice-president and a Catholic, with whom he had previously disagreed publicly over Donald Trump administration's policies on migration.

Another cause was climate change. He

rightly made the link between the threat to the planet - "our common home" - and the large-scale migration it might cause, saying that the poor are "on the front line of environmental degradation" because they often subsist on agriculture, forestry and fishing.

In his final message, Pope Francis condemned the "deplorable humanitarian situation" in Gaza. A strong advocate of Palestinian rights, he spoke regularly during the Hamas-Israel conflict with the pastor of the Holy Family Church in the territory, where lay members sheltered both Muslims and Christians.

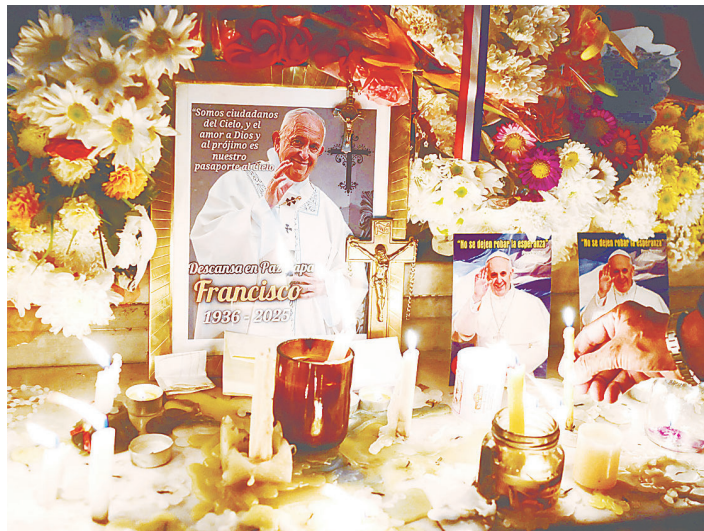
"A breath of fresh air in the Catholic Church, Pope Francis spurned the trappings of power and undoubtedly had a human touch."

A breath of fresh air in the Catholic Church, Pope Francis spurned the trappings of power and undoubtedly had a human touch. The word "marginalised" ran through his public statements like the words inside a stick of rock.

Those outside the Church gave him credit for championing the excluded, antagonising his internal conservative opponents in a divided movement he was unable to heal.

His successor will now be chosen by up to 138 cardinals under the arcane, highly secretive process depicted in Conclave, the film based on Robert Harris's book.

The Argentinian Pope Francis, the first non-European pope in 1,300 years, appointed more cardinals from the "global South" he cared so much about. Perhaps the conclave will afford him a fitting legacy by choosing the



To the end, Pope Francis was true to the causes he made a hallmark of his papacy - notably, the plight of migrants. - **AFFPIC**

first Black pope.

The Catholic Church should resist the temptation to do what the Church of England has done in the past: play pendulum politics by replacing a moderniser with a traditionalist or vice versa.

Pope Francis was a reformer frustrated by what could be called the "deep state" of conservative vested interests at the Vatican.

Arguably, he upset both liberals, whose hopes for greater change were raised but dashed, and conservatives, who suspected he intended to go further than he admitted.

Unfortunately, his unfinished revolution ran out of time but it should be completed by his successor. He should follow Pope Francis's own guiding star: the Church must apply the gospel to today's world. - **The Independent**

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Trump's Maga vision hits speed bump

BARELY 100 days into his new term, President Donald Trump is deeply embroiled in battles on multiple fronts in his Maga (Make America Great Again) mission.

In the critical domestic battleground, he has met with rebuff after rebuff and significant opposition across key areas. Some relate to:

➤ Immigration

Trump's policies on stricter immigration enforcement and attempts at selective deportation have faced strong legal challenges and opposition from those who argue that the policies are anti-democratic, discriminatory, inhumane and ineffective.

➤ Social policies

Very much in the news and receiving what appears to be wider support is his handling of LGBTQ+ rights, particularly transgender rights, though these have also faced legal challenges and public protests. Meanwhile, the issue of abortion remains highly divisive, with ongoing legal battles over state-level restrictions.

➤ Healthcare

Efforts to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare, have sparked widespread protests and legal battles with ongoing debates about access to healthcare, pre-existing conditions and the role of the government in healthcare.

➤ Environment

Trump has almost single-handedly destroyed the US reputation as an influential stakeholder in addressing and mitigating the many-faceted global environmental crisis. The withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, expediting permits for fossil fuel development, rolling back emissions reporting requirements and support for other anti-green Trump initiatives have drawn opposition from the public, including those in the scientific community as well as state and local governments.

➤ Government efficiency

Trump has met with quicker success with the flurry of executive orders and policy shifts aimed at

advancing his agenda of government deregulation. However, here too, the success has been less than initially envisaged. The Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) was established to cut federal spending, reduce bureaucracy and streamline procurement.

While it has overseen some layoffs of civil servants, eliminated some agencies and rescinded Joe Biden-era rules, including environmental and healthcare regulations, its mission objective of saving a trillion dollars in the federal budget has now been drastically reduced to a modest US\$150 billion (RM658 billion), according to the latest update by Elon Musk.

Challenging Maga's domestic agenda

Ominously, the outlook for Trump making much headway with his Maga agenda for the coming months and probably until the end of his current administration in 2028 is looking bleak.

Firstly, he has underestimated the legal and constitutional challenges that are bringing intense legal and public scrutiny, causing delay into virtually every issue and sector in which he is attempting policy reform and change.

Despite the Supreme Court with the majority of its members being seen as leaning towards the conservative camp, Trump cannot expect automatic support for the cases that are brought before it. This is because the US Constitution sets limits on presidential power and any attempt to expand those limits faces resistance from the courts and other branches of government.

Increasingly too, questions are being asked on the limits of presidential authority and the president's ability to override congress.

Meanwhile, we are seeing the lower judiciary play a crucial role in reviewing the constitutionality of laws and executive actions.

This has provided victories to opponents of some of Trump's executive orders and policies. These opponents, although a motley and



Trump's administration policies on stricter immigration enforcement and attempts at selective deportation have faced strong legal challenges and opposition from those who argue that the policies are anti-democratic, discriminatory, inhumane and ineffective. — REUTERS/PIC

disparate group of state attorneys general, civil rights organisations and advocacy groups, have been able to block or effectively alter orders relating to various travel bans and border security violations, citing concerns over due process and equal protection.

Perhaps more challenging for Trump has been the difficulty in gaining support from the opposition party for key domestic reform initiatives. Not only has there been little bipartisan cooperation but what has emerged is a deeper political polarisation between Republicans and Democrats.

This has led to failure to find common ground for legislative agreement on controversial issues. The small majority that the Republican party has in both the Senate and House means that the gridlock accompanying every major legislative proposal will lead to stalled policies, delayed implementation and a broader perception of political stagnation – or even regression.

One of the greatest obstacles to

Trump succeeding in his domestic agenda to make his vision of America great has been the emergence of a diverse network of activists and organisations across the country.

These groups have mobilised to protest on various policy issues and to defend against the erosion of what they view as core American values, democratic norms and institutions, which they believe the Trump administration is destroying.

Although this evolving and dynamic grassroots movement has been handicapped by a host of disadvantages and problems – such as internal divisions over strategy and messaging, the absence of conventional political legitimacy and reliance on social media to provide coverage and visibility – it has nonetheless been able to mobilise strong support and raise the level of political awareness and engagement, especially among the younger generation.

Turning point

Ironically, the final blow to Trump's

Maga agenda may come from his foreign policy approach. Presently focusing on tariffs, this strategy is widely expected to inflict considerable pain on a wide swath of American families and businesses.

This damage and pain will be definitely felt by all the constituencies supporting Trump and will lead to inevitable reversals and losses for the Republican party in the next round of electoral contests.

"I always say 'tariffs' is the most beautiful word to me in the dictionary," Trump said at a rally just hours after his inauguration in January. "Because tariffs are going to make us rich as hell."

The "rich as hell" claim may well go down as one of the most extravagant, bizarre and strangely prophetic proclamations uttered by Trump to upend his government and place in American history.

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

Safeguarding Malaysia's digital future a national priority



I AM writing to express my deep concern about Malaysia's alarming data protection crisis, which I learned about at Spirit of Endeavour's recent "Strong Data Protection for Good Business" event.

The statistics presented by Wong Kar Hong of Young Technology Consulting paint a dire picture of our nation's cybersecurity landscape, and I believe urgent action is needed from the government and private sector.

In 2024 alone, a staggering 72.5% of users discovered their personal information had been compromised. Phone numbers were the most leaked data type (98%), followed closely by names (89%).

Even more troubling, scam calls nearly doubled from 1.63 million in 2023 to 2.98 million in 2024, resulting in financial losses of RM1.57 billion. The Digital Ministry's report of a 1,192%

increase in data thefts between 2022 and 2023 is particularly alarming, as is the 41% increase in data breaches reported in 2024.

While the recent amendments to the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA) 2010 are a step in the right direction, I believe more comprehensive action is required. I propose the following measures for the government's consideration:

➤ **Establish a national cybersecurity task force:** This multiagency body will coordinate efforts across government departments, law enforcement and the private sector to address cybersecurity threats holistically.

➤ **Implement mandatory cybersecurity standards:** Develop and enforce industry-specific cybersecurity standards, particularly for sectors handling sensitive data such as finance, healthcare and telecommunications.

➤ **Enhance public education:** Launch a nationwide cybersecurity awareness campaign to educate citizens about online risks, data protection and safe digital practices.

➤ **Establish a cybersecurity skills**

development programme: Partner with educational institutions to create specialised cybersecurity courses and certifications, addressing the skills gap in this critical field.

➤ **Implement regular security audits:** Mandate regular third-party security audits for government agencies and critical infrastructure to identify and address vulnerabilities.

➤ **Create a national data breach reporting system:** Develop a centralised platform for reporting and tracking data breaches, ensuring quick response and analysis of trends.

➤ **Enhance legal framework:** Strengthen laws related to cybercrime, increasing penalties for offenders and providing better protection for whistleblowers.

The private sector also has a crucial role to play. Businesses should prioritise appointing internal data protection officers as advocated by Wong to ensure long-term sustainability and knowledge retention.

Organisations must also promptly notify authorities and affected individuals of data breaches and invest in ongoing employee

training on cybersecurity best practices.

This crisis affects every Malaysian whose personal information is at risk. It is not just about financial losses; it erodes public trust, compromises national security and destabilises our economy.

We must act now to strengthen cybersecurity measures, train employees on compliance protocols and adopt proactive strategies.

I urge the government to take swift action. The private sector must also step up its efforts in partnership with the government. Only through a coordinated and comprehensive approach can we hope to address this critical issue effectively.

Safeguarding our data is an investment in trust, security and resilience for a safer digital future for all Malaysians.

The time for action is now, and I hope this serves as a call to action for all stakeholders involved in protecting our digital infrastructure and the personal data of our citizens.

Anishaa J
Petaling Jaya

Alliance Bank nears RM15b goal in new sustainable loans

➤ Focus is on assisting smaller players who need greatest help: Chief strategy officer

KUALA LUMPUR: Alliance Bank Malaysia Bhd is now close to achieving RM15 billion in new sustainable banking business for green projects to support small and medium enterprises (SMEs) ahead of the targeted 2027 financial year.

The bank has already given out RM14 billion in new sustainable banking facilities by empowering SMEs to adopt environmental, social, and governance (ESG) practices, group chief strategy and transformation officer Aaron Sum said.

He said Alliance Bank has managed to do this in just two years and 10 months, from November 2022 to January 2025, thanks largely to a comprehensive suite of personalised financial and beyond banking solutions.

The solutions include customised financing options and green funding schemes from Bank Negara Malaysia, such as low carbon transition facility, high-tech (technology) and green facility, and green mortgages, he told Bernama in an interview.

"We are on track to meet our target

ahead of schedule and will announce a new target in due course.

"This reflects demand as more people adopt ESG practices and require financing," he said.

Emphasising that the bank continues to empower SMEs on their ESG journey, he said, "Many are now turning to banks and government grants instead of self-funding (which is) driving our numbers up."

Do SMEs understand ESG?

Citing Alliance Bank's second edition of its annual ESG report, titled "The Path to Sustainable Impact - Sectoral Insights of Malaysian SMEs" (ESG 2.0 Report) released in January this year, Sum said that the awareness level among the SMEs surged to 80% from 14%, while ESG adoption increased to 60% from 28% within 18 months, compared to the ESG 1.0 Report published in 2023.

He attributed the greater awareness and adoption to regulatory and compliance pressure, cost savings, revenue growth, market positioning and the drive for innovation.

"One of the key reasons for increased ESG adoption is innovation, which jumped from 25% in 2023 to 43% now. This showed that businesses no longer see ESG as just a compliance requirement.

"The mindset has shifted from 'I am forced to do it' to recognising ESG as an opportunity to innovate, create new products and adopt sustainable manufacturing that benefits the environment, reduces carbon footprint, lowers costs and promotes responsible local sourcing, ultimately boosting the local economy," he said.

This is a positive development as SMEs now look beyond compliance and link ESG to clear profit and loss (P&L) benefits that help them access new markets.

The ESG 2.0 Report showed that 38% of SMEs incorporating ESG practices achieved more than 50% revenue uplift, demonstrating the potential for sustainable practices to drive profitability.

The awareness in the manufacturing sector rose from 18% to 84%, the construction sector (from 12% to 77%), the services sector (from 12% to 78%), and agriculture (from 19% to 61%).

Alliance Bank's focus on SMEs

From a readiness standpoint, larger corporations are typically ahead in adopting and complying with

international regulations, Sum said.

He pointed out that for smaller businesses, readiness is more challenging due to the lack of expertise and resources that can be dedicated to ensuring full compliance.

"Hence, Alliance Bank's efforts go beyond thought leadership and the research by providing practical tools to help SMEs in their transition journey.

"Our focus is on assisting smaller players who need the greatest help. Larger corporates have had ample time to prepare because they have been given advanced notice, with greater means compared to smaller businesses," he said.

Furthermore, he said SMEs require guidance and support to navigate these changes, adding that the bank provides diagnostic tools and workshops for SMEs to develop their own ESG transition roadmaps.

Additionally, the bank takes a pragmatic approach for SMEs to embark on a sustainability journey by helping the businesses adopt cost-effective sustainability measures, such as improving energy efficiency.

Alliance Bank also links ESG efforts to tangible P&L benefits.

"Once SME owners see the direct financial incentives, they are more likely to take action. It is not just about compliance but also business growth and profitability," he said.

Tradeview Sustainability Fund delivers 18.8% return

KUALA LUMPUR: Tradeview Capital, a boutique fund management company licensed by the Securities Commission Malaysia (SC), recently announced a distribution of a 7.03 sen dividend per unit for its flagship fund, the Tradeview Sustainability Fund (TSF), after logging an 18.8% return in the financial year of 2024.

Launched on November 18, 2022, TSF is recognised as a Sustainable and Responsible Investment (SRI) open-ended wholesale fund. It aims to provide investors with sustainable long-term returns by focusing on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles.

TSF predominantly invests in small- and mid-cap stocks that are fundamentally sound and demonstrate best-in-class or improving ESG parameters.

Neoh Jia Man, the portfolio manager overseeing TSF, noted that the fund has recorded positive returns over the last year due to the increased awareness for ESG compliant small and mid-cap companies on the local bourse.

"Most ESG funds today only focus on the large cap companies which are part of sustainability or ESG indexes. These indexes exclude small and mid-cap companies. With our own proprietary assessment model, we are able to score and discover ESG compliant small and mid-cap companies poised for long term growth which allows us to outperform benchmarks and generate the alpha for the fund," Neoh added.

Tradeview Capital founder and CEO Ng Zhu Hann said: "TSF achieved a return of 28.4% since its inception averaging 14.2% per annum, beating the FBMKLCI, FBM100 and FBM Small Cap Index benchmarks. This is the second consecutive year since our fund's inception that we have declared a distribution yield of above 6% with the latest year being 6.5%."

Hann also highlighted that "this not only underscores the potential of sustainable investing, it also highlights the importance for listed companies to strive to be ESG compliant."

"With sustainability reporting being mandated for listed companies from 2025 onwards by Bursa Securities Malaysia and Securities Commissions Malaysia, this put our fund on the right track in meeting the capital markets' agenda."

He said most new fund management companies do not survive beyond three years without consistent performance and Tradeview Capital has crossed the RM100 million Asset-Under-Management milestone, an inflection point that allowed them to achieve full year profitability in the latest audited financial year ahead of their projected timeline by two years.

Birkin International Hotel sets new benchmark for responsible hospitality

■ BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Birkin International Hotel (BIH) is integrating smart technology and green innovations as part of redefining its luxury with sustainability, to drive its environmental, social and governance (ESG) agenda.

From energy-efficient systems to waste reduction initiatives, the hotel is setting a new benchmark for responsible hospitality.

BIH general manager Simon Tan (pic) said, a key component of BIH's sustainability efforts is its advanced energy management system.

"Smart heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) technology automatically adjusts energy consumption based on occupancy levels, reducing waste while ensuring guest comfort.

"Motion-sensor light emitting diode (LED) lighting further enhances efficiency, cutting down unnecessary power usage. Plans are also in place to expand the hotel's renewable energy integration, reinforcing our long-term commitment to a lower carbon footprint," he told SunBiz.

He said water conservation is another pillar of BIH's ESG strategy, adding that the hotel has implemented rainwater harvesting, storing collected water for domestic and irrigation use.

"Low-flow taps, showerheads and dual-flush toilets with sensors further contribute to responsible water management, reducing consumption without compromising luxury," he said.

Beyond operational efficiency, he noted that BIH is making a social impact through an

innovative food sustainability initiative.

"The hotel repurposes untouched meals into dehydrated food packs for food banks and disaster relief efforts with a shelf life of up to two years, ensuring surplus food benefits communities in need rather than going to waste.

"Food scraps are also converted into compost for the hotel's landscaping, reinforcing a zero-waste approach," he remarked.

Tan said the hotel's corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts play a crucial role in its sustainability framework.

"BIH actively engages with the local community through various charitable initiatives, particularly during festive seasons such as Chinese New Year and Ramadan. These CSR activities range from food donations to community events, fostering a strong connection between the hotel and the people it serves," he said.

As BIH looks to the future, he said the hotel remains committed to strengthening its sustainability initiatives.

"Plans are in place to expand our in-house water purification system, which could set a new industry standard in the region.

"The hotel is also exploring advanced composting technologies to further enhance food waste management, ensuring that every aspect of its operations aligns with ESG best practices," he noted.

He said, for BIH, sustainability is not just a trend, it is a long-term commitment to creating a positive impact on the ESG standards.

"By integrating smart technology and green



innovations into our business model, the hotel is also redefining what it means to offer a luxury experience in the modern age.

"With a clear ESG vision and a roadmap for continuous improvement, BIH is not only reducing its own environmental footprint, but also inspiring the hospitality industry to embrace a more sustainable future."



Move to keep M'sian solar sector shining

► Govt will ensure industry remains competitive in wake of reports US proposes to impose new tariffs on such products from SE Asia: Nik Nazmi

■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: The government will ensure that Malaysia's solar industry remains competitive amid the United States' proposal to impose new duties on solar product imports from Southeast Asia, said Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad.

He disclosed that the issue falls under the purview of the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) which has already launched an investigation.

"Malaysia is one of the producers. We have investors from various countries, including America, China and other countries that are involved in solar production in our country. We trust MITI will present the best case (in trade discussion) to ensure Malaysia's solar industry remains competitive," he told reporters at the 'Tops It Off With Solar' event in conjunction with World Earth Day at IKEA Damansara yesterday.

Nik Nazmi acknowledged that rising costs due to tariffs could pose a challenge to the country's sustainability transition.

"We don't want these duties to halt progress in renewable energy. If the cost increases significantly, it will affect our economy and make the transition less viable," he said.

According to news reports, the US

has proposed to impose steep anti-dumping and countervailing duties on solar cells and modules imported from Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand and Cambodia, following complaints of unfair trade practices by the American Alliance for Solar Manufacturing Trade Committee.

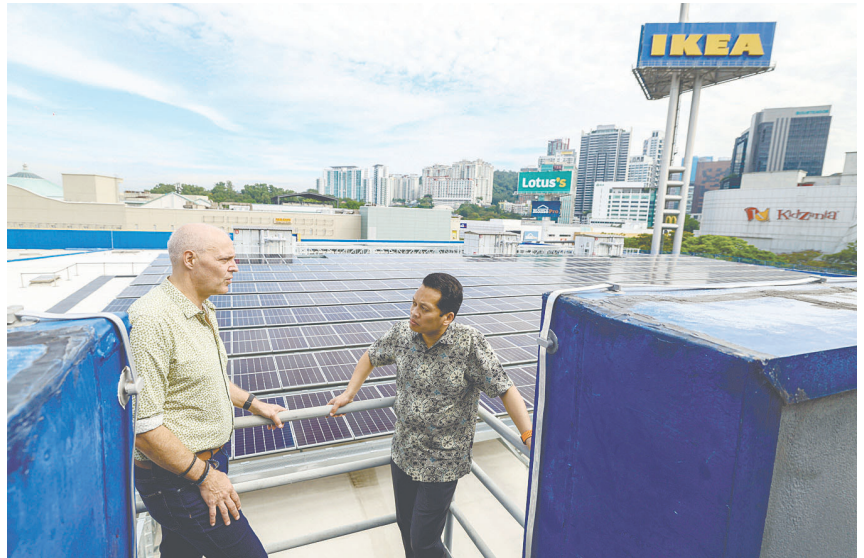
Malaysia's average countervailing subsidy rate was determined at 34.41%, with general anti-dumping duties of 8.59%, the lowest among the four countries. However, certain Malaysian firms that did not cooperate in the investigation face duties of up to 81.24%.

The US Commerce Department stated that this is one of the first instances in which companies were found to have received "transnational subsidies" from China while operating in Southeast Asia.

Malaysia exported around US\$1.9 billion (RM8.3 billion) worth of solar products to the US in 2023. Final implementation of the duties depends on a determination by the US International Trade Commission, expected by June 2.

In conjunction with World Earth Day, IKEA Malaysia is commissioning 2,668 solar panels at its Damansara outlet.

Covering about 12,000 square metres of rooftop area, the installation is expected to generate 2 MWh of energy annually – supplying up to 25% of the store's energy needs and



IKEA Malaysia sales director Malcolm Pruys (left) briefing Nik Nazmi on IKEA Damansara's rooftop solar installation yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

reducing carbon emissions by about 1,330 tonnes per year.

With this latest addition, Ikea Malaysia now has more than 20,437 solar panels installed across its stores and centres nationwide. The combined capacity of these installations brings Ikea Malaysia's total renewable energy generation to 6.3 MWh annually.

Nik Nazmi highlighted the role of the private sector in driving Malaysia's climate goals. "The transition toward

a low-carbon, climate-resilient future is not a journey the government can undertake alone. It must be a whole-of-nation effort – and the private sector is an essential partner in driving our sustainability agenda forward. Ikea is showing that doing good for the planet and doing good business go hand in hand."

In addition to solar energy adoption, Ikea Malaysia continues to invest in sustainable store opera-

tions and reduce its carbon footprint across the value chain.

Ikea Cheras was the first Ikea store globally to achieve both Green Building Index Malaysia Gold certification and LEED Gold certification – later replicated by Ikea Batu Kawan.

In addition, the company is expanding its electric vehicle fleet as part of its goal to make 100% of home deliveries using more sustainable transport solutions by 2030.

See also page 17

Rising food consumption to fuel local packaging market's growth

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's packaging market is projected to grow from 20.8 billion units in 2023 to 23.7 billion units by 2028, driven primarily by rising food consumption and the rapid adoption of flexible packaging.

GlobalData PLC business development manager Paul Saruviar said cost-effectiveness, convenience, and sustainability are making flexible packaging the fastest-growing segment in the sector.

"The food industry will continue to be the growth engine, accounting for up to 60% of packaging demand. With shifting consumer preferences and regulatory pressures, flexible packaging has emerged as the go-to solution for manufacturers across food and beverage categories," he said in a presentation at the "Unpacking Malaysia-Thailand Trade & Packaging Opportunities Ahead of ProPak Asia 2025" event yesterday.

At the same time, he said, sustainability has moved from optional to essential, adding that industry players are expected to

comply with the Malaysian Plastic Sustainability Roadmap and future regulatory updates, particularly those expected to roll out by late 2025.

"Companies that fail to meet sustainability standards face potential fines and the risk of being cut from procurement lists," he added.

Paul said global trade dynamics are reshaping the regional packaging landscape.

"The proposed implementation of up to 60% tariffs on Chinese goods – targeting electronics, plastics, metals, and food – has triggered a broader supply chain realignment.

"Multinational companies are increasingly looking towards Southeast Asia as part of a 'China Plus One' strategy. Malaysia, in particular, is emerging as a preferred destination for relocating packaging and manufacturing operations due to its strategic trade position and regulatory stability."

Paul said the shift offers a major export opportunity for Malaysian converters, especially those producing plastic resins, flexible films, and paperboard packaging. – by AIMIE SHAZRIE

Thailand to tap into Malaysia's halal ecosystem strength to push food exports

■ BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Thailand is looking into Malaysia's halal market strength as a key pillar in advancing its future food exports strategy, as both countries push for deeper collaboration under the Asean framework.

Thai Chamber of Commerce vice-chairman Visit Limlurcha (pic) said one key area of focus is building a regional roadmap that ensures trade resilience.

"Asean must maintain at least 50-60% intra-regional trade capacity to buffer against external shocks and preserve access to markets such as the United States and China. In this context, Thailand sees strong potential in integrating Malaysia's established halal certification ecosystem with its own abundant raw materials."

"Malaysia has a lot of halal market access, while Thailand has a lot of raw materials. We can exchange and help each other," he told reporters at the "Unpacking Malaysia-Thailand Trade & Packaging Opportunities ahead of

ProPak Asia 2025" event yesterday.

Visit said the synergy aligns with Thailand's policy shift towards producing more "future food", which is food that is sustainable, health-focused and designed to meet the needs of new generations. "The food we are developing is not just for nutrition, but for sustainability and innovation."

Visit pointed out that Malaysia holds an advantage in developing functional and high-value ingredients, beyond traditional food commodities, which could complement Thailand's production capabilities.

"Malaysia has roadmaps that can turn raw products into functional ingredients. We need to work together to unlock that value," he said.

Visit highlighted the urgent need for regional alignment to address global economic uncertainties, including



slowing trade, US tariffs, and post-pandemic recovery.

"We all face the same problem, so we need to prepare ourselves well, not just Thailand and Malaysia, but Asean as a whole."

With Malaysia taking over the Asean chairmanship this year, Visit said, both countries are intensifying cross-border dialogue.

"This is a very good time for Malaysia. Both the government and private sectors are in close conversation, and we have a meeting coming up next month to align on these matters," he said.

Visit acknowledged that Thai food exports to Malaysia have been declining in recent years, attributing this to the broader global economic slowdown. "Once the situation improves, the numbers will bounce back, and with stronger collaboration, we can do more than before," he said.



TMD Energy IPO's gross proceeds totalled about US\$10.08 million.



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TMD Energy makes debut on NYSE American

➤ First Malaysian marine bunker supplier to list on a major US exchange

PETALING JAYA: TMD Energy Ltd, a Malaysia and Singapore-based provider of integrated marine bunkering services and part of Straits Energy Resources Bhd, announced yesterday that its shares have been listed and began trading on the NYSE American – an exchange designed for growing companies – on Monday under the ticker symbol “TMDE”.

TMD Energy's share price opened at US\$3.26, rising to an all-time high of US\$4.12 on its market debut before closing at US\$3.63, which was 11.69% higher than its initial public offering (IPO) price of US\$3.25 per share.

This gave the company a market capitalisation of US\$83.85 million (RM367.2 million) on its first day as a publicly listed company.

TMD Energy IPO's proceeds (excluding over-allotments) before deducting underwriting discounts and other related expenses totalled about US\$10.08 million (RM44.13 million). The proceeds from the IPO will be used for the purchase of cargo oil, defraying listing expenses, working capital and other general corporate purposes.

In a statement, the company said it has granted the underwriter a 45-day option to purchase up to an aggregate of 465,000 additional shares to cover over-allotments at the IPO price. If the underwriter exercises their

option to purchase the additional shares in full, the total gross proceeds before deducting underwriting discounts and other related expenses from the offering are expected to be about US\$11.59 million.

“We are proud to become the first Malaysian marine bunker supplier to achieve a listing on a major US exchange, reinforcing our position as one of the industry's leading players. Leveraging Malaysia's strategic location along major shipping routes including the Straits of Malacca and the South China Sea, as well as resilient demand for bunker fuel in the region and globally, we are well positioned for further expansion. On top of that, TMD Energy is also the first Malaysian company to list on the NYSE American,” said chairman, executive director and CEO, Datuk Seri Ron Ho Kam Choy.

He added that their listing in NYSE American will help them to enhance their international profile, expand their reach, capture new markets, and deliver sustainable, higher returns to their shareholders.

“Our debut on the NYSE American is a key milestone in our journey of growth. While continuing to drive strong organic growth, as part of our strategic growth initiatives, we remain focused on identifying and pursuing strategic mergers and acquisition opportunities that align with our long-term vision and strengthen our regional presence,” said executive director Datuk David Young Leong Yan.

TMD Energy and its subsidiaries (TMD Energy Group) are mainly involved in marine fuel bunkering services specialising in the supply and marketing of marine gas oil and marine fuel oil to various types of ships and

vessels at sea. In addition, the company provides vessel chartering services and vessel management services.

TMD Energy Group operates in 19 ports across Malaysia, with a fleet of 15 well-maintained bunkering vessels with capacities ranging from 540 deadweight tons (dwt) to 7,820 dwt, of which nine are double-bottom and double-hull vessels with an average cargo-carrying capacity of 4,200 dwt each. Its customers include ship owners and operators, shipping lines, logistics and freight companies, as well as oil and gas traders or brokers. In 2023, Tumpuan Development Sdn Bhd, its indirect wholly owned subsidiary, became the first Malaysian industry player to be recognised as a biofuel supplier and trader under the International Sustainability and Carbon Certification scheme, underscoring its commitment to reducing shipping's carbon footprint and leading sustainability initiatives within the region.

TMD Energy's growth strategy includes expanding its market presence across Southeast Asia, growing its bunkering fleet, providing ship management services to external customers and diversifying its fuel offering to include eco-friendly alternative fuels such as biodiesel.

TMD Energy is part of Straits Energy Resources, a Fortune Southeast Asia 500 company listed on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities. Besides oil trading and bunkering, Straits Energy Resources is involved in a diverse range of businesses including ship-to-ship operations, ship management services, shipping agency, telecommunication and networking services, and inland transport and logistics.

Google Pay rolls out integration of e-wallets for Android users in M'sia

PETALING JAYA: Google has announced the integration of ShopeePay and TNG eWallet (an Alipay+Partner) with Google Pay in Malaysia, marking Google Pay's first e-wallet integrations in Southeast Asia.

This new feature will enable Android users in Malaysia to check out seamlessly with their preferred e-wallets when shopping on mobile sites via Google Chrome, starting with selected online merchants.

This initial integration features ShopeePay and TNG eWallet, and will expand to support more partners in the future, Google said in a statement yesterday.

With 88% of Malaysians using e-wallets in 2024, this Google Pay integration helps make online payments more convenient and secure. By incorporating the popular e-wallets that Malaysians use daily, Google Pay now offers consumers more choices in addition to card payments and extends cashless payments to the underbanked.

Google Malaysia country director, Farhan S. Qureshi said, “We are excited to bring this new Google Pay feature first to Malaysia, a market with a thriving digital payment landscape and a strong appetite for e-wallet adoption. By integrating with trusted local platforms like ShopeePay and TNG eWallet, we are localising Google Pay to match their everyday payment preferences, and delivering a frictionless and secure manner when shopping on their favourite mobile sites on Google Chrome.”

Bank Muamalat becomes first ASNB agent to offer ASNB wakaf services

KUALA LUMPUR: Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd has become the first Amanah Saham Nasional Bhd (ASNB) agent to serve as a distribution channel for ASNB Wakaf services.

In a statement yesterday, the bank said ASNB unit holders can now easily make ASNB Wakaf contributions at any Bank Muamalat branch nationwide.

“ASNB Wakaf allows unit holders to donate their ASNB unit trusts as wakaf, where the principal investment remains intact, and the returns are channelled to wakaf projects aimed at community and ummah development.

“This service is managed by ASNB Wakalah Sdn Bhd, a wakaf management institution responsible for overseeing the entire wakaf fund process, from collecting donations to distributing the wakaf benefit funds to those in need,” it said.

Bank Muamalat president and CEO Khairul Kamarudin said the collaboration offers Bank Muamalat the opportunity to expand its services by providing Islamic financial solutions with significant social impact to create a better life together. – Bernama

HEB Group declares 1.46 sen dividend after record earnings in FY24

PETALING JAYA: Engineering and project management consultant HSS Engineers Bhd (HEB Group) yesterday declared a final single-tier dividend of 1.46 sen per share in respect of the financial year ended Dec 31, 2024 (FY24), compared to 1.21 sen per share paid out in the previous year (FY23).

The FY24 dividend payout is estimated at RM7.4 million or about 30% of profit after tax (PAT), in line with the dividend policy targeted at 30% of annual PAT, subject to approval by shareholders at the group's annual general meeting on June 11.

The dividend payment reflects the group's

impressive financial results, with net profit increasing 23% to a record high of RM25.2 million in FY24 from RM20.4 million in FY23. The improved performance was fuelled by the group's expanding presence in international markets and deepening involvement in emerging sectors.

Executive vice-chairman Tan Sri Kuna Sittampalam said: “We are glad to reward our shareholders with higher dividends as we reap growing financial gains from our rising regional presence and diversified sector coverage. The historic net profit reflects the strength of our adept engineering services, deployed to

transformational projects across various industries and countries.”

Looking ahead, he said they aim to sustain their earnings momentum.

“We look forward to reprising our prominent role in transportation and water-related projects while accelerating our involvement in data centres, artificial intelligence-powered drone solutions, and renewable energy,” he said.

As at Dec 31, 2024, the group's order book stood at RM2.1 billion and will be billed progressively over the next eight years. The order book, the biggest in the group's history, includes new contract wins in FY24 amounting

to over RM900 million across various sectors and countries.

Notable wins last year include Westports 2 Expansion Development Phase 1, two new data centre projects in Johor, the Phnom Penh-Bavet Highway in Cambodia and the group's largest-ever contract – the Baghdad Metro project in Iraq's capital.

The group is actively pursuing more opportunities in the infrastructure sector, with a tender book of RM504 million worth of projects across the domains of highways, roads, rail, ports, water infrastructure, data centres, and renewable energy.

M'sian palm oil stocks rise in March after six months of falls

► Commodity has regained its price competitiveness against other soft oils, says MPOC

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian palm oil stocks increased in March 2025 after six consecutive months of decline, rising to 1.56 million tonnes, said Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) yesterday.

It said that the increase was driven by a 16.8% month-on-month rise in palm oil production, following delayed harvests in February caused by heavy rainfall and flooding.

Despite the recovery in March, it added cumulative production for the first quarter of 2025 remains the lowest in three years and year-on-year production declines are likely to persist until September.

As a result, total palm oil production in 2025 could fall to around 19 million tonnes, below the 19.3 million tonnes recorded in 2024.

"Palm oil has recently regained its price competitiveness against the soft oils, after trading at a premium in the global market since August 2024. At RM3,900 per tonne, palm oil is now considered reasonably priced. As a result, China is projected to increase its palm oil imports in May and June to replenish inventories, coinciding with the onset of the summer season, which typically sees higher palm oil consumption in the country. Similarly, India is expected to

capitalise on the current low palm oil prices to replenish its depleted inventories, as the price gap between palm oil and soybean oil has narrowed in the domestic market," said MPOC in a statement.

Soybean oil prices on the CBOT exchange have been hovering above 42 cents per pound (equivalent to US\$920 per tonne), despite bearish sentiment in the US market. Following the recent removal of tax credit for both canola oil and imported used cooking oil from the US biodiesel supply chain, the feedstock shortfall is expected to be filled by increased demand for tallow and soybean oil. This suggests that global soybean oil prices may have bottomed out and are poised for a strong recovery once US biofuel policy becomes clearer in the months to come, MPOC said.

Although palm oil stocks in Malaysia are expected to con-

tinue rising from April onwards, it said the build-up will be moderate, capped by weak year-on-year production growth, particularly in Sabah. Palm oil production in Sabah declined by 10% from January to March 2025, reaching its lowest level in five years. This production shortfall will limit inventory accumulation and help support palm oil prices.

In coming weeks, it added palm oil prices are expected to remain supported at RM3,900. "This stability is underpinned by the recovery in soybean oil prices, which enhances palm oil's price competitiveness. The ongoing decline in palm oil production in Sabah remains a concern and is likely to limit any significant production recovery in the coming months. Despite these supportive factors, a strong rally in vegetable oil prices is unlikely, as escalating trade conflicts and soft crude oil prices imply higher risk and price volatility," said MPOC.

SC kicks off third cohort of syariah mentorship scheme

KUALA LUMPUR: The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) yesterday commenced the third cohort of its Syariah Mentorship Programme (SMP), aimed at nurturing a new generation of syariah professionals in the Islamic capital market (ICM).

The event also celebrated 15 graduates of the second cohort of SMP, marking a significant step in the SC's efforts to strengthen syariah talent development and governance in the ICM.

The SMP, funded by the Capital Market Development Fund (CMDf), was introduced by the SC in 2023. The mentorship initiative is run by ISRA Consulting, wholly owned by INCEIF University.

The programme combines practical knowledge, industry exposure, and mentorship by members of the SC's Syariah Advisory Council.

Each cohort goes through an eight-month programme which includes three months of intensive classroom sessions, followed by five months of industry placements to gain hands-on experience in Syariah advisory within Islamic finance.

SC chairman Datuk Mohammad Faiz Azmi said SMP, one of the initiatives under the Capital Market Masterplan 3, will help nurture a sustainable Syariah talent pipeline and build industry capacity.

"Through a structured approach, SMP also aims to support the broader objectives of Maqasid al-Syariah by fostering values of integrity, ethics and sound judgement," he said.

"These are essential for syariah advisory roles in order to serve the greater good of the market and society."

"SC is also looking at the whole ecosystem beyond syariah professionals to developing the next generation of syariah scholars and the scope of their work, in order to solidify SC's leadership in this area."

To date, the SMP has produced 30 alumni where more than 70% of whom are now serving in various Islamic finance institutions. It is anticipated that the alumni will be registered as syariah advisers with the SC in the next five years.

Public portion of Reach Ten IPO oversubscribed 1.85 times

KUALA LUMPUR: The public portion of Sarawak-based telecommunications firm Reach Ten Holdings Bhd's initial public offering (IPO) has been oversubscribed by 1.85 times, ahead of its scheduled listing on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia on May 2.

The company said in a statement yesterday that it received a total of 2,706 applications for 142.65 million new shares, exceeding the 50 million shares allocated for public subscription.

"The Bumiputera portion of the shares was oversubscribed by 1.11 times, with 945 applications for 52.79 million shares.

"Meanwhile, the non-

Bumiputera portion saw 1,761 applications for 89.86 million shares, representing an oversubscription rate of 2.59 times," Reach Ten said.

The company also stated that the 25 million new shares allocated for its eligible directors, employees, and individuals who have contributed to its success under the pink form allocations have been fully subscribed.

"In addition, its placement agent has confirmed that 225 million shares made available for application by way of private placement to Bumiputera investors approved by the Ministry of Investment Trade and Industry and selected investors have been fully placed out," it said.

Managing director Leo Chin said that with the successful completion of its IPO and the funds now secured, the company is well-positioned to move forward with plans to expand its telecommunications infrastructure in Sarawak, while also focusing on strengthening and scaling up its overall business operations.

"The proceeds from the IPO will provide us with the necessary financial resources to significantly accelerate our expansion initiatives, particularly in establishing and enhancing our fibre optic network infrastructure," he said. "In addition, we plan to construct an extra 100 4G and/or 5G telecommunication towers across various parts of

Sarawak. These efforts are aligned with and supportive of the state government's ongoing commitment to improving internet coverage and digital connectivity, especially in underserved and rural communities."

Under the listing exercise, Reach Ten aims to raise RM104 million from the public issue of 200 million new shares at an issue price of RM0.52 per share.

M&A Securities Sdn Bhd is the principal adviser, underwriter and placement agent for the IPO exercise.

Reach Ten designs, builds, owns and operates the fibre optic communication networks and services in Kuching and Samarahan, Sarawak. - Bernama

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Mavcom: Complaints up in second half of last year

➤ Of the 2,613 reports in July to December, 99% were on airlines, with grievances centered on flight cancellations, delays and rescheduling

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Aviation Commission's (Mavcom) 17th Bi-Annual Consumer Report saw a rise in complaints received in the second half of 2024 (H2'24) as it continued efforts to bolster consumer protection while monitoring airline and airport service levels.

From July to December 2024, Mavcom received 2,613 complaints, a 34% increase compared to 1,948 complaints in the corresponding period in 2023 (H2'23). Of the total, 2,581 complaints (99%) were on airlines, while the remaining 32 complaints (1%) involved airport services. The grievances were predominantly centered around flight cancellations, delays and rescheduling, which collectively comprised 53% of the total.

Malaysia Airlines accounted for the highest number of complaints at 921, followed by AirAsia with 611 and Batik Air with 437. For every one million passengers carried, Firefly received the highest number of registered complaints with 256 complaints, followed by Malaysia Airlines with 142 complaints, and Batik Air with 111 complaints.

Among airports, KL International Airport Terminal 1 recorded the highest number of complaints with 13 cases, followed by KL International Airport Terminal 2 with six complaints - the majority of these primarily involved airport facilities.

In terms of complaint resolution by domestic airlines, AirAsia, AirAsia X, Batik Air, Firefly, Malaysia Airlines, and MASwings successfully met the 90% resolution target for closing complaints within 30 days. In contrast, foreign airlines reported a resolution rate of 54%, highlighting there were still areas for improvement to ensure higher consumer satisfaction. Additionally, 32 grievances involving airports were resolved within the 30-day timeframe, reflecting continued efforts to address consumer issues promptly.

Notably, 99% of all complaints received by Mavcom were successfully resolved, with 37% of these cases resulting in airlines reversing their initial decisions in favour of consumers.

In a statement yesterday, Mavcom said it continued to monitor airline operational performance based on key metrics, including on-time performance (OTP), which requires at least 85% of flights to depart within 15 minutes of the scheduled time of departure each month.

In H2'24, AirAsia, AirAsia X, Batik Air, and Malaysia Airlines did not meet the 85% OTP target for international flights. For domestic routes, Malaysia Airlines achieved the OTP targets from October to December 2024, while AirAsia X met its target from August to November 2024. However, it is noted that other airlines did not reach the 85% OTP benchmark during this period.

The performance of Malaysia's airports is observed by Mavcom through the Airports

Quality of Service Framework, which comprises 28 service quality elements grouped under four service quality categories, including passenger comfort and facilities, passenger and baggage flows, operator equipment and staff facilities, and queuing times.

The performance of Malaysia's airports under this framework is anchored on four key measurement mechanisms. These include independent inspections at airports, passenger surveys, data provided by airport operators regarding specific performance assessment indicators, and the availability of equipment and operator. This information allows Mavcom to determine whether the targets are being met.

"As air travel continues to rebound, it is crucial that the industry not only meets growing demand but also upholds the rights of consumers. The enhancements to the Malaysian Aviation Consumer Protection Code 2016 and our monitoring efforts are designed to ensure consumers are better protected and informed," said Mavcom executive chairman Datuk Seri Saripuddin Kasim.

He added, "We urge all aviation players to place consumer needs at the forefront, particularly in resolving complaints effectively. Our survey findings indicate a positive trend in consumer awareness of their rights and improvement in the resolution efforts by Malaysian carriers."

"However, there is always room for more improvement. Continued collective effort by the aviation industry is necessary to further elevate consumer knowledge and protection. Mavcom remains committed to further enhancing public education and outreach efforts to ensure that consumers are well informed and empowered throughout their air travel experience."

Investors express confidence in Johor-Singapore SEZ

JOHOR BAHRU: The Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) has seen numerous investors expressing strong confidence in its significant potential.

Daniel Chua, senior vice-president at Singapore-based GP Energy Tech International Pte Ltd, expressed optimism about the business opportunities that JS-SEZ provides, particularly in advanced manufacturing and digitalisation.

He said the company, which will be investing US\$150 million (RM658 million) to establish a nickel-based manufacturing facility and research and development centre in the economic zone, is expected to contribute significantly to the region's energy and technology sectors with an estimated 180 to 200 skilled job opportunities created over the next few years.

"When we look at JS-SEZ, the various areas that the government is pushing towards, for example, advanced manufacturing, digitalisation, and improving the logistics systems, I think all this has helped us put a lot more advanced manufacturing ideas into our manufacturing plants," he told Bernama on the sidelines of the JS-SEZ Joint Business and Investment Forum at the Persada Johor International Convention Centre, here yesterday.

Chua said the manufacturing facility is scheduled to begin operations next year.

GP Energy Tech is a subsidiary of Hong Kong-based Gold Peak Technology Group Ltd. Meanwhile, Agro Snow Malaysia Sdn Bhd is also capitalising on these strategic advantages by establishing its plant protein manufacturing facility in Tanjung Langsat.

Agro Snow is a joint venture between Agrocrop International and Megmilk Snow Brand, one of the largest dairy companies in Japan.

Singapore-based agricultural firm Agrocrop International's chief executive, Vishal Vijay, said the company is excited to be part of the JS-SEZ as they have a factory coming up in the Tanjung Langsat area.

He said the factory is located in a great location and gives them access to highly skilled labour and all the utilities needed.

The facility is expected to be completed by the first quarter of 2026.

Maybank, PUJB join forces to support Johor entrepreneurs

PETALING JAYA: Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) and Perbadanan Usahawan Johor Sdn Bhd (PUJB) have entered into a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to collaborate on strengthening support for the state's entrepreneurs, with a particular focus on businesses, especially MSMEs, aligned with the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ).

An MoU exchange ceremony was held recently in conjunction with the JS-SEZ Joint Business and Investment Forum, between Maybank president and group CEO Datuk Khairussaleh Ramli and PUJB CEO Mohd Radzi Mohd Amin.

Both parties aim to bridge key gaps by offering tailored banking and beyond banking solutions including halal facilitation services, supply chain financing, capacity-building programmes and strategic advisory services.

Khairussaleh said the collaboration underscores Maybank's commitment in supporting local entrepreneurs and to work closely with PUJB and Johor to strengthen the local MSME ecosystem. This is in line with the JS-SEZ key economic focus efforts to ensure that local businesses will greatly benefit from new investments and economic growth.

He said the partnership will play a catalytic role in advancing business growth and investments in the JS-SEZ covering over 60,000 local MSME entrepreneurs who are currently part of PUJB's ecosystem.

"With JS-SEZ's focus on halal (industry), this partnership with PUJB will also contribute towards the development and positioning of JS-SEZ as the preferred regional and global halal hub. Our strong global Islamic banking



Mohd Radzi (left) and Khairussaleh at a ceremony to exchange MoUs between PUJB and Maybank.

experience has strategically positioned us to assist in not only providing syariah-compliant financing solutions, but also enables us access to the halal ecosystem and marketplace for businesses," said Khairussaleh.

Since September 2023, Maybank Islamic has guided 360 MSMEs in their halal certification journey under its Halal Facilitation Programme. The programme will be extended to benefit not only local entrepreneurs but also foreign investors in the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics sectors who are seeking entry into the halal market.

Khairussaleh said Maybank is committed to

delivering its M25+ strategic thrusts, of which one of them is to strengthen global Islamic banking leadership through a number of business drivers, and at the same time being a major player in the robust and dynamic halal sector in Malaysia and globally.

Mohd Radzi said: "PUJB is committed to leading the development of a competitive and inclusive entrepreneurial and cooperative ecosystem including empowering youth, women, and rural communities through training, mentoring, access to modern technology, as well as financing and infrastructure support for shared economic prosperity."

Automotive sector TIV in March rises to 72,704 units

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Automotive Association (MAA) reported that the automotive sector's total industry volume (TIV) rose by 12% month-on-month in March 2025 to 72,704 units compared to 65,061 units in February.

"The higher TIV growth can be attributed to the Hari Raya festive celebration and attractive promotional offers from automotive companies," it said in a statement yesterday.

On a year-on-year basis, MAA said the TIV also improved by two per cent from the 71,199 units recorded in March 2024.

The association noted that a total of 58,063 vehicles were produced in March this year, down 13% from the same month last year.

It said passenger vehicles accounted for 55,301 units, while commercial vehicles accounted for 2,762 units.

On the industry's outlook, MAA expects the TIV for April to be lower than March due to the long Hari Raya celebration break during the first week of the month. - Bernama

Nomura to acquire Macquarie's US, European asset management units

TOKYO: Nomura is acquiring Macquarie Group's US and European public asset management businesses for US\$1.8 billion (RM7.88 billion), marking the Japanese investment bank's most ambitious expansion abroad since its failed purchase of Lehman Brothers' assets.

Japan's largest investment bank and brokerage will take over the management of the publicly traded assets, the companies said yesterday. It will also take over the investment teams and operating platforms relating to the businesses, and retain the existing management team.

The Japanese company has had a troubled history in its attempts to expand overseas, including the acquisition of assets from the collapsed Lehman Brothers in 2008 which it later wrote down.

But the Macquarie assets deal, which Nomura said is its largest acquisition ever, comes as companies in Japan face a shrinking domestic market and are increasingly seeking growth opportunities abroad.

Asset management has become a core growth area for Japanese financial institutions looking to secure stable fee-based revenue that is less impacted by the ups and downs of market sentiment.

"The market now is very unstable but the biggest factor in our mid to long term plan is to have a robust investment management platform," Nomura CEO Kentaro Okuda told a press conference.

"This transaction had a very prudent due diligence process and should be durable against the volatility of the market," he added.

The deal is expected to close by the end of 2025 and will be settled entirely by cash with no financing directly related to the transaction planned, Okuda said. — Reuters

THAI INDUSTRIAL SENTIMENT DECLINES IN MARCH, FIRST TIME IN THREE MONTHS

BANGKOK: Thailand's industrial sentiment in March fell for the first time in three months, with a future index pointing to a further fall on concerns about US tariffs, the Federation of Thai Industries said yesterday. The FTI's industrial sentiment index dropped to 91.8 in March from 93.4 in February. Another FTI index that projects sentiment over the next three months also fell for the first time in three months, to 95.7 in March from 97.6 in a previous survey, the FTI said. Earlier yesterday, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said Thai-US trade talks had been postponed from April 23, without giving a reason. The US was Thailand's largest export market last year, accounting for 18.3% of total shipments, or US\$54.96 billion. — Reuters

UBS TO SELL INDIA WEALTH BUSINESS TO 360 ONE, TAKE 5% STAKE IN PARTNER

HONG KONG: UBS will sell its Indian onshore wealth business to asset manager 360 ONE WAM in a deal valued at 3.07 billion rupees (RM157.8 million), while taking a nearly 5% stake in the Mumbai-based company. 360 ONE will buy UBS' local stock broking and distribution business, discretionary and non-discretionary portfolio management services business, and residual loan portfolio, the Indian company said in a statement yesterday. UBS said in a separate statement it would acquire warrants for a 4.95% stake in 360 ONE — worth about 19 billion rupees based on Monday's close. It said it would also take over serving 360 ONE's clients in Singapore, subject to regulatory approvals. This deal will see UBS relinquish equity control in its India onshore wealth business while taking up offshore wealth business of its local partner. — Reuters

US finalises tariffs on solar imports from Southeast Asia

► Jinko Solar faces countervailing duties of 40% for exports from Malaysia, products from Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam targeted too

WASHINGTON: US trade officials have finalised steep tariff levels on most solar cells from Southeast Asia, a key step towards wrapping up a year-old trade case in which American manufacturers accused Chinese companies of flooding the market with unfairly cheap goods.

The tariffs on companies from Cambodia, Thailand, Malaysia and Vietnam will still need to be ratified at a meeting of the International Trade Commission in June.

The case was brought last year by Korea's Hanwha Qcells, Arizona-based First Solar Inc and several smaller producers seeking to protect billions of dollars in investments in US solar manufacturing.

The petitioner group, the American Alliance for Solar Manufacturing Trade Committee, accused big Chinese solar panel makers with factories in Malaysia, Cambodia, Thailand and Vietnam of shipping panels priced below their cost of production and of

receiving unfair subsidies that make American goods uncompetitive.

While Monday's move came after a year-long investigation, it follows on the heels of US President Donald Trump launching blistering trade wars through tariffs around the globe.

Trump's tariffs, which have seen the White House impose eyewateringly high levies before suspending some of them to allow for negotiations, are aimed at reducing US trade imbalances.

The Commerce Department's statement said the new recommended tariffs on solar cells, however, were taking specific aim at "transnational subsidies".

"In the CVD investigations involving Cambodia, Malaysia, Thailand, and Vietnam, Commerce found that companies in each country were receiving subsidies from the Government of China," the statement said, referring to countervailing duty probes.

"These are among the first CVD

investigations wherein Commerce has made an affirmative finding that companies received transnational subsidies."

The tariffs unveiled on Monday vary widely depending on the company and country, but were broadly higher than the preliminary duties announced late last year.

Among firms targeted were Chinese companies Jinko Solar and Trina Solar.

Products from Cambodia are set to face duties of up to 3,521%, according to the Commerce Department.

Jinko Solar faced duties of 40% for exports from Malaysia and around 245% for goods from Vietnam.

Trina Solar in Thailand will see duties of more than 375%, and more than 200% for products from Vietnam.

Products from Cambodia face duties of more than 3,500% because its producers elected not to cooperate with the US probe.

If imposed, the new levies will come on top of the blanket 10% levy imposed by Trump since early April on products entering the United States from most trading partners.

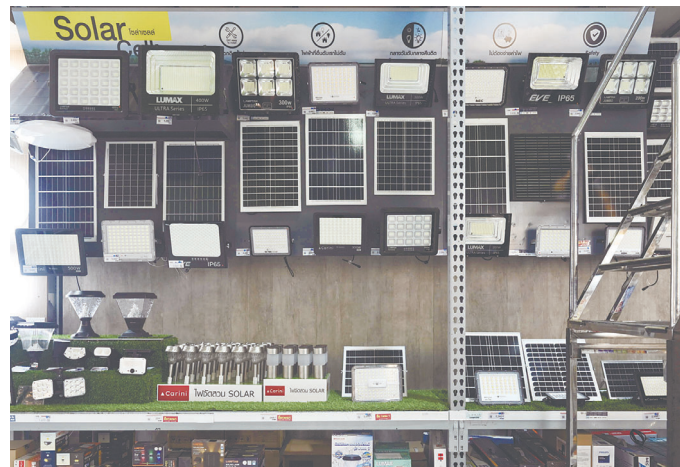
"These are very strong results," Tim Brightbill, an attorney for the US manufacturing group, said on a call with reporters. "We are confident that they will address the unfair trade practices of the Chinese-owned companies in these four countries, which have been injuring the US solar manufacturing industry for far too long."

The threat of tariffs on countries that supplied more than US\$10 billion (RM43.8 billion) of solar products to the United States last year, accounting for the vast majority of domestic supplies, has caused a dramatic shift in the global solar trade. Imports from the four targeted countries this year are a fraction of what they were a year ago, while shipments of panels from nations like Laos and Indonesia are on the rise.

Critics of the effort, including the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) trade group, have said tariffs would harm US solar producers because they would raise prices on the imported cells that are assembled into panels by American factories. Those facilities have been on the rise since a new subsidy for clean energy manufacturing was created in 2022.

SEIA officials were not immediately available for comment.

In order for the tariffs to be finalised, the International Trade Commission must vote in June on whether the industry was materially harmed by the dumped and subsidised imports. — Reuters, AFP



Small solar panels and solar-powered lights for sale are displayed at a home improvement centre in Bangkok yesterday. — AFP/IC

Vietnam cracks down on illegal transshipments to US

HANOI: Vietnam's trade ministry has issued a directive to crack down on illegal transshipment of goods to the United States and other trading partners as it tries to avoid steep US tariffs, according to a document reviewed by Reuters.

The ministry in the directive, which was dated and effective April 15, said trade fraud was likely to increase amid growing tension caused by US tariffs.

That in turn would make it "more complicated to avoid sanctions that countries will apply to imported goods" if fraud is not prevented, it said.

The directive did not specifically name any countries where transshipment fraud might originate. However, Vietnam's goods imports are nearly 40% from China and Washington has openly accused Beijing of using the Southeast Asian nation as a transshipment hub to dodge US duties.

Vietnam has been slapped by the Trump

administration with 46% "reciprocal" tariffs, currently paused until July, which if applied could seriously undermine a growth model that relies on exports to the United States, its top market, and large investments in the country by foreign manufacturers.

Under the directive, officials at the trade ministry, customs and other agencies have been told to strengthen supervision and inspection of imported goods to establish their origin, "especially imported raw materials used for production and export".

Vietnam's Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh instructed officials to combat trade fraud, counterfeiting and other issues of concern for the United States as the country readied to start talks with Washington on tariffs, the government said on its portal yesterday.

The trade ministry directive was issued the day China's President Xi Jinping concluded a trip to Vietnam during which several agreements were signed, including one on strengthening

cooperation between agencies in charge of issuing certificates on the origin of goods.

Earlier this week, Beijing warned countries against striking trade deals with the US at its expense.

Under allegations of illegal transshipment, exported goods from China stop in Vietnam to change their certificate of origin despite no or insufficient value being added in the country, before being shipped to the United States where they can enjoy lower tariffs than if they were labelled as Chinese products.

New stricter procedures are to be implemented to inspect factories and supervise the release of "Made in Vietnam" labels, "especially for enterprises with a sudden increase in the number of applications for certificates of origin," the Vietnamese trade ministry's document said.

It instructs officials to propose when needed "specific measures to prevent illegal transshipment". — Reuters



Global shipping navigates unprecedented volatility

➤ Half-empty cargo ships, changing freight rates and new routes among latest shifts in wake of US tariffs

PARIS: Shifting trade announcements have led to unprecedented volatility in the global shipping industry in recent weeks, with industry players having to constantly adapt to new US tariffs.

Cargo ships put to sea half empty, fluctuating freight rates and possible shipping route changes are some of the recent adjustments industry specialists have noted.

The global economy has been riding a rollercoaster since US President Donald Trump returned to the White House in January and kicked off a tariff offensive.

Trump's recent walk-back, announcing a 90-day pause on some previously announced levies – with the exception of those targeting China – has once again upset the balance.

"In the three weeks leading up to the announcement, we saw a slowdown in trade and many ships were only 50% full on the transatlantic and transpacific trades to the US," said Alexandre Charpentier, transport specialist at consulting firm Roland Berger.

During that time, sea freight rates fell and many companies held on to their stocks as a precaution.

"As of last week, we've had the opposite effect," Charpentier said. "People want to ship as much as possible to the US, they're destocking and there has been a rush for space."

And prices have started to rise again. Adding to the headwinds facing shipping are new US port fees for Chinese-built and -operated ships, unveiled by Washington last week and due to kick in from mid-October.

Those come on top of the tariffs of up to 145% the Trump administration has introduced on a large number of Chinese imports, resulting in a top tax line as high as 245% on some products.

China builds nearly half of all ships launched, ahead of South Korea and Japan.

In the long run, shipping companies expect a decline in freight rates – as happened in 2018-2019 during Trump's first presidential term.

Back then liners "experienced an oversupply of shipping capacity, decreased shipping rates, increased operational costs and ultimately, a reduction in revenue," said Sandy Gosling,

specialist in transport and logistics at consulting firm McKinsey.

Tariffs then were lower than those announced by Trump this year.

"It's difficult to see into the future but what seems most likely to us is a slowing of certain routes in favour of other countries in Southeast Asia or India," said Charpentier.

Anne-Sophie Fribourg, vice-president of ocean procurement at British freight forwarder Zencargo, said she expected the China-US route would become unprofitable.

If this were to happen, she said, "shipowners will readjust their rotations. In other words, they will turn away from traditional routes to new ones, such as Latin America, where demand has been growing for some time now."

For the time being, major international companies such as MSC, CMA CGM and Maersk have not made such adjustments.

German container shipping firm Hapag-Lloyd said it was not noticing any changes on the Atlantic.

It however saw a "massive decline in China," offset by "a clear increase in demand in Southeast Asia."

Consulting firm Boston Consulting Group said in a note sent to its clients that it expected a sharp decline in China-US trade and an increase in trade within what it called the "Global South".

The World Trade Organisation (WTO) warned of a potential "even sharper decline of 1.5% in global goods trade" in 2025, depending on Trump's tariffs policy.

It said merchandise trade between China and the US could plunge by 81%.

Gosling said tariffs are just the latest of many disruptions the shipping industry suffered in recent decades.

"According to a 2020 McKinsey Global Institute report, industries have experienced material disruptions lasting a month or longer every 3.7 years on average," she said.

Logistical chains were upended during the Covid-19 years, before Houthi attacks in the Red Sea drove vessels to round Africa via the Cape of Good Hope. Shipowners have developed a certain "agility to change routes," said Fribourg of Zencargo.

But adjusting flows towards other destinations "will take some time," Charpentier said. – AFP



New US port fees targeting Chinese-built and -operated ships – announced by Washington last week and set to take effect in mid-October – are adding to the challenges facing the shipping industry. – UNSPLASH PIX

Gold hits record, stocks mixed on Trump salvo against Fed chief

HONG KONG: Bullion hit another record yesterday while the dollar weakened and equities fluctuated as US President Donald Trump's latest salvo against Federal Reserve boss Jerome Powell added fuel to fears about the central bank's independence.

With the US tariff blitz still causing ructions on global trading floors, investors are now dealing with the added worry that the US president will try to remove the country's top banker.

Trump took a swipe at Powell last week for his warning that the sweeping levies would likely reignite inflation, saying his "termination cannot come fast enough" and adding that "I'm not happy with him. I let him know it and if I want him out, he'll be out of there real fast, believe me".

While that raised eyebrows, the Republican tycoon sent shivers through markets Monday by calling on the Fed boss again to make pre-emptive cuts to interest rates and calling him a "major loser" and "Mr Too Late".

He said on his Truth Social platform that there was "virtually" no inflation, claiming energy and food costs were well down and pointed to the several reductions by the European Central Bank.

The outbursts have fanned concern that Trump is preparing to oust Powell, with top economic adviser Kevin Hassett saying Friday the president was looking at whether he could do so.

Panicked Wall Street investors once again dumped US assets, with all three main indexes ending down around 2.5% on Monday.

"The first volley on Thursday had little market reaction, but Monday's second barrage has seen an intensification of the 'sell America' trade," said National Australia Bank's Tapas Strickland.

"Whether or not President Trump is legally able and willing to move against the US Fed, the jousting underscores the loss of US exceptionalism and the very real policy risk for investors."

The rush for safety saw gold hit yet another record above US\$3,500, and while the dollar steadied after the previous day's selloff, it remained under pressure against its major peers.

Stocks swung between gains and losses on the first full day of business after the Easter break.

Tokyo, Sydney, Seoul, Wellington, Taipei, Manila and Bangkok fell while Hong Kong, Shanghai, Singapore, Mumbai and Jakarta rose.

London was barely moved, while Paris and Frankfurt edged down.

However, analysts warned of another rout if Trump were to try to fire the Fed boss, which many said could cause a crisis of confidence in the US economy.

"Were Powell to be fired, the initial reaction would be a huge injection of volatility into financial markets, and the most dramatic rush to the exit from US assets that it is possible to imagine," said Pepperstone strategist Michael Brown.

"Lower, much lower, equities; Treasuries sold across the board; and, the dollar falling off a cliff."

"Any sign of the longstanding, independent nature of the Fed coming under threat would see investors across the globe selling every single US-based asset that they have, and also poses the genuinely scary prospect of upending the entire way in which the global financial system operates." – AFP

Roche plans US\$50b investment in US over five years

ZURICH: Roche said yesterday it would invest US\$50 billion (RM219 billion) in the US over the next five years, creating more than 12,000 new jobs, in the latest massive investment by companies reacting to President Donald Trump's tariffs policy.

The Swiss pharma giant said the new positions would include nearly 6,500 in construction and 1,000 at new and expanded facilities.

The announcement comes as drugmakers unveil investments to deal with tariffs from the Trump administration, which is seeking to boost domestic manufacturing.

Fellow Swiss drugmaker Novartis earlier this month said it would spend US\$23 billion in the US, while Eli Lilly and Johnson & Johnson also announced sizeable investments recently.

CEO Thomas Schinecker said the investment underscored Roche's commitment to the US, where it employs 25,000 people across 24 sites.

Once the new and expanded manufacturing capacity comes online, Roche will export more medicines from the US than it imports, the Basel company said.

Among the investments, Roche will expand its manufacturing and distribution centres in Kentucky, Indiana, New Jersey and California.

A new gene therapy factory will be built in Pennsylvania, along with a new plant for continuous glucose monitoring in Indiana.

A new factory to make weight loss medicines will be built, with the location yet to be announced, along with a research centre for cardiovascular, renal and metabolism studies in Massachusetts.

"Our investments of US\$50 billion over the next five years will lay the foundation for our next era of innovation and growth, benefiting patients in the US and around the world," Schinecker said in a statement.

The executive did not mention the threat of looming tariffs, with Switzerland facing a 31% charge on its exports to the US.

Last week, the Trump administration launched a probe into pharmaceutical imports, as part of a bid to impose tariffs on the sector.

The timing and extent of the levies remain uncertain, but the impact could be big, with close to US\$213 billion in pharmaceutical products imported to the US last year, nearly triple 2014's US\$73 billion, according to the United Nations trade database. – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: APRIL 22

Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

22 April 2025

Participation

Retail (21.65%) Net (in RM mil.)	Institution (44.67%) Net (in RM mil.)	Foreign (33.68%) Net (in RM mil.)
+65.15	+40.20	-105.35
Bought (in RM mil.) 392.75	Bought (in RM mil.) 763.35	Bought (in RM mil.) 507.76
Sold (in RM mil.) 327.59	Sold (in RM mil.) 723.16	Sold (in RM mil.) 613.11

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



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

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

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	10,981.00 -114.30
FBMKLCI	1,486.25 -13.22
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	490.62 -2.00
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	142.46 -1.57
CONSTRUCTION	249.44 -5.18
FINANCIAL SERVICES	17,849.90 -159.20
ENERGY	654.43 -5.58
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	481.35 -3.33
HEALTH CARE	1,822.18 -38.79
TRANSPORTATION	957.35 -2.23
PROPERTY	942.22 -12.48
PLANTATION	7,216.32 +5.19
FBMSHA	10,780.60 -104.40
FBMACE	4,522.32 -43.88
TECHNOLOGY	44.02 -0.54
TURNOVER: 3.113 bil	VALUE: RM1.291 bil

Bursa eases amid Trump-Powell tensions and cautious sentiment

BURSA Malaysia ended lower yesterday on selling activities in the financial services and industrial products and services sectors' heavyweights, amid tensions between US President Donald Trump and Federal Reserve chair Jerome Powell.

The tensions, coupled with global uncertainty, have sparked investors' concern, prompting them to remain cautious.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI fell 13.22 points or 0.88% to 1,486.25 from Monday's close of 1,499.47.

The benchmark index opened 7.03 points lower at 1,492.44 and moved between 1,482.70 and 1,492.44 during the early session.

Market breadth was negative, with decliners outpacing gainers 631 to 302, while 397 counters were unchanged, 1,095 untraded and 30 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said market sentiment remains cautious globally after Trump lashed out at Powell, raising fears about political interference in monetary policy and dampening optimism over the US economy.

Meanwhile, UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said the lower FBM KLCI close yesterday reflected mounting global uncertainty amid renewed trade tensions under the new US administration.

Among other heavyweights, YTL Power International slipped nine sen to RM3.17, YTL Corporation lost six sen to RM1.77, Public Bank edged down three sen to RM4.37, however, Maxis gained five sen to RM3.54 and Axiata added one sen to RM1.96.

As for the actives, NexG rose one sen to 35.5 sen, Aumas inched up two sen to 80 sen, while Ingenieur Gudang trimmed half-a-sen to 3.5 sen, Tanco shaved 3.5 sen to 84.5 sen and My E.G. Services was two sen lower at 89 sen. — Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWD2	0.080	-0.030	-27.27	2,845,617
HSI-CWC4	0.085	+0.010	+13.33	2,488,274
HSI-CWEI	0.105	+0.010	+10.53	1,747,758
HSI-CWEI	0.150	-0.005	-3.23	1,451,462
HSI-PWDU	0.080	-0.030	-27.27	1,343,861
MYEG-C7Q	0.025	-0.040	-61.54	1,308,481
HSI-PWFQ	0.135	-0.025	-15.63	1,147,920
MYEG-C8Q	0.175	+0.025	+16.67	1,040,100
NEXG	0.355	+0.010	+2.90	771,846
HSI-CWEK	0.090	-0.005	-5.26	633,316
INGENIEU	0.035	-0.005	-12.50	614,557
HSI-PWFK	0.135	-0.020	-12.90	568,009
TANCO	0.845	-0.035	-3.98	444,189
MYEG	0.890	-0.020	-2.20	331,539
XIAOMI-C36	0.110	+0.015	+15.79	310,498
AUMAS	0.800	+0.020	+2.56	297,447
SGFCAP-WC	0.015	-0.020	-57.14	278,006
GAMUDA	3.850	-0.090	-2.28	260,640
MAGMA	0.375	+0.005	+1.35	252,796
NEXG-WB	0.225	+0.015	+7.14	251,930



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
DIN045801028	103.500	+0.300	2
ALLIANZ	17.540	+0.200	106
AYER	7.500	+0.200	20
KOTRA	4.200	+0.200	1
HSI-PWF5	0.420	+0.175	1,000
HSI-PWF5	0.410	+0.160	501
CARLSBG	18.960	+0.120	1,695
TEXCYCL	1.080	+0.110	5,018
IDEAL	4.000	+0.100	61
BPURI-WB	0.230	+0.095	971
KSL	1.550	+0.090	21,674
KSENG	5.310	+0.080	65
NESTLE	80.580	+0.080	2,295
PADINI	2.040	+0.080	1,518
UTDPLT	22.980	+0.080	8,064
TCHONG	0.390	+0.075	113,951
ORIENT	7.070	+0.070	885
GOLDETF	4.770	+0.070	3,316
HSI-CWEA	0.610	+0.060	100
PIE	3.740	+0.060	5,597

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
GENM-C30	0.010	+100.00	1,010
HSI-PWF5	0.420	+71.43	1,000
BPURI-WB	0.230	+70.37	971
HSI-PWF5	0.410	+64.00	501
AHB-WC	0.015	+50.00	170
GENTINGC3K	0.015	+50.00	10
ITRONIC-WA	0.015	+50.00	3,065
MTRONIC	0.015	+50.00	1,080
TOPGLOV-C4T	0.015	+50.00	12,000
PBBANK-C1M	0.035	+40.00	100
FOCUS	0.020	+33.33	5,721
99SMART-CC	0.210	+31.25	100
BYD-C33	0.165	+26.92	146
TCHONG	0.390	+23.81	113,951
FFB-C14	0.080	+23.08	500
HSTECH-C20	0.170	+21.43	52,315
GENTINGC3R	0.145	+20.83	2,301
CDB-C62	0.030	+20.00	3,500
FITTERS	0.030	+20.00	50
IVORY	0.030	+20.00	102

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	38,170.41	-971.82	-2.48
S&P 500 [US]	5,158.20	-124.5	-2.36
NASDAQ [US]	15,870.90	-415.55	-2.55
NYSE [US]	18,032.37	-334.75	-1.82
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	4,922.75	-12.59	-0.26
FTSE 100 [UK]	8,296.01	20.35	0.25
DAX [GER]	21,180.46	-25.4	-0.12
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	34,220.60	-59.32	-0.17
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	2,532.12	3.19	0.13
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	21,562.32	167.18	0.78
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,783.95	-0.93	-0.02
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	179.25	0.16	0.09
SHANGHAI SEI COM [CHN]	3,299.76	8.32	0.25
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,486.64	-1.78	-0.07
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	79,602.50	194	0.24
ASX 200 [AUS]	7,816.70	-2.43	-0.03
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,013.73	-8.17	-0.1
FBM KLCI	1,486.25	-13.22	-0.88
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	3,796.62	37.4	0.99
WTI [US\$/BBL]	63.96	0.88	1.4
BRENT [US\$/BBL]	67.27	1.01	1.52
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	3,467.10	41.8	1.22
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	32.78	-0.05	-0.16
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	971.29	5.11	0.53
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	479.6	1.6	0.33
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,188.50	-15	-0.16
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	490.75	0.75	0.15
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	552.75	0.5	0.09
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	48.72	0.41	0.85
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	8,604.00	-97	-1.11
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	165.8	-2.4	-1.43

As at 5pm, April 22

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWFB	0.815	-0.545	2,038
HLBANK	19.540	-0.440	2,080
PETDAG	19.120	-0.380	1,294
ALLIANZ-PA	17.500	-0.300	18
MPI	14.840	-0.260	693
SUNCON	4.090	-0.250	45,526
PETGAS	16.660	-0.240	1,772
HSI-CWE4	0.405	-0.225	12
A50CHIN-H97	0.240	-0.180	500
HLFG	16.840	-0.160	272
EUROSP	2.400	-0.150	100
CANONE	2.030	-0.140	200
HEIM	26.360	-0.140	598
VSTECs	2.570	-0.130	6,682
HSI-CWE3	0.250	-0.120	11,960
CIMB	6.750	-0.110	178,030
DKSH	4.800	-0.100	217
KGB	2.950	-0.100	6,857
PANAMY	13.100	-0.100	65
PMETAL	4.700	-0.100	57,285

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWBU	0.005	-93.75	2,156
HSI-PWDN	0.005	-75.00	300
JT1ASA-CZ	0.015	-66.67	1,100
SIMEPROP-C45	0.015	-62.50	800
MYEG-C7Q	0.025	-61.54	1,308,481
NEXG-C67	0.060	-60.00	500
SGFCAP-WC	0.015	-57.14	278,006
FBMKLCI-HB5	0.065	-56.67	1,460
META-C14	0.065	-56.67	1,000
99SMART-CB	0.005	-50.00	18,104
CDB-C64	0.075	-50.00	1,000
DNEX-C38	0.005	-50.00	2,551
EAH	0.005	-50.00	15,224
GAMUDA-C2V	0.005	-50.00	1,000
GIIB-WA	0.005	-50.00	200
HSI-CWAI	0.005	-50.00	5,080
SUNCON-C20	0.005	-50.00	1,000
HSI-CWEI	0.080	-46.67	200
MEITUAN-C34	0.080	-46.67	200
A50CHIN-H97	0.240	-42.86	500

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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HLIB: Local construction sector outlook remains bright for now

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian construction sector is largely insulated from the direct impact of Liberation Day, which brought tariffs to over 180 trading partners, with reciprocal rates ranging between 10% and 49% across Asean.

Nevertheless, Hong Leong Investment Bank Bhd (HLIB) said the far-reaching nature of these measures, if prolonged, elevates potential second-order risks, which include a slowdown in trade-related jobs and a potential pullback in data centre contracts.

"The KL Construction Index has fallen by 4.3% since Liberation Day, exacerbating year-to-date performance. On the whole, we think that elevated risk premiums and negative wealth effects necessitate adjustment to our valuations.

"In our view, the on/off nature of tariffs could result in deferment of investment decisions affecting the flow of industrial jobs," it said in a note yesterday.

HLIB said tender opportunities have been coming thick and fast this year, unimpeded by artificial intelligence, DeepSeek fears and global trade uncertainties.

"We anticipate that data centre contracts could start trickling in from the second quarter (Q2'25) onwards, with awards for larger contract sizes of about RM2 billion per data centre possibly towards the second half, factoring in the evaluation period.

"Encouragingly, several power infrastructure contracts have materialised this year. Tenaga's electricity supply continues to expand with agreements signed totalling 5.9GW, or 26% up from 4.7GW in the previous quarter.

The overall situation looks sunny at the moment, but HLIB has noted that there could be a pullback in data centre capital expenditure. – Bernama

Ringgit retreats on renewed concerns over global economy

THE ringgit retreated versus the US dollar at the close yesterday due to renewed concerns over global economic uncertainties and mixed signals from the US monetary policy front, said an economist.

At 6pm, the local currency dropped to 4.3835/3905 against the greenback, from Monday's close of 4.3670/3735.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the ringgit saw some slight correction against the US dollar at RM4.3850 from the previous day's closing.

"The degree of uncertainties remained, but traders may have taken some positions as the dollar index (DXY) appears to have reached an attractive level," he told Bernama.

Having said that, US President Donald Trump's strong criticism of the US Federal Reserve (Fed) and its potential implications for the Fed's independence in setting monetary policy remain key concerns, Mohd Afzanizam added.

Back home, the ringgit traded mostly lower against a basket of major currencies.

It fell against the Japanese yen to 3.1206/1260 from 3.1046/1095 at Monday's close and declined against the British pound to 5.8590/8683 compared with 5.8513/8601 on Monday, but improved against the euro to 5.0362/0442 from 5.0408/0483 previously.

The local note also slipped against Asean currencies.

It decreased against the Singapore dollar to 3.3523/3579 from 3.3515/3570 at the close on Monday, slid against the Philippine peso to 7.73/7.75 from 7.71/7.73 on Monday, depreciated against the Thai baht to 13.1930/2212 from 13.1914/2170 and eased against the Indonesian rupiah at 259.9/260.5, compared with 259.8/260.3 previously.

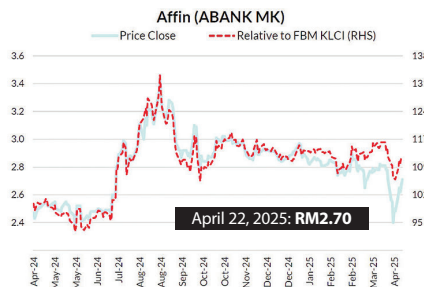
Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.4500	4.3130	4.3030
1 Australian Dollar	2.8680	2.7510	2.7350
1 Brunei Dollar	3.4060	3.3040	3.2960
1 Canadian Dollar	3.2120	3.1240	3.1120
1 Euro	5.1350	4.9710	4.9510
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6750	2.5750	2.5590
1 Singapore Dollar	3.4060	3.3040	3.2960
1 Sterling Pound	5.9640	5.7790	5.7590
1 Swiss Franc	5.5380	5.3010	5.2860
100 UAE Dirham	122.5400	116.1300	115.9300
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7380	3.4780	3.2780
100 Chinese Renminbi	61.4300	58.7900	N/A
100 Danish Krone	70.2800	64.6300	64.4300
100 Hongkong Dollar	57.9400	55.0200	54.8200
100 Indian Rupee	5.3100	4.9800	4.7800
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0274	0.0248	0.0198
100 Japanese Yen	3.1760	3.0750	3.0650
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.7000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	44.0000	40.4300	40.2300
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6100	1.5100	1.3100
100 Philippine Peso	7.9800	7.5100	7.3100
100 Qatar Riyal	123.2600	117.0100	116.8100
100 Saudi Riyal	119.8600	113.7900	113.5900
100 South Africa Rand	26.4400	22.2400	22.0400
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5200	1.4000	1.2000
100 Swedish Krona	48.1700	43.7800	43.5800
100 Thai Baht	13.9900	12.3900	11.9900

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Affin Bank Bhd

Neutral. Target price: RM2.45



Source: Bloomberg

WE believe that Affin's target growth segments (including Sarawak) provide it with some defense against a potential macroeconomic slowdown, but its non-IL could take a hit due to adverse market sentiment. Affin's long-term growth prospects are encouraging, although its near-term earnings growth might be impacted, due partly to the high base of FY24.

In our view, the main risk for Affin is on NIM, as the group is one of the sector players with the highest sensitivity to potential OPR cuts. Our analysis indicates that a 10bps decline in NIM results in a 16% cut to our FY25F PATMI, i.e. comparable to its peer range of 4-13%. Loan growth, however, should remain fairly resilient, as Affin's target segments (retail, enterprise, and Sarawak) should be fairly insulated from a potential trade and manufacturing slowdown.

Elsewhere, fee-based non-IL could weaken amid slower investment banking deals, but this could be mitigated by enhanced opportunities for customer flows (eg FX hedging) and trading activities. Asset quality is not an immediate concern at this juncture, as the group is still sitting on RM300 million in overlays.

Affin's share price should be fairly well-supported by the Sarawak growth theme and M&A news flow. As such, we do not expect its P/BV to de-rate down to the Covid-19-era low of 0.29x. However, if valuations deteriorate to the more recent trough of 0.36x (mid-2023 post Silicon Valley Bank incident), there could be a 31% downside to the current level.

NEUTRAL with new RM2.45 TP. – **RHB Research, April 22**

Construction

Overweight

Bursa Malaysia Construction Index's performance



Source: Company data, RHB

WE believe contractors will remain well occupied with their jobs (together with new ones) from a mix of incoming industrial, residential, and infrastructure works (be it rail, road, and/or water). In our recent report, we highlighted the possibility of US data centre (DC) developers mitigating costs in light of prevailing tariffs – combined with the proposed US Artificial Intelligence Diffusion (USAID) rules (which may be a yardstick for their expansion plans in countries like Malaysia) – benefitting local contractors.

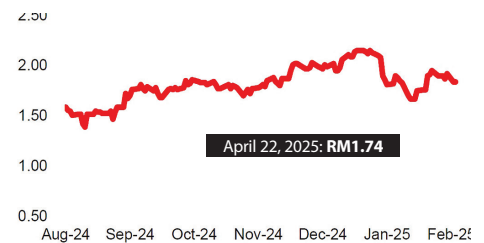
Microsoft is strategically pacing its DC plans – the group continues investing in 18 countries where it announced investments between Oct 2023 and Mar 2025, which includes Malaysia (announced in May 2024). Additionally, Google has restated its commitment to spend US\$75 billion on building DC capacity. Domestically, Johor alone has 822MW of planned DC capacity, according to Cushman & Wakefield, which translates to potential job values of between RM16 billion and RM20 billion.

Despite US President Donald Trump hinting at potential new tariffs for semiconductors, the tariff imposed on Malaysia prior to the 90-day pause is lower than most Asean countries except the Philippines and Singapore. As such, Malaysia could attract corporations from Asean (and potentially other Asian countries) to set up manufacturing bases here, consequently providing job opportunities for the likes of IJM Corp and Sunway Construction. Recall: The overhang in industrial properties has been declining from 2012 to 2024.

The Elevated Autonomous Rapid Transit or EART (estimated at RM6-7 billion) is undergoing a request for proposal (June deadline). – **RHB Research, April 22**

Eco World Development Group Bhd

Neutral. Target price: RM1.90



Source: PublicInvest Research

ECO World Development (ECW) has formalised its MoU for the collaboration with SD Guthrie Bhd and Negeri Sembilan's state investment arm NS Corporation announced late last year with the signing of the deal last Friday. The tripartite collaboration is to develop a 1,166-acre industrial park in Bukit Pelanduk, Negeri Sembilan, that will have an estimated GDV of RM2.95 billion.

We understand that the said development will be named Eco Business Park VII, and accordingly a company will be established whereby ECW will hold 55%, while SD Guthrie Land Ventures Sdn Bhd, a wholly subsidiary of SD Guthrie will hold a 30% stake. The remaining 15% will be held by NS Corp. The land cost (RM572.8 million) is fair in our view, at about 19.4% of total GDV.

This deal marks the group's maiden foray into the Negeri Sembilan's industrial park market.

Industrial development is one of the key revenue pillars of ECW, with RM6.7 billion cumulative sales achieved from FY14 to Feb 28. To date, more than 1,400 local and international industrialists operate across ECW's Eco Business Parks. In the first 4 months of FY25 alone, the group recorded almost RM1 billion sales propelled by 2 industrial land deals signed with global technology leaders in February 2025 – (i) 138.532 acres in Eco Business Park I to Microsoft Payments (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd and (ii) 58.187 acres in EcoBusiness Park V to Pearl Computing Malaysia Sdn Bhd.

As such, we believe the group's track record in the execution of industrial parks speak for itself and we are positive that demand for its industrial offerings would continue to be healthy.

NEUTRAL with RM1.90 TP. – **PublicInvest Research, April 22**



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White Snake
in local cinemas

BY JOHN TAN

BRAND ambassadors are crucial for furthering a new style and image in the fashion and beauty industry. While the brand's core is the selling point, ambassadors are essential in driving attention to them.

Celebrities, as such, are often scouted for collaborations. Here is a list of celebrities who have recently earned collaborations with notable brands.

Daiyan Trisha - Uniqlo

Malaysian actress Daiyan Trisha has been appointed as Uniqlo's first brand advocate in Malaysia. As the apparel's advocate, Daiyan will play a key role in showcasing the brand's products, including versatile pieces from the Linen collection.

Designed to seamlessly integrate into daily life, the star will show how these products embody the LifeWear philosophy, combining simplicity, comfort and innovation for every occasion.

Since making her debut in 2012, Daiyan has established herself as an actress and singer in Malaysia's entertainment industry. The 31-year-old has appeared in numerous movies such as *Jerunei's Curse* and released two albums.

Allison Yee - Asics Malaysia

Local athlete Allison Yee has joined Asics's Malaysian family as its newest brand ambassador. Together with Asics, Yee will foster a healthier and more active lifestyle in the female community.

After graduating with a degree in Food Science and Technology from University Putra Malaysia, Yee began her athletic journey with



Daiyan is Uniqlo's first brand advocate in Malaysia.



Wang's appointment as global ambassador is in conjunction with Jordan Brand's 40th anniversary.



Ulike is Zahirah's fourth time as a brand ambassador.

Fashion's new alliances

► Fresh collaborations with notable brands

casual running in 2014.

She then progressed into competitive sports, making her mark in events such as the 2019 Sea Games Duathlon, 2018 Ironman triathlon and 2024 Tokyo Marathon.

Outside sports, Yee is a content creator, who shares her athletic progress and passion for running online.

Zahirah Macwilson - Ulike

Hair removal device brand Ulike is on a mission to shape the future of beauty, introducing its latest devices - Ulike Air10 Pro and Ulike Clear Pro.

Joining them is local actress Zahirah Macwilson, who serves as the brand's first Malaysian ambassador. At the recent launch event, Zahirah made her presence known with her beauty insights and personal experiences with Ulike.

"Having smooth, hair-free skin gives me the confidence to look and feel my best. With my hectic schedule, Ulike saves me so much time since I no longer need to visit the salon for hair removal.

"It is gentle, pain-free and incredibly convenient, allowing me

to achieve salon-quality results in the comfort and privacy of my home," shared the 30-year-old.

Zahirah rose to fame in 2015 after starring in numerous shows for TV3 and TV9. She has since transitioned to making movies.

Jackson Wang - Jordan Brand

As the global ambassador of Jordan Brand, Jackson Wang recently took on the role of creative curator at Nike's recent Air Max Night in Shanghai, China.

The K-pop star transformed the city into Nike's Air Max Innovation Lab, where eight themed experience spaces created an immersive journey across three dimensions - product innovation, athletic energy and cultural resonance.

Wang drew inspiration from the Air Max Dn8, aiming to create a diverse experience of culture, music and art. He was appointed as Jordan Brand's global ambassador last December. Considering Nike is under the same parent company as Jordan, Wang contributed to Nike's Air Max Innovation Lab as creative curator.

Gracie Abrams - Hourglass Cosmetics

Pop star Gracie Abrams is the new face of Hourglass Cosmetics. Along with the beauty brand, the Grammy-nominated singer will

highlight the complexion products designed for Any Time, Any Place, Any Wear.

Her efforts, particularly, will demonstrate how radiant skin can be a canvas for personal storytelling and self-expression.

Abrams and Hourglass Cosmetics reflected this in the 2025 campaign, capturing Abrams's constant glowing complexion throughout the day.

In the golden morning light, the midday and after-dark, each image was time-stamped to showcase the 16-hour wear of the Vanish Airbrush Concealer and the Veil Hydrating Skin Tint.

Asian stars - Prada Re-Nylon

Various Asian stars have been enlisted as ambassadors for the Prada Re-Nylon collection.

Personalities include Prada Ambassadors Karina, Jeon Somi, Sana, Win Metawin, Kentaro Sakaguchi, Sky Wongravee, Kunpol, Wonpil, Meen Nichakoon, Tor Thanapob, Namtan Tipnaree and Toey Jarinporn.

All of them have been tapped to exemplify the collection's message to reduce wastage, as the offerings are regenerated from plastic waste sourced from oceans and landfills.

The Asian stars solidified the collaboration, appearing in photos with the bags for the social fashion campaign.



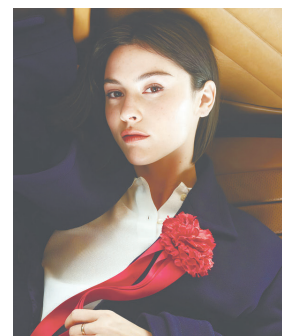
K-pop star Jeon Somi with the Prada Mariner Re-Nylon small bucket bag.



Yee shares her running adventures with followers online.



Thai actor Win posing with the Prada Re-Edition 1978 small Re-Nylon backpack.



Abrams's collaboration with Hourglass Cosmetics is for the brand's Any Time, Any Place, Any Wear collection.

Stepping it up

➤ Latest releases
blend tech with trend

BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ

THE sneaker scene this year is off to a bold and comfortable start, with leading brands such as Skechers, Asics, New Balance, Puma and Under Armour unveiling innovative collections that blur the lines between performance, style and culture. From hands-free slip-ons and heritage-inspired runners to futuristic lifestyle silhouettes and playful pop culture collaborations, this year's hottest drops are engineered for movement and designed to turn heads. Whether you are chasing comfort, clocking miles or making a streetwear statement, these releases are built to keep up and stand out.

Skechers goes all in on comfort, convenience

Skechers kicks off 2025 with a powerhouse release: The Gowalk Max Cushioning Arch Fit Collection. What makes this launch so noteworthy is the combination of four signature Skechers innovations into a single shoe for the very first time: Hands Free Slip-ins, Arch Fit, Max Cushioning and Hyper Arc. Engineered for men and women, this collection ensures effortless wear, next-level cushioning and podiatrist-approved support with every step.

The women's designs include black, grey aqua and navy lavender, while men can look forward to taupe, charcoal red, black, white navy and white options in March. Each shoe features a breathable upper, secure fit with the Heel Pillow and lightweight Ultra Flight cushioning. Notably, several men's colourways bear the Apma Seal of Acceptance.

For runners and those seeking elevated performance, Skechers has also introduced the Max Cushioning Endeavour Series (RM479-RM499). These feature Soft Stride foam, Air-Cooled Goga Mat insoles and Natural Rocker Technology, all geared towards smooth heel-to-toe transitions. The Slip-ins versions offer the same tech with hands-free convenience and are available in charcoal, white, navy and black.

Both collections are available at major Skechers concept outlets nationwide and online.

New Balance 471, heritage meets modernity

Blending 1970s running DNA with present-day style, the New Balance 471 debuts as a sleek, low-profile silhouette that is equal parts nostalgic and versatile. Crafted with breathable mesh underlays, hairy suede overlays and an EVA midsole, this RM449 sneaker leans into retro charm while remaining street-ready.

Additional design cues include a "fang" toebox overlay inspired by the



Under Armour UA Echo features SlipSpeed technology and HOVR cushioning for all-day versatility.



Skechers White Mint (Women's Series) offers a clean, breathable knit upper with podiatrist-certified Arch Fit support.

original 320, exposed foam tongue for a vintage edge and classic leather "N" logos. Already seen on ambassador Cameron Brink during the NBA Paris Games, the 471 is ready to be styled courtside or curbside.

The shoe is available at New Balance outlets in Pavilion KL and The Exchange TRX, with more colourways expected in the coming months.

Asics Gel-Kinetic Fluent, archive tech for daily wear

Asics is tapping into its running legacy with the Gel-Kinetic Fluent, a reimagined sneaker that fuses elements from early 2010s Gel-Kinetic and Gel-Fluent designs. Priced from RM779, the shoe delivers on comfort with Scutoid Gel and FF Blast Plus Eco cushioning, a powerful combo that offers plush support for everyday scenarios.

The updated tooling, lifted from the Gel-Quantum Kinetic, adds an energised step to daily walks, while technical overlays and welded structures give the upper a distinct, layered look. It is a premium lifestyle sneaker backed by performance tech, available now at select Asics outlets in Malaysia.



Asics Gel-Kinetic Fluent is a tech-packed sneaker that brings archived Gel elements into everyday motion.



Skechers Men's Collection pairs hands-free slip-on convenience with ultra-light Max Cushioning tech.

Puma collabs go bold with Fenty and TMNT

Puma continues to build on its legacy of eye-catching partnerships. First up, the Fenty x Puma drop brings a splash of summer with its Cat Cleat Jelly slides, crocheted Avanti LS sneakers and an adorable Pocket Bag for essentials. Retailing between RM379 and RM579, the range features bright orange and neon yellow tones that blend Rihanna's flair with sporty silhouettes. The collection launches at selected Puma outlets.

Meanwhile, nostalgic fans are in for a treat with the Puma x Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (TMNT) collab. From the Suede XL to the RS-X, the sneakers embrace cracked leather textures, ooze-themed details and shell-inspired debossing. The TMNT footwear lineup pays homage not only to the heroes in a half shell but also to their nemesis Krang, with purple accents and custom eyelets. Matching techwear-inspired apparel (such as the PumaTech Cargo Vest) completes the capsule, which is priced between RM199 and RM579.

The Puma x TMNT collection hit outlets and online platforms with designs ideal for



New Balance 471 blends 70s running heritage with modern-day styling, complete with hairy suede overlays and EVA midsoles.



Puma x TMNT collab features shell-inspired textures, custom "Cowabunga" details and colours straight from the sewers of NYC.

fans who want to add a playful, street-ready edge to their rotation.

Under Armour enters streetwear culture

Under Armour is redefining its identity with the launch of UA Echo, its first true lifestyle sneaker built for a new generation that values performance and style. Priced at RM699, UA Echo is engineered for movement but designed to stand out, marking the brand's bold entry into streetwear culture.

Featuring a multi-layered monofilament mesh upper, the shoe combines breathability with structure, while translucent overlays and geometric lines create a futuristic aesthetic. At the heel, Under Armour's SlipSpeed technology allows wearers to switch from a secure performance fit to an easy slip-on mode, excellent for fast-paced lifestyles.

An asymmetrical speed-lace system adapts to the foot for a customised fit, while HOVR cushioning delivers impact absorption and energy return. The lightweight outsole ensures comfort from day to night.

Now available at Under Armour Brand Houses nationwide, the UA Echo signals a bold new chapter for the brand.

From Skechers's tech-packed walkers and Under Armour's street-savvy UA Echo to Asics's performance remixes, New Balance's retro revival and Puma's playful collabs, this year's sneaker drops are proving comfort and style no longer live in separate worlds. Whether you are stepping into the gym, the streets or something in between, these new releases offer something for every kind of mover and every kind of moment.



Rihanna's Fenty combines sport and style in bold, playful tones with this collaboration with Puma.



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➤ Rise of 'no mascara' trend

COULD volume-boasted XXL lashes be coming to an end? For several weeks, the #nomascara hashtag has been all the rage on TikTok, establishing a trend that favours natural lashes. This could well change the face of eye makeup, making way for more minimalist and natural beauty looks.

Who would have thought mascara, a staple product in any makeup bag, would be dethroned simply by... nothing? Yet this is what the TikTok generation seems to be advocating with the "no mascara" trend, which has already racked up millions of views on the social platform.

Forget coated and elongated lashes, it is time to make way for a more natural, almost youthful look – which is part of an overall drive for subtlety and simplicity in beauty.

Far from being a mere passing fad, this trend is being echoed by many celebrities who have decided to skip mascara on the

red carpet and in their daily lives. Hailey Bieber was recently spotted at several events wearing a mascara-free look, enhanced by fresh and radiant makeup.

Rose, from Blackpink, has taken the same approach, opting for a pared-down beauty look where lashes remain natural, accentuating the softness and modernity of her look.

So, why are people suddenly turning away from mascara? Several reasons explain this change in beauty trend. First, a desire to avoid clumps and the "spider leg" effect, often feared by those who prefer more discreet makeup looks.

Then there is the question of comfort: No more smudges at the end of the day or tedious makeup removal. Some followers of the "no mascara" trend claim it reduces the loss of eyelashes, preventing them from being weakened by repeated applications and harsh makeup removal.

Several alternatives exist for those who want to try the look

without completely giving up on all potential enhancements. For starters, eyelash curlers make your eyes look bigger in an instant. Meanwhile, fortifying and tinted treatments offer a discreetly enhancing effect. Otherwise, semi-permanent eyelash tinting can help add definition to your eyes without having to resort to makeup.

Another tip for balancing out a makeup look without mascara is to focus on a fresh and radiant complexion. A pink or peach blush adds definition to the face and compensates for the lightness of the eyes.

Lips can also be emphasised – a moisturising lipstick or a subtly coloured gloss is enough to lift the entire face. Finally, structuring the eyebrows with a transparent or slightly tinted gel can frame the eyes without overdoing it.

So, is mascara about to become a thing of the past?

Nothing is less certain. But minimalist beauty is definitely having a moment. – ETX Studio



Turmeric is fast establishing itself as an essential in the cosmetics aisle.

Turmeri-fic skincare

ORIGINALLY hailing from Southeast Asia, turmeric has been the subject of numerous scientific studies revealing its nutritional and medical virtues. But, what about its role in the beauty industry? This spice, known for being an excellent natural dye, is said to be beneficial not only in combating acne, but also in reducing wrinkles and dark circles and banishing a dull complexion.

Known in many traditional medicine practices, including Ayurveda, turmeric is starting to make a name for itself in the cosmetics industry. The ingredient is now showing up in creams, masks, cleansers and other hair care products, and also has a prominent place in DIY beauty recipes in the form of herbal distillates, powders, dyes or essential oils.

This means a growing number of people are able to benefit from its myriad virtues for the skin and hair. This is why turmeric is fast establishing itself as an essential in the cosmetics aisle.

Ally against acne

Fans of wellness drinks will likely be familiar with all the advantages of turmeric. This super ingredient is packed with anti-inflammatory and antibacterial active ingredients that contribute to its reputation. It is also beneficial in the fight against acne and

blemishes of all kinds. This is due to its anti-inflammatory, antiseptic and healing properties, as well as its purifying action, which helps fight the bacteria that cause blemishes. Best of all, turmeric is helpful in reducing scars and stretch marks.

Softer, more radiant skin

Curcumin, the main pigment in turmeric, is rich in anti-inflammatories and packed with antioxidants that help fight against external aggressions and the signs of aging. It is even capable of blocking the action of elastase, an enzyme responsible for the appearance of wrinkles and sagging skin. By improving the elasticity of the skin, turmeric also helps to reduce dark circles, while its bright colour makes it a radiance booster for an immediate healthy glow effect.

Anyone who has cooked with it knows turmeric has powerful colouring properties. Additionally, it is an excellent hair dye that has added benefit of soothing the scalp. But, American researchers have recently gone even further by studying the benefits of curcumin as a natural sunscreen. The research is still at an early stage, but could eventually enable this spice to help protect us against ultraviolet rays. Turmeric is undoubtedly an essential spice that clearly has many surprises in store for us. – ETX Studio



Many are turning away from mascara and eyelash curlers to create a more minimalist yet chic look.

– ALL PICS FROM PEXELS

LIPOSUCTION has evolved far beyond its reputation as a cosmetic procedure, emerging as a precise, technology-driven solution for body contouring. Advancements such as the integration of medical technologies are transforming the field – enhancing safety, effectiveness and recovery times. However, alongside this growth comes a concerning rise of unlicensed and unofficial liposuction procedures, often performed without expertise or safety measures. This trend puts patients at serious risk, underscoring the critical need for public awareness and informed decision-making regarding professional medical care.

Rise of unlicensed liposuction

The increasing popularity of liposuction has led to a surge in unlicensed practitioners offering substandard procedures, often without the necessary medical training or safety protocols. This disturbing trend has led to several cases of severe complications. In Malaysia, these unofficial procedures are often performed at beauty salons or unregulated clinics, without the safeguards associated with certified medical facilities.

The rise in unlicensed liposuction procedures significantly contributes to an increase in complications. While precise statistics are limited due to the covert nature of these practices, medical professionals have observed a worrying trend of adverse outcomes, including infections, deformities and fatalities.

The risks associated with liposuction performed at unlicensed clinics are severe. Patients often experience complications such as fat embolism, excessive bleeding and infections. Some even face nerve or organ damage due to the lack of expertise, particularly when procedures are performed on sensitive areas such as the abdomen or thighs.

There is an uptick in revision cases, patients coming in after undergoing botched procedures in non-certified beauty centres or overseas clinics. High-profile cases such as Coco Siew have brought public attention to this issue, but many more cases go unreported. Unfortunately, many patients only realise the consequences after it is too late.

The Malaysian Society of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery has issued warnings regarding the risks of aesthetic procedures performed by unqualified practitioners. These risks can include infections, adverse reactions to anesthesia and even death. In contrast, liposuction procedures performed in accredited facilities by certified professionals have a significantly lower complication rate. Statistics obtained by the American Association for Accreditation of Ambulatory Surgery Facilities indicate the overall complication rate for liposuction in such settings ranges from 0.4% to 0.63%, with mortality rates between 0.002% and 0.02%.

These figures highlight the stark difference in patient outcomes between licensed and unlicensed procedures, and underscores the critical importance of seeking aesthetic procedures from qualified medical professionals to ensure patient safety and optimal results.

Game changing machine

The growing prevalence of unlicensed liposuction procedures, particularly those involving outdated or unsafe technology, has contributed to a concerning rise in adverse outcomes. These unofficial procedures often use traditional suction-assisted liposuction, which, when performed without proper training or equipment, can cause excessive tissue trauma, uneven fat removal, significant blood loss and burns or skin necrosis from improperly used heat-generating devices.

However, procedures have become safer and more efficient, thanks to the advancement of technology. The Vaser machine, introduced at Sunway Medical Centre Damansara, represents a breakthrough in liposuction technology. Vaser, or Vibration Amplification of Sound Energy at Resonance, uses ultrasound energy for minimally invasive fat removal. This innovative technology targets fat cells selectively while preserving surrounding



Liposuction can be safe and effective when performed by certified medical experts.

Advancing liposuction

➤ Setting new standards in body contouring through latest innovations



Modern liposuction techniques may continue to play a role in supporting overall wellness.

— ALL PICS FROM PEXELS

tissues, reducing trauma. Certified plastic surgeons utilise this machine to liquify fat before removal, ensuring greater precision with less pain and downtime. Additionally, the ultrasound waves stimulate collagen production, enhancing skin retraction – an advantage for patients with mild skin laxity that may reduce the need for further skin-tightening treatments.

It is a liposuction system that offers several safety and aesthetic advantages such as precision targeting of fat cells, reduced bleeding and bruising, enhanced skin retraction and smoother, more even results with lower risk of contour deformities. It is especially effective for patients looking for natural, high-definition results with minimal downtime.

Beyond aesthetic enhancements, effective fat removal in areas of excess accumulation can also help improve mobility and reduce strain on the joints, offering functional benefits in addition to improved body contouring. To ensure patient safety, it is crucial these advanced procedures are performed by certified professionals trained in the latest technologies, optimising safety and effectiveness.

Future of liposuction

The future of liposuction in Malaysia looks bright, with technology continuing to push boundaries. As technology progresses, procedures will become even more personalised and efficient, allowing more individuals to achieve their body goals with minimal risks.

Furthermore, as scientific research increasingly highlights the connection between excess fat and various health risks – including metabolic disorders and joint strain – modern liposuction techniques may continue to play a role in supporting overall wellness.

Advancements in liposuction technology are not just about fat removal, it is about creating a more sculpted, balanced body while ensuring safety and minimising recovery time.

Liposuction can be safe and effective when performed by certified medical experts, but the rise of unregulated procedures underscores the need for informed decisions and qualified medical care to ensure patient safety.

This article is contributed by
Sunway Medical Centre Damansara
plastic surgeon Dr Jagjeet Singh.



Syafie is open to working with new and emerging production teams.

— PIC FROM FACEBOOK
@SYAFIENASWIPFANPAGE

Local movie to spotlight Sabah

AFTER nearly two decades in the entertainment industry, Syafie Naswip, whose acting talent was first discovered in the film *Mukhsin*, continues to shine, with his name now considered on par with senior actors.

Despite his success and reputation for taking on serious roles, Syafie remains humble. Known for his down-to-earth attitude, he is open to working with new and emerging production teams.

For the 33-year-old actor, the most important aspect of any work – be it a film, drama or telemovie – is its ability to offer something different and to challenge him as an actor, steering away from stereotypes. He also dreams of contributing to the growth of Malaysia's, particularly Sabah's, film industry.

At the premiere of horror film *Mantera*, he said while Sabah's film industry is on the rise, limitations in platform access and audience reach in Peninsular Malaysia have somewhat restricted their potential.

"Through my involvement in this film (*Mantera*), I hope to help create space and draw more attention to the talents and productions coming out of Sabah," Syafie said.

Directed by Sabah filmmaker Chester Pang, *Mantera* marked a new experience for Syafie. The actor, who is married to actress Nur Afiqah Ishak, said working on the film gave him insight into the unique directing approaches, scripting and production style of the Sabah creative scene.

Playing Inspector Zafri in *Mantera*, the actor said the openness and sincerity of the production team in welcoming ideas, regardless of status, as well as their team spirit, were among the reasons he agreed to be a part of the movie.

"When I was first offered the role, the script was still in its early stages. I met the director at a local eatery and we had a casual discussion. Although the budget was tight, their enthusiasm was extraordinary and I felt very comfortable working in that environment," he said, adding that the experience also opened his eyes to Sabah's cultural beliefs, particularly those that formed the supernatural backdrop of the film.

Pang said *Mantera*, set to hit cinemas nationwide this Thursday, is a murder investigation film with its plot deeply rooted in the traditional beliefs of the Bobolian, the ritual specialists of the Dusun ethnic group in Sabah, whose practices are becoming increasingly rare.

Pang added that the film is not only packed with horror scenes but also showcases authentic rituals performed by the Bobolian, as well as the concept of evil spirits in everyday life.

"Not many people are aware of the traditional practices of the Bobolian, who serve as cultural guardians and spiritual intermediaries between the human world and kinohiringan (realm of deities)."

"I felt the story of the Bobolian or Dusun shamans was compelling and deserved to be brought to the big screen," Pang said.

The film cast also includes Namron as Sergeant Ramli and several Sabah-born talents including Jovenia Jim (as Tana), Wedlyn Batala (as Damiane) and Larry Noh (as Aaron).



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White Snake slithers in Malaysia

► Cantonese opera movie box office to hit local cinemas, showcasing cultural charm

CHINA'S highest-grossing domestically produced opera film *White Snake*, which premiered in Malaysia in conjunction with the visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Malaysia last week, will play in selected cinemas across Malaysia beginning this Thursday.

The film showcases the unique charm of traditional Cantonese opera to Malaysian audiences, further promoting cultural exchange between Malaysia and China and serving as a cultural bridge that strengthens the enduring friendship between the two nations.

White Snake was brought to Malaysia by Juxta Films and premiered last week at Dadi Cinema Pavilion Kuala Lumpur. The film is a joint production of Zhujiang Film Group, Guangdong Cantonese Opera Theatre and Foshan Cultural Tourism Co Ltd. It was filmed by Zhujiang Film and Television Production Co Ltd, directed by Zhang Xianfeng and written by Mo Fei. The film stars actors Zeng Xiaomin and Wen Ruqing, with co-starring roles by Wang Yanfei, Zhu Hongxing and others.

Since its release in China in 2021, the film has garnered widespread acclaim and won numerous awards and nominations, including Outstanding Feature Film at the 19th China Huabiao Film Awards, nomination for Best Chinese Opera Film at the 32nd China Golden Rooster Awards, Outstanding Work Award at the 12th Guangdong Provincial Spiritual Civilisation Construction "Five Ones Project" and the highest-rated Chinese-language film at the 2021 Douban Film Annual Awards, among others.

White Snake is based on *The Legend of the White Snake*, one of China's four great love folktales – it is the love story of Bai Suzhen and Xu Xian. The film blends the traditional Cantonese opera of singing, reciting, acting and acrobatics with modern cinematic storytelling, creating a captivating fusion of visual spectacle and emotional depth.

Director Zhang collaborated with special effects teams from Australia and New Zealand, alongside a top CG animation production company from Shenzhen, China, to craft breathtaking visual effects. Unlike Hollywood-style special effects, the film emphasises classical Chinese aesthetics, focusing on the interplay of reality and illusion, which further enhances the poetic ambience of the opera and Eastern aesthetics.

This premiere aims to promote the rich heritage of traditional Chinese culture and strengthen the cultural exchange as well as cooperation between Malaysia and China.

The release of *White Snake* is not just a revival of traditional culture but also a significant contribution to cultural exchange and heritage. Through this film, Malaysian audiences are able to experience the unique charm of Cantonese opera, marking a new chapter in the cultural exchange between China and Malaysia.

Meanwhile, representatives from Juxta Films and Zhujiang Film Production Co Ltd paid a visit to the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (Finas) to explore opportunities for deepening cultural exchange between Malaysia and China. The meeting focused on fostering



White Snake has partnered with Guangdong Lingnantong to release a limited edition co-branded national all-in-one commemorative card.

bilateral cooperation in the creative industry and promoting greater mutual understanding through shared cultural initiatives.

Finas CEO Datuk Azmir Saifuddin Mutalib commended *White Snake* for its innovative integration of high-end visual treatments with traditional storytelling. He highlighted the film's role in rejuvenating cultural heritage, noting its success in capturing the interest of younger audiences while preserving the essence of Cantonese opera.

White Snake has also partnered with Guangdong Lingnantong Co Ltd to launch a limited-edition co-branded commemorative & "national all-in-one" travel card. The Lingnan Pass, already accepted in over 330 cities across China, as well as in Hong Kong and Macau, supports convenient payments for public transportation including buses and subways.

With the recent implementation of mutual visa exemption between Malaysia and China, the card offers an easy and efficient "one-card travel" solution for Malaysian tourists visiting China.



White Snake will play in selected cinemas across Malaysia beginning April 24.



theSun

Classified

WEDNESDAY
APR 23, 2025

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322 Notices

**NOTICE
IN THE MATTER OF
THE COMPANIES ACT 2016
AND
IN THE MATTER OF
CLEANTECH
ENGINEERING SDN. BHD.**
(Company No.
201401001371 (1077444-P))
(In Members' Voluntary Winding-Up)

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the Members of Cleantech Engineering Sdn. Bhd., duly convened and held at 15-B (2nd Floor), Jalan Jones, 10250 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang on 18th April 2025, the special resolutions set out below was duly passed.

THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act 2016 and that Mr. Neoh Chin Wah of CW Insolvency, 3rd Floor, Accatx Corporate Centre, No. 2, Jalan Bawassah, 10050 Georgetown, Penang be appointed as Liquidator to act for the purpose of the winding-up.

Dated this 23th April 2025

Sgd.
Ang Eng Hin
Director

**IN THE MATTER OF
THE COMPANIES ACT 2016
AND
IN THE MATTER OF
CLEANTECH
ENGINEERING SDN. BHD.**
(Company No.
201401001371 (1077444-P))
(In Members' Voluntary Winding-Up)

Notice is hereby given that the creditors of the abovementioned Company are required on or before 23th May 2025 to prove their debts or claims and to establish any title they have to priority by delivering or sending through the post to the Liquidator at the undermentioned address and affidavit verifying their respective debts or claims. In default they will be excluded from the benefit of priority, if any, and from objecting to any such distribution. Form of proof may be obtained from the Liquidator at the address shown below.

Dated this 23th April 2025

Sgd.
Neoh Chin Wah, Liquidator
c/o CW Insolvency
3rd Floor
Accatx Corporate Centre
No. 2, Jalan Bawassah
10050 Georgetown
Penang

302 Jobs

WE ARE HIRING

1 MEDIA SALES - Specialist

Job Description

- Building and sustaining strong working relationship with advertising agencies and clients.
- New business development and business retention.
- 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.

Office based in Petaling Jaya (Five-day week)

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.
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322 Notices

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTARY WINDING UP OF LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP (Section 50(4)(a) of the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2012)

Notice is hereby given that Wood Style PLT (LLP No.: LLP0007353-LGN) will be making an application to the Registrar of Limited Liability Partnerships for a declaration of dissolution pursuant to section 50(2) of the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2012 within seven (7) days after the publication of this notice. Any partner or creditor of the LLP desiring to object to the application may do so in writing to the Companies Commission of Malaysia within thirty (30) days from the date of this notice.

Date: 23 April 2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF BAGAN DUNIA SDN BHD
198401010706 (298385-K)
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 439 of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special resolution set out below was duly passed by the members of the Company on 22 April 2025.

"That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439 of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Miss Khoo Siew Siew (NRIC No. 640911-07-6176) of 160 Jalan Utama 10450 Georgetown, Penang be appointed Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up with power to distribute surplus assets in specie to members and to exercise the power of the Liquidator as set out in Section 456 of the Companies Act 2016".

NEOH CHYE LENG
Liquidator

Date : 23 April 2025

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of BAGAN DUNIA SDN BHD are required, on or before 22 May 2025 to send their names and addresses and particulars and particulars of their debts, or claims to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company, and is so required, are to come in and prove their debts and claims as shall be specified, or in default will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such proof.

KHOO SIEW SIEW
Liquidator

Date : 23 April 2025



PUBLIC PACKAGES HOLDINGS BERHAD
Registration No. 198701003743 (162413-K)
(Incorporated in Malaysia)

NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the 38th Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the Company will be held at Angier & Borden Level 4, Meeting Room, The Prestige Hotel of 8 Gai Lebah Geraja, 10300 Penang on Monday, 26 May 2025 at 10:00 am for the following purposes:-

AGENDA

ORDINARY BUSINESS

- To receive the Audited Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 together with the Reports of Directors and Auditors thereon. **Resolution 1**
- To re-elect Mr. Koay Chiew Kang, a Director who retires by rotation in accordance with Article 99 of the Company's Constitution and who, being eligible, offers himself for re-election. **Resolution 2**
- To re-elect Puan Nurjannah Binti Ali, a Director who retires by rotation in accordance with Article 99 of the Company's Constitution and who, being eligible, offers herself for re-election. **Resolution 3**
- To re-elect Mr. Tang Boon Lee, a Director who retires by rotation in accordance with Article 99 of the Company's Constitution and who, being eligible, offers himself for re-election. **Resolution 4**
- To re-elect Mr. Gooi Chye Soon, a Director who retires pursuant to Article 106 of the Company's Constitution and who, being eligible, offers himself for re-election. **Resolution 5**
- To approve the payment of Directors' fees amounting to RM150,000 to the Non-Executive Directors of the Company for the financial year ending 31 December 2025. **Resolution 6**
- To approve the payment of Directors' fees amounting to RM100,000 to the Executive Directors of the Company for the financial year ending 31 December 2025. **Resolution 7**
- To approve the payment of Directors' benefits of not exceeding RM100,000 for the financial year ending 31 December 2025. **Resolution 8**
- To re-appoint Messrs. Grant Thornton Malaysia PLT as Auditors of the Company to hold office until the conclusion of the next AGM of the Company and to authorise the Directors to fix their remuneration. **Resolution 9**

SPECIAL BUSINESS

To consider and if thought fit, to pass with or without any modifications the following ordinary resolution:-

- AUTHORITY FOR DIRECTORS TO ALLOT AND ISSUE NEW SHARES PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 75 AND 76 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016** **Resolution 9**

"THAT pursuant to Sections 75 and 76 of the Companies Act 2016 and subject always to the approval of the relevant authorities, the Directors be hereby authorised to allot and issue shares in the Company at any time and upon such terms and conditions and for such purposes as the Directors may deem fit, provided that the aggregate number of shares to be issued does not exceed 10% of the total number of issued shares (excluding treasury shares) of the Company.

THAT any one of the Executive Directors and/or Secretary of the Company be empowered to obtain the approval from Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad for the listing and quotation of the additional shares so issued and to do all such acts and things necessary to give full effect to such transactions as authorised by this resolution.

AND THAT, such authority shall commence immediately upon the passing of this resolution and continue to be in force until the conclusion of the next AGM of the Company."

- To transact any other business of which due notice shall have been given in accordance with the Company's Constitution and the Companies Act, 2016.

By Order of the Board,

LEE PENG LOON (MACS 01258)
SSM PC NO. 201908002340

P'NG CHEW KEEM (MAICSA 7026443)
SSM PC NO. 201908002334

Company Secretaries

Penang
Date: 23 April 2025

NOTES ON APPOINTMENT OF PROXY

- A proxy may but need not be a member of the Company.
- A member shall be entitled to appoint up to a maximum of two (2) proxies to attend and vote at the same meeting. Where a member appoints two (2) proxies, the appointment shall be invalid unless he specifies the proportions of his shareholdings to be represented by each proxy.
- Where a member is an Exempt Authorised Nominee which holds ordinary shares in the Company for multiple beneficial owners in one securities account ("omnibus account"), there is no limit to the number of proxies which the Exempt Authorised Nominee may appoint in respect of each securities account it holds. An Exempt Authorised Nominee refers to an authorised nominee defined under the Securities Industry (Central Depositories) Act 1991 ("SICDA") which is exempted from compliance with the provision of subsection 25A(1) of SICDA.
- Where a member is an Exempt Authorised Nominee as defined under SICDA, it may appoint at least one (1) proxy but not more than two (2) proxies in respect of each securities account it holds which is credited with the shares of the Company. The appointment of two (2) proxies in respect of a particular securities account shall be invalid unless the Authorised Nominee specifies the proportion of its shareholding to be represented by each proxy.
- For a proxy to be valid, the proxy form duly completed must be deposited at the registered office of the Company at Wisma Public Packages, Plot 67 Lintang Kampong Jawa, Bayan Lepas Industrial Estate, 11900 Bayan Lepas, Penang not less than 48 hours before the time for holding the meeting or any adjournment thereof, or in the case of a poll not less than 24 hours before the time appointed for the taking of the poll. Any completed proxy form transmitted by facsimile or electronic mail to the registered office of the Company will not be accepted.
- In the case of a corporate member, the proxy form must be executed under the corporation's common seal or under the hand of an officer or attorney duly authorised in which, it must be supported by a certified true copy of the relevant form or resolution appointing the officer or certified true copy of the power of attorney.
- For the purpose of determining a member who shall be entitled to attend the 38th AGM, the Company shall be requesting Bursa Malaysia Depository Sdn. Bhd. to issue a General Meeting Record of Depositors as at 13 May 2025. Only a depositor whose name appears on the Record of Depositors as at 13 May 2025 shall be eligible to attend the 38th AGM or appoint proxies to attend and/or vote on his/her behalf.

NOTES ON ORDINARY BUSINESS

- Agenda 1 - Audited Financial Statements**
The Audited Financial Statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2024 will be laid to shareholders at the forthcoming AGM pursuant to Section 340(1)(a) of the Companies Act 2016. Hence, the Agenda 1 is not put forward for voting.
- Agenda 2 to Agenda 5 - Re-election of Directors**
The Nominating Committee had assessed the performance and contribution of each of the retiring Directors seeking for re-election in accordance with the Directors' Fit & Proper Policy and was satisfied therewith. The Board had endorsed the Nominating Committee's recommendation to seek shareholders' approval for the re-election of the retiring Directors at the forthcoming AGM of the Company. The retiring Directors had abstained from deliberations and decisions on their respective re-election at the Nominating Committee and Board meetings. The details and profiles of the Directors who are standing for re-election at the forthcoming AGM are provided in the Company's Annual Report 2024.
- Agenda 6 and Agenda 7 - Directors' Fees**
The Resolutions 5 and 6, if passed, will enable the Company to pay Directors' fees to the Non-Executive Directors and Executive Directors of the Company for the financial year ending 31 December 2025 in accordance with Section 230(1) of the Companies Act 2016.
- Agenda 8 - Directors' Benefits**
The Resolution 7, if passed, will enable the Company to pay benefits to the Non-Executive Directors of the Company in accordance with Section 230(1) of the Companies Act 2016. The total amount of Directors' benefits payable is estimated based on number of scheduled meetings of the Board and Board Committees as well as the number of Non-Executive Directors involved; and these benefits may comprise of meeting allowances, trainings, accommodations, insurance and other emoluments and benefits-in-kinds.
- Agenda 9 - Re-appointment of Auditors**
The Audit & Risk Management Committee and the Board had considered the re-appointment of Messrs. Grant Thornton Malaysia PLT as Auditors of the Company. The Audit & Risk Management Committee and the Board collectively agreed and are satisfied that Messrs. Grant Thornton Malaysia PLT meets the relevant criteria prescribed in Paragraph 15.21 of the Main Market Listing Requirements of Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad.

NOTES ON SPECIAL BUSINESS

- Agenda 10 - Authority to issue shares pursuant to Companies Act 2016**
The Resolution 9, if passed, will enable the Directors to allot and issue shares in the Company up to an amount not exceeding 10% of the total number of issued shares of the Company for the time being without having to offer the new shares in the Company to be issued equally to all existing shareholders of the Company prior to its issuance and, for such purposes as the Directors consider will be in the best interest of the Company. This authority, unless revoked or varied by the shareholders of the Company in a general meeting will expire at the conclusion of the next AGM.

The proposed renewal of general mandate for issuance of shares will provide flexibility to the Company for any possible fund raising activities, including but not limited to placing of shares for the purpose of funding future investment, working capital and/or acquisition.

As at the date of this notice, the Directors have not issued any shares pursuant to the general mandate granted at the last AGM of the Company.

Statement Accompanying Notice of Annual General Meeting (PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH 8.2(2) OF THE MAIN MARKET LISTING REQUIREMENTS OF BURSA SECURITIES)

- No individuals are standing for election as Directors at the forthcoming 38th Annual General Meeting of the Company.
- The Resolution 9 tabled under Special Business as per the Notice of 38th Annual General Meeting of the Company dated 23 April 2025 is a renewal of general mandate granted by shareholders of the Company at the last Annual General Meeting held on 29 May 2024.

The proposed renewal of general mandate for issuance of shares will provide flexibility to the Company for any possible fund raising activities, including but not limited to further placing of shares for the purpose of funding future investment, working capital and/or acquisition.

As at the date of notice of meeting, the Directors have not issued any shares pursuant to the general mandate granted at the last Annual General Meeting of the Company.

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Unseeded surprise

Ostapenko shocks world No. 1 Sabalenka in Stuttgart final

UNSEED Jelena Ostapenko crushed world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka 6-4, 6-1 yesterday to win the claycourt title in Stuttgart for her first singles trophy of the year.

It was the Latvian's first title on clay since her 2017 French Open Grand Slam victory while Sabalenka has now lost four finals on Stuttgart's clay after losing the showcase match in 2021-23.

The world No. 1 was no match for her opponent's fierce baseline power while struggling with her first serve throughout. "Congrats Aryna on a great week," Ostapenko said. "I think you hate me now because you wanted this car so bad," she said in reference to a sponsor's offer of a Porsche sports car for the tournament winner.

"Every time I come here I enjoy it so much and thanks everyone for making this week amazing for me. I am really happy today," she said.

Ahead of yesterday's match, Sabalenka had referred to wanting to win the luxury German car.

"I believe that all those times (the losses) were just because I played the

World No. 1, so I became World No. 1. Hopefully it's going to help me somehow," Sabalenka had said ahead of the match.

"Please, I beg you (Ostapenko). Please, please. I need this car. I want to put this thing (tick-mark gesture) next to the goal," Sabalenka added.

In her first claycourt tournament since last year's French Open, the Belarusian was broken in the very first game.

World No. 24 Ostapenko, who also ousted world No. 2 Iga Swiatek earlier in the

tournament, earned another three break points at 4-2 but could not convert any of them with the Belarusian hanging on.

Sabalenka finally carved out her first break only to be broken straight back before Ostapenko clinched the first set.

In the second set the pair traded early breaks but the Latvian powered through, winning 16 of 18 points to break Sabalenka twice and race to a 5-1 lead.

Another erratic Sabalenka service game handed Ostapenko two match points and made sure of her first singles title when she fired a sensational crosscourt forehand winner on a second serve to put down a marker ahead of next month's French Open.

The 26-year-old Sabalenka, who won the 2024 US and Australian Opens, is still waiting for her first tournament win on clay since the 2023 Madrid Open.

"You were a better player than me, that's all there is to it," Sabalenka said. - Reuters/Agencies



Jelena Ostapenko. - REUTERS/SPIC

I don't miss tennis: Nadal

RAFAEL NADAL insisted yesterday that he doesn't "miss tennis" after being honoured with a Sporting Icon award at the Laureus World Sport Awards in Madrid.

The 38-year-old Spaniard, winner of 22 Grand Slam trophies, including 14 at Roland Garros, retired from the sport after his final match at the Davis Cup in Malaga in November.

"The truth is that I don't miss tennis. Zero. I don't miss it at all," Nadal told reporters.

"But not because I finished tired of tennis or fighting against tennis, not at all."

"I finished my career happy and if I could have, I would have carried on, because I loved what I was doing."

"It was my passion and that's been the case all my life. It's just that when you realise that

physically you can't do it any more... you try to close that chapter. And I closed it."

Nadal suffered numerous injuries during his career but resisted retiring as long as possible.

"I delayed making my final decision because I needed time to be sure it was the right one."

"What would have been hard was sitting on my sofa wondering if I should keep trying to play."

"When I saw that my body wasn't going to recover to the level I needed to continue enjoying myself on court, then I made the decision to stop."

"That's why I don't miss it," Nadal added.

"Because I finished with the peace of mind of knowing that I'd given it my all, and that my body couldn't give any more." - AFP

Less is more for Raducanu

EMMA RADUCANU will return to action at this week's Madrid Open after a mid-season break and the former US Open champion said she is benefiting from a more focused approach to the season.

The 22-year-old Briton pulled out of the Billie Jean King Cup qualifiers to rest following a run to the quarterfinals in Miami, where she needed medical attention during her defeat by eventual runner-up Jessica Pegula.

Having opted for a training block instead, Raducanu is raring to go in the Spanish capital where she kicks off her campaign against Dutchwoman Suzan Lamens today.

"I've realised now that less is more for me sometimes," Raducanu told *Sky Sports*. "I work really intense and really hard and can definitely be partial to overkilling it sometimes."

"It's just making sure when I'm

on the court I'm maxing out for X amount of time so I can focus, and then once I'm done, I'm switching off better."

"You hear a lot that people need matches and I say the same thing. Matches definitely help, but there's a time and a place."

"There are other times where you need to reset and get your bearings, because the season is very long."

Raducanu's break involved working with former player Mark Petchey, continuing an informal arrangement after employing a number of coaches with little success amid form and fitness issues.

"It's pretty informal for now but is something that's going really well," Raducanu said.

"I'm still figuring things out: what works for me, what doesn't. What gets the best out of me. For now, I'm not getting as technical as I used to maybe." - Reuters

Shubman, Sudharsan help Gujarat boss KKR

SHUBMAN GILL led from the front with his 55-ball 90 to help Gujarat Titans hammer holders Kolkata Knight Riders by 39 runs yesterday and consolidate their top spot in the IPL.

Gujarat posted 198-3 after Sai Sudharsan, who hit 52, and Shubman put on 114 runs for the first wicket to lay the foundations of the total at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

The bowlers then combined to restrict Kolkata to 159-8 with skipper Ajinkya Rahane playing a lone hand with 50 to register Gujarat's sixth win in eight matches.

Kolkata, who won their third title of the popular T20 tournament last year, slipped to their fifth defeat in eight matches.

The batters set up victory for Gujarat with England's Jos Buttler hitting an unbeaten 41 off 23 balls as he steered the team after the opening stand between the Sudharsan and Shubman.

"We never talk about that one of us has to stay until the end," player-of-the-match Shubman

said on being asked about one of their top three staying through to the end in most of the matches.

"We just talk about how we can score runs in these conditions and how to take the game deep."

Andre Russell handed Kolkata its first breakthrough as the pace bowler dismissed Sudharsan after his 36-ball knock but he came under attack from Buttler who hit him for three successive boundaries.

Buttler and Shubman kept up the attack before fast bowler Vaibhav Arora denied the Gujarat captain his hundred.

Buttler lost another partner in Rahul Tewatia but Gujarat finished with a flourish in a 18-run 20th over from Arora.

"When you are chasing 199, you expect a good opening start with the batters, that's where we are struggling throughout this tournament," said Rahane.

"I thought 199 chaseable on this wicket, we bowled really well, we faltered with our batting." - AFP

theSun WE ARE HIRING!

- 1) EXECUTIVE / SENIOR - HR & Admin
- 2) ASST MANAGER / MANAGER - HR & Admin

Job Description

- Maintain HR records, including employee files, salaries and benefits information.
- Handle employee attendance records, payroll and claims.
- Handle employee relations and resolve any workplace conflicts or issues.
- Provide HR support and guidance to managers and employees.
- Ensure compliance with all employment laws and regulations.
- Stay updated on changes in law legislation and industry standards.
- Handle employee training and development programmes.
- Manage employee benefits programmes and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Stay updated on current industry trends and best practices in HR management.
- For Senior/Assistant Manager - with supervisor skills.
- Handle staff training and recruitment matters.
- Experience in payroll system would be advantageous.
- Handle General Admin and other HR duties.

Requirements

- Diploma/Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management or related field.
- Executive: 1+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
- Senior: 3+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
- Asst Manager: 5+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply for Assistant Executive post.
- Basic HR knowledge and proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

- 3) EXECUTIVE - Safety & Building Maintenance

Job Description

- Perform routine and preventive maintenance on factory & office building systems, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems.
- Conduct regular inspections of the factory & office building to identify and address maintenance issues.
- Respond promptly to maintenance requests and ensure timely resolution.
- Maintain accurate records of maintenance activities, including work orders, inspections and repairs.
- Ensure all maintenance activities comply with relevant health, safety and environmental regulations.
- Coordinate with external contractors and vendors for specialised maintenance and repair works.
- Monitor and optimise energy usage to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- Assist in preparation and management of maintenance budget.
- Assist in any ad-hoc operations and admin tasks assigned by Management from time to time.

Requirements

- Diploma/Degree in Building or Facilities Management, Safety & Health or related field.
- Additional certificate: Electrical Chargeman, preferably A4 or minimum A1 would be an added advantage.
- Minimum of one year of experience in Building Maintenance or Safety & Health.
- Adequate technical knowledge of building systems (HVAC, electrical, plumbing etc).
- Excellent problem-solving and troubleshooting skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Able to work flexi hours.
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(Closing Date: April 30, 2025)

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR
IN THE STATE OF WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR
(COMMERCIAL DIVISION)
COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) PETITION
No. WA-28NCC-266-03/2025

In the matter of Section 465 (1) (e) and 466 (1) (a) of Companies Act 2016

And

In the matter of Spas Design Studio Sdn Bhd (Company No: 200201022631/590294-F)

BETWEEN

DE GRAND STONE SDN BHD (Company No: 201301011491 / 1041329-D) ...PETITIONER

AND

SPAS DESIGN STUDIO SDN BHD (Company No: 200201022631/590294-F) ...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 05-03-2025 presented by De Grand Stone Sdn Bhd (Company No: 201301011491 / 1041329-D) AND that the said Petition is directed to be heard at the High Court at Kuala Lumpur at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon, on Thursday, 19-06-2025, 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 the hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to the creditor or contributory of the said company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charges for the same.

The Petitioner's registered address is at 1108-1, Jalan Raja Permaisuri Bainun, 30250 Ipoh Perak and its business address is at 12A-2, Lobi Lapangan Siber 2, Bandar Cyber, 31350 Ipoh Perak.

The Petitioner's Solicitors are Messrs. Christopher Yun & Partners, Advocates & Solicitors of D-3A-4, Plaza Mont Kiara, Block D, Jalan Kiara 2, Mont Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur.

Sd. MESSRS. CHRISTOPHER YUN & PARTNERS

SOLICITORS FOR THE PETITIONER

NOTE - Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named Solicitors, notice in writing of his intention so to do. 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 Solicitors not later than twelve o'clock noon of the 19-06-2025 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the petition).

THIS ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION is filed by Messrs. Christopher Yun & Partners, solicitors for the Petitioner above-named whose address for service is at D-3A-4, Plaza Mont Kiara, Block D, Jalan Kiara 2, Mont Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur
Tel No: 03-6412 5494
Fax No: 03-6412 5495
(Our ref: LT210911.DGSS.SDS.CV.CC)

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI KUALA LUMPUR
GUAMAN NO. WA-AT2NCCV-715-02/2025

ANTARA

TETUAN FAID NARAENDRAN & PARTNERS ... PLANTIF

DAN

SATTHYA PRIYA A/P MARTHAHANEERAN ... DEFENDAN

NOTIS

Kepada: - SATTHYA PRIYA A/P MARTHAHANEERAN

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majlisret di Kuala Lumpur Guaman Sivil No: WA-AT2NCCV-715-02/2025 oleh TETUAN FAID NARAENDRAN & PARTNERS ("Plantif") yang beralamat di No. 3A, Persiaran Ara Kiri, Lucky Garden, Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur, di mana Plantif menuntut terhadap kamu antara lain untuk membayar ganti rugi, faedah dan kos.

DAN TELAH DIPERITAKAN oleh Mahkamah melalui Perintah bertarikh 10.04.2025 bahawa Writ Saman dan Permintaan Tuntutan bertarikh 27.02.2025 dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti terhadap kamu dengan menempakkannya papan notis mahkamah, menghantarnya secara pos berdaftar ke alamat kamu di Apartment Abadi Indah di jalan Klang Lama, menempakkannya di alamat kediaman kamu di Seri Kembangan dan mengiklankan sekali di suatu penerbitan akbar "The Sun". Penyampaian Writ Saman dan Permintaan Tuntutan sedemikian akan disifatkan sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penyampaian atau pengiklankan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut, kamu mestilah memasukkan kehadiran sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu ingkar hadir sedemikian, penghakiman boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 21 April 2025

.....TETUAN FAID NARAENDRAN & PARTNERS
Peguamcara Plantif

Notis Penyampaian Ganti (Bentuk Pengiklankan) ini difailkan oleh Tetuan Faid Naraendran & Partners, iaitu Plantif yang dinamakan di atas dengan alamat penyampaian di No. 3A, Persiaran Ara Kiri, Lucky Garden, Bangsar, 59100 Kuala Lumpur
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BRIEFS

Biles 'not so sure' about 2028 LA Olympics

AMERICAN gymnast Simone Biles, voted Sportswoman of the Year at the Laureus Sport Awards ceremony in Madrid, said she remained uncertain about whether she would compete at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. The 28-year-old, a seven-time Olympic champion, won three gold medals in Paris last year, making a thrilling return to the Olympic stage after a long mental health break. "I'm really enjoying my time off before I decide if I want to go back to the gym and compete," she said at yesterday's ceremony. "A lot of people think it's just a one-year commitment but it truly is the four years leading up to the Olympics. It's in LA it's back in the States, which is so exciting. But if I'm going to compete again, I'm not so sure. But I will be at the Olympics, whether it's on the floor or in the stands." Swedish pole vaulter Armand Duplantis, the double Olympic champion and world record holder, was named Sportsman of the Year. Duplantis, 25, took the award ahead of tennis great Novak Djokovic, Formula One world champion Max Verstappen.

Boom Boom, Smriti top Wisden awards

INDIA duo Jasprit Bumrah and Smriti Mandhana have been crowned the world's leading cricketers in the latest edition of the Wisden Cricketers' Almanack. Jasprit won the honour in the men's section after a stellar 2024 when he excelled across formats and was named player of the tournament as India won the Twenty20 World Cup in the West Indies. "In an eventful year for Indian cricket, their success depended largely, if not entirely, on one factor: whether or not he had the ball," the publication wrote about the 31-year-old, who is considered the best all-format bowler of his era. "Rarely has a cricketer stood out so overwhelmingly as he did in 2024." Opener Mandhana won the women's honour after a prolific 2024 that included five hundreds – four of them in one-day internationals. Mandhana also led Royal Challengers Bengaluru to their first Women's Premier League title last year. West Indies batter Nicholas Pooran was named the "Leading T20 Player in the World".

Hedwall, Reid named vice captains

EUROPEAN captain Anna Nordqvist named Sweden's Caroline Hedwall and England's Mel Reid as vice captains for the 2026 Solheim Cup yesterday. The biennial competition against the United States will take place from Sept. 7-13, 2026, at Bernardus Golf in the Netherlands. Hedwall, 35, has represented Europe at the Solheim Cup five times. This is her first selection as a vice captain. "I was so thrilled when Anna invited me to be one of her Vice Captains in 2026 as the Solheim Cup has definitely provided many of the most important moments of my career," she said. Reid, 37, played for Europe in the Solheim Cup four times and was a vice captain in 2019 and 2024. "If the Solheim Cup is happening, I want to be there for Europe in whatever way I can contribute," Reid said. "Some of my fondest core memories have been during a Solheim Cup week and in that European team room."

Devils lack killer-instinct

Eriksen insists tiredness not behind Man Utd loss to Wolves

■ BY SIMON PEACH

CHRISTIAN ERIKSEN says Manchester United's lack of cutting edge was to blame for Sunday's defeat to Wolves rather than any Europa League hangover.

Ruben Amorim's Red Devils returned to action just 63 hours after Thursday's show-stopping 5-4 extra-time quarterfinal comeback win against Lyon.

United made five changes from that physically and emotionally draining Europa League encounter as Amorim admitted preparations for their semifinal against Athletic Bilbao took precedence over Premier League matters.

The Portuguese's side did well, considering, but substitute Pablo Sarabia's freekick secured Wolves a 1-0 win at Old Trafford, with Eriksen

blaming a lack of killer-instinct rather than Thursday's exertions.

"I think it was pretty easy to get over," the experienced midfielder said. "I think obviously we changed a lot of the team from Thursday... we had our chances (on Sunday).

"No matter if we played Thursday or not, I think we had enough energy to win the game and, in the end, it was just small details. We weren't good enough in the last end.

"It is football, in a nutshell. Sometimes if you have a good game but don't score any goals, then the opposition will always have a chance to take the lead and take the win."

Unfortunately, they did that."

The positives on a disappointing afternoon for United were the performances of Tyler Fredricson, 20, on his debut and Harry Amass, 18, as he made his first Old Trafford start.

"I'm happy for both," Eriksen told MUTV. "Obviously Harry has played a few games, but Tyler has trained with us a few times and performed (on Sunday). I think he's a bright kid.

"I mean, they're both really working hard and earning their chance in the team. I think they can both be very proud of what they've achieved.

"They look very comfortable. I hope they enjoyed it and keep the memory apart from the loss, but for their own development I think they'll be very proud."

United return to action at Bournemouth on Sunday (9pm Malaysian time) and could start the day behind Wolves, who take on relegated Leicester the previous day buoyed by substitute Sarabia's winner at Old Trafford.

Vitor Pereira has overseen quite the turnaround at Molineux, with Sunday's victory seeing them secure five consecutive top-flight wins for the first time since 1970.

"It's a massive victory," match-winner Sarabia told the Premier League. "We are very happy for this win and for me as well. Very happy for me and my team."

"We are fighting every single game. We try to do our best and we are improving a lot. It was a very difficult season for us, but we are enjoying now."

"I think this team needed a change. With Vitor, something changed. The most important thing is that the players are very happy on the pitch and because of this it is possible to do the best on the pitch." – The Independent



Christian Eriksen.
– REUTERS/PIC

Leverkusen have 'gentleman's agreement' to let Alonso go

BAYER LEVERKUSEN and their coach Xabi Alonso have a "gentleman's agreement" that would allow the Spanish manager to leave if one of the clubs he played for during his career calls him up, the German club's CEO Fernando Carro said yesterday.

The 43-year-old former midfielder, who had a remarkable career playing for Liverpool, Real Madrid, Bayern Munich and his childhood club Real Sociedad, has been rumored as the strongest candidate to succeed Carlo Ancelotti in the Spanish capital.

The 65-year-old Italian manager's future with Real Madrid is uncertain following their Champions League quarterfinal exit, with multiple reports suggesting he could step away from his position at the end of the season to take over the Brazilian national team's vacant spot, which could further open the door for Alonso's return to Madrid.

The former Spanish international, who is under contract until June 2026, has done an excellent job at Bayer Leverkusen in his short managerial career.

He led them to their first Bundesliga title, ending Bayern Munich's 11-year domination, as

well as triumphs in the German Cup and DFB Supercup.

"We have a gentlemen's agreement that if any of the teams he has played for calls, we would sit down and talk and we wouldn't put any obstacles in his way," Carro told reporters yesterday.

"(Last year) Xabi had offers from important clubs but he assured us that he would stay with us. Maybe it is a bit early to talk as the season is still ongoing.

"Maybe things can happen. So we have given ourselves some time to decide... We are very calm and there is not much more to say other than that."

Carro said that Leverkusen's relationship with Real Madrid "is excellent" but said there has been no contact whatsoever regarding Alonso from the Spanish club.

"We are not naive, but the position of the coach is very important for a club and we are preparing the next season with him," Carro said.

"If at the end of the day there is interest from another club and he is interested in going to that club, we have a relationship that we would have to talk about.

"Xabi's will is important in this, he respects us a lot and we respect Xabi". – Reuters

Alexander-Arnold could snub Madrid after all

CLINTON MORRISON has weighed in on the speculation surrounding Trent Alexander-Arnold's future, suggesting his zealous goal celebrations against Leicester City hint he might just remain at Liverpool.

The 26-year-old made an impact off the bench at the King Power Stadium on Sunday, replacing Conor Bradley in the 71st minute.

Just five minutes later, Alexander-Arnold hammered home a left-footed volley and jubilantly shared the moment with away supporters, taking off his shirt as Liverpool edged closer to another Premier League title with their 1-0 victory.

With Alexander-Arnold's contract set to expire this summer and rumours of a switch to Real Madrid gathering steam, Morrison pondered whether such exuberant celebrations wouldn't align with a player poised for departure.

During an appearance on *BBC Radio 5 Live*, he said: "If you're leaving a football club I don't think you celebrate like that."

As the 2024/25 Premier League season kicked off, Alexander-Arnold was one of three Liverpool mainstays whose contracts were set to expire at the end of the campaign, alongside Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk.

And while both Salah and Van Dijk have recently signed new two-year deals with the Reds, Alexander-Arnold is yet to extend his own contract beyond June.

After Liverpool's 1-0 victory over Leicester, he declined to discuss his future, telling *Sky Sports*: "I have said all season that I am not going to speak on my situation. I am not going to go into the details."

"But days like today are always special. Scoring goals, playing games, winning games, winning titles – they are special moments for me and I am glad to do my part."

Captain Van Dijk says Alexander-Arnold will "always be remembered for good things" at Liverpool even if he decides to leave as a free agent.

"Since I joined the club, he has been a fantastic player and there's a lot of good things that he will always be remembered for if he decides to leave," said Van Dijk.

"Whatever may happen in the future for him, that's something he has to resolve with himself and the family."

"But he's a Liverpool player at this point and he's important for our team."

While Alexander-Arnold's celebration after scoring against Leicester has been debated, especially on social media, Van Dijk says the Liverpool squad have had no inclination about the England player's future.

"At this point, we don't know as a group what's going to happen," added Van Dijk.

"He is already under a lot of pressure so there is no point for me to put him on the spot whatsoever." – Express Newspapers/Agencies

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Leeds target C'ship title

Jubilant Whites secure promotion with 6-0 thrashing of Stoke

LEEDS captain Ethan Ampadu said Premier League promotion felt "amazing" and said the club will now target securing the Championship title.

The Whites thrashed Stoke 6-0 at Elland Road to remain top of the table and the players then stayed to watch Burnley's 2-1 win over Sheffield United at Turf Moor, which confirmed promotion for both Leeds and the Claret.

Leeds fans gathered outside the ground in their thousands to celebrate their top-flight return.

Ampadu said: "It's amazing. If you look at the scenes here, as it was after the final whistle, just pure excitement."

"Within ourselves we've got another target, so we can enjoy this now, but we've got another target we want to achieve. But right now, it's very good."

Joel Piroe grabbed four goals for Leeds against hapless Stoke, including the club's fastest ever league hat-trick with strikes in the sixth, eighth and 20th minutes.

He added his fourth before half-time after Junior Firpo had put Daniel Farke's side 4-0 up in 26 minutes.

Willy Gnonto headed the hosts' sixth in the second half to help seal Leeds' Premier League return after a two-year absence.

Leeds came up short during last season's run-in, dropping out of the top two before losing to Southampton in the playoff final, and Ampadu said that heartache had helped fuel Farke's side this time round.

"Definitely. The lads that were here last year – we all felt that hurt," he said.

"After the game at Wembley we wanted to put it right straightaway and we've had to wait another season."

"The lads who came in have been excellent, joining in with what we wanted to achieve."

"Thankfully one part is done."

Everyone knows what the next part is, but it's fantastic."

Ampadu's Wales teammate Joe Rodon said he was "buzzing" for everyone involved with the Elland Road club.

Rodon said: "For me it hasn't sunk in yet. I don't think it will until the end of the season, but I'm just delighted for everyone involved with the club, the fans and what it means to them."

"It's what everyone has worked for all season and I'm buzzing."

"(Last season) didn't sit right with me. The boys who have come in have been brilliant and we set out to do what we've done. I'm just delighted for everyone."

Leeds boss Farke, who won promotion to the Premier League twice with Norwich in 2019 and 2021, said he was "lost for words."

Farke, enjoying a celebratory beer, said: "It doesn't happen that often."

"You can see the atmosphere here, it's incredible. It's well deserved, 94 points at this stage is unbelievable. The lads should celebrate, all our supporters should celebrate."

"It's difficult on such an emotional day to reflect too much, but it was a long road. It's not easy to stabilise the ship after relegation and to deal with that."

"We played fantastic last season, with 90 minutes, before the heart-breaking game at Wembley, but to show resilience and keep going, we deserve today to celebrate."

Independent

New Cardiff boss Ramsey denied winning start

AARON RAMSEY was denied a winning start as Cardiff City's caretaker manager, as his side were plunged deeper into Championship relegation strife by Oxford United captain Cameron Brannagan's staggering long-range equaliser.

Appointed on Saturday following the sacking of Omer Riza, Wales captain Ramsey was given a hero's welcome as he instigated an instant improvement in performance.

Yousef Saleh gave Cardiff a precious second half lead as he held off two Oxford defenders and headed in superbly from Chris Willock's cross to prompt fervent celebrations among the home crowd.

But that jubilation turned to stunned silence when an Oxford free-kick was laid off to Brannagan and, from 35 yards out, the midfielder launched a missile of a

strike which whistled into the top corner.

Equally damaging to Cardiff were results elsewhere, with all their other relegation rivals winning to leave them second from bottom of the table and three points from safety with only two games left.

For Oxford, whose only shot on target was Brannagan's goal, this draw takes them another step closer to safety, three points clear of the bottom three.

"It was really enjoyable, I really enjoyed that. The level of performance from the boys was superb," Ramsey said via BBC Sport.

"They did everything we asked of them over the last two days. A lot of work has gone in, a bit of information for them."

"We controlled the game really well, played with real intensity and intent. Sometimes football can be cruel, it can sometimes take a worldie from 35 yards, their only shot on target. These things can happen."

"We can be really proud of what we've done over the last 24 hours. To produce that sort of performance in that time, we can take a lot from."

"We controlled the game pretty well and nullified them to nothing really and we had a few chances ourselves."

"But in general, the performance we looked for and the commitment was evident to see."

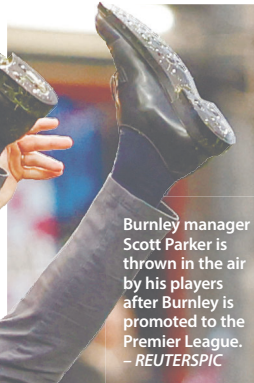
"This club means a lot to me and I felt like I could get a reaction. I certainly got that today." – Agencies



Burnley's 'boring' label brings sweetest reward

INCREDIBLE. Boring. Record-breakers. Special. Those are all the words that have been used to describe Burnley on their way to winning promotion to the Premier League this season.

Captain Josh Brownhill himself even joked that Burnley have "bored our way to the Premier League" after the 2-1 win over Sheffield United yesterday confirmed their



Burnley manager Scott Parker is thrown in the air by his players after Burnley is promoted to the Premier League. – REUTERS/PIC

return to the top flight.

Brownhill was referencing the fact the Claret are set to become the best defence in Championship history having conceded just 15 goals this season, smashing the record of 30 goals allowed by Watford in 2020-21 and Preston in 2005-06.

They have also kept 29 clean sheets, beating Wigan Athletic's English Football League record of 27 in League One in 2017-18.

A season of 12 stalemates has

culminated in a swift return to the top flight, a pitch invasion and a triumph for Scott Parker. It wasn't always easy or entertaining but Burnley are back. As Turf Moor erupted, as Parker's players bounced around in jubilation, as Ashley Barnes marked his fourth promotion by hoisting chairman Alan Pace off his feet, the achievement was appreciated. Boredom can have a beauty.

Top goalscorer Brownhill led by example at Turf Moor against the Blades – as he has done for much of this season – with two goals to help his side to the victory that sealed Burnley's place in the Premier League for the 2025-26 campaign.

"I'm speechless. All that hard work this season," the 29-year-old Brownhill told Sky Sports.

"We've been written off so many times, people calling us boring. We've bored our way to the Premier League."

"It takes a whole team – it's not just a back four, a goalkeeper, it takes everybody."

"I don't think a lot of the lads will sleep. I'm so buzzing for the lads that haven't played Premier League football."

Head coach Parker said the "ambition and target at the start of the season was to get back to the Premier League."

"We've managed to do that so I'm hugely proud of the squad," he told BBC Radio Lancashire.

"It's come down to real, pure commitment from every one of the players, their dedication and the sacrifice that they've made, that leads us to this point."

"I explained to the lads there is emotion from me because I see the commitment that everyone has brought."

"We live in a world where you win or you lose and you get judged and at the end of the season you're either promoted or not and that's how quickly people will judge it."

"I'm just delighted that all that work, all that effort, all that sacrifice has been worth it and people can see it. The facts are if you don't get promoted people can see it." – The Independent/Agencies

Vardy declares Foxes' season 'total embarrassment'

JAMIE VARDY has apologised for Leicester ending their season with "such a s*** show" after the club were relegated from the Premier League.

On Sunday, the Foxes suffered their second top-flight relegation in three seasons after being beaten 1-0 by League leaders Liverpool.

Trent Alexander-Arnold's goal was the difference to confirm Leicester's place in the Championship next season and hand them a 23rd league loss.

Veteran Foxes striker Vardy – who has seven League goals for the club this season – took to social media yesterday to apologise for the team's performances and described their campaign as "miserable".

In a post on Instagram, the 38-

year-old said: "At this point, I don't even know what to say."

"No words I have can ever express my feelings of anger and sadness with the way this season has gone. There are no excuses."

"Collectively, as players and as a club, we failed. There is simply no hiding, and I refuse to entertain any suggestion of doing so."

"Having been at this club for so long, we've experienced so many highs and successes – and this season has been nothing but miserable and for me personally, a total embarrassment. It hurts, and I know you're feeling it too."

"To the fans: I'm sorry. Sorry we haven't performed, and sorry we end the 2025 season with such a s*** show." – The Independent



RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE: Tottenham 1 (Richarlison 87) **Nottingham Forest 2** (Anderson 5, Wood 16).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	33	24	7	2	75	31	79
Arsenal	33	18	12	3	61	27	66
Nottm Forest	33	18	6	9	53	39	60
Newcastle	33	18	5	10	62	44	59
Man City	33	17	7	9	64	42	58
Chelsea	33	16	9	8	58	40	57
Aston Villa	33	16	9	8	53	47	57
Bournemouth	33	13	10	10	52	40	49
Fulham	33	13	9	11	48	45	48
Brighton	33	12	12	9	53	53	48
Brentford	33	13	7	13	56	50	46
Crystal Palace	33	11	11	11	41	45	44
Everton	33	8	14	11	34	40	38
Man Utd	33	10	8	15	38	46	38
Wolves	33	11	5	17	48	61	38
Tottenham	33	11	4	18	61	51	37
West Ham	33	9	9	15	37	55	36
Ipswich	33	4	9	20	33	71	21
Leicester	33	4	6	23	27	73	18
Southampton	33	2	5	26	24	78	11

Note: Top five qualify for Champions League; bottom three relegated.

CHAMPIONSHIP: Cardiff City 1 Oxford 1, Hull City 2 Preston North End 1, Leeds United 6 Stoke City 0, Luton Town 3 Bristol City 1, Millwall 3 Norwich City 1, Plymouth Argyle 3 Coventry City 1, Portsmouth 1 Watford 0, QPR 1 Swansea City 2, Sheffield Wednesday 2 Middlesbrough 1, Sunderland 0 Blackburn Rovers 1, West Bromwich Albion 1 Derby County 3, Burnley 2 Sheffield United 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leeds	44	27	13	4	89	29	94
Burnley	44	26	16	2	61	15	94
Sheff Utd	44	27	7	10	60	35	86
Sunderland	44	21	13	10	58	41	76
Bristol City	44	17	16	11	57	49	67
Coventry	44	19	9	16	62	57	66
Mid'boro	44	18	9	17	64	54	63
Millwall	44	17	12	15	45	46	63
Blackburn	44	18	8	18	50	46	62
West Brom	44	14	18	12	52	44	60
Swansea	44	17	9	18	48	52	60
Watford	44	16	8	20	51	58	56
Sheff Wed	44	15	11	18	58	67	56
Norwich	44	13	14	17	67	66	53
QPR	44	13	14	17	52	58	53
Portsmouth	44	14	10	20	56	69	52
Stoke	44	12	14	18	45	60	50
Preston	44	10	19	15	45	55	49
Oxford Utd	44	12	13	19	44	62	49
Hull	44	12	12	20	43	52	48
Derby	44	12	10	22	47	56	46
Luton	44	12	10	22	41	64	46
Cardiff	44	9	16	19	46	69	43
Plymouth	44	10	13	21	48	85	43

Note: Top two promoted to Premier League; third to sixth in playoffs; bottom three relegated.

LA LIGA: Girona 1 (Stuani 85) **Real Betis 3** (Cardoso 6, Antony 39, Isco 42).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	32	23	4	5	88	32	73
Real Madrid	32	21	6	5	65	31	69
A. Madrid	32	18	9	5	53	27	63
A. Bilbao	32	15	12	5	49	26	57
Villarreal	31	14	10	7	55	42	52
Real Betis	32	14	9	9	45	40	51
Mallorca	32	12	8	12	31	37	44
Celta Vigo	32	12	7	13	47	49	43
R. Sociedad	32	12	6	14	32	36	42
R. Vallecano	32	10	11	11	35	39	41
Osasuna	32	9	14	9	39	46	41
Getafe	32	10	9	13	31	29	39
Espanyol	31	10	8	13	34	40	38
Valencia	32	9	11	12	36	48	38
Sevilla	32	9	10	13	35	43	37
Girona	32	9	7	16	39	51	34
Las Palmas	32	8	8	16	38	52	32
Alaves	32	7	10	15	34	46	31
Leganes	32	6	11	15	29	48	29
Valladolid	32	4	4	24	23	76	16

Note: Top five qualify for Champions League; bottom three relegated.

PROMOTED RELEGATED

BADMINTON ASSOCIATION of Malaysia (BAM) has tapped men's singles player Leong Jun Hao and national No. 1 women's doubles player Pearly Tan to lead the national squad's challenge at the 2025 Sudirman Cup in Xiamen, China.

Doubles coaching director Rexy Mainaky said the trust given to Jun Hao and Pearly to shoulder joint responsibility as team captains could have a positive impact on their respective leadership styles both on and off the court.

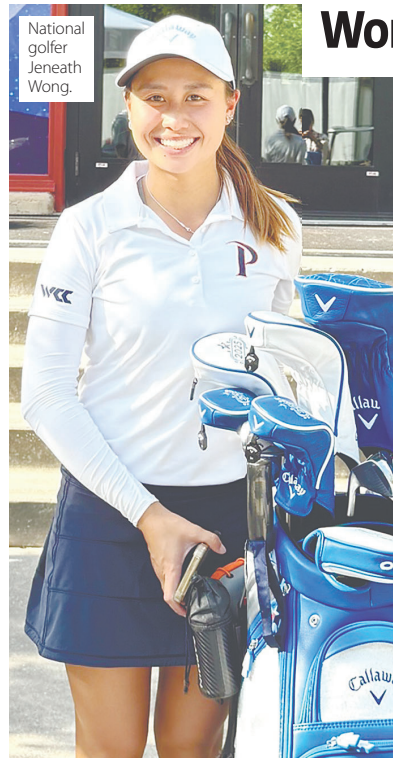
"Pearly, who used to be behind the scenes, is now quite active in providing information in the group."

"For Jun Hao, it's probably the first time he has become captain and it is something good for him," Rexy told reporters after the Sudirman Cup 2025 central training session in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Commenting on yesterday's simulation match, Rexy said the situation helped the players to strengthen their respective psychological aspects, especially their preparations for court action before they leave for Xiamen, tomorrow.

Meanwhile, the doubles expert from Indonesia said the presence of three professional representatives, namely the country's No. 1 men's doubles Goh Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin Rumsani, the mixed doubles Goh Soon Huat-Shevon Lai Jemie and the women's singles player Goh Jin Wei, created a positive impact on the central training session that has been going on since last week.

"Actually, the impact on both sides (BAM and professionals) is enormous and positive for the team since we trained together," he said.



Jun Hao, Pearly to lead charge

Duo given captains' roles for Sudirman Cup challenge

Meanwhile to ensure Malaysia's success at the Games, Shevon said she is ready to "split" with her partner Soon Huat temporarily if needed.

Shevon said the situation could provide a new dimension for her in learning the playing style of other players at the tournament.

"Of course, in any situation, when the team needs us to split, we are ready to do what is the best for the team."

"Actually it's a good experience if we can play split partnership. We can learn something from the new partner and refresh ourselves," she told reporters yesterday.

Despite being one of the senior players in the squad, Shevon said she is ready to help the junior players if they need guidance from her.

Shevon, who is 31, is also open to receiving any views from the junior players in the tournament.

Meanwhile, she admitted that she and Soon Huat are currently in their best form ahead of the

2025 Sudirman Cup.

Although they are currently ranked third in the world and are the top pair in the country at the moment, Shevon said the pressure is still there for them in Xiamen.

"I think for me and Soon Huat, we've been through quite a lot but recently, we've been handling it much better."

"I won't say it's perfect, but it's much better compared to previously and we know how to balance that emotion," she said.

Malaysia, who were drawn in Group C, will open their campaign against France (April 28), followed by Australia (April 29) and third seed Japan (May 1).

Only the top two teams from each group will qualify for the quarterfinals.

Malaysia's best achievement in the Sudirman Cup is reaching the semifinals three times, namely in the 2009, 2021 and 2023 editions. - Bernama

Wong to fly Jalur Gemilang at Chevron

MALAYSIAN amateur talent Jeneath Wong aims to soak in the experience when she tees off at the LPGA Tour's first Major of the 2025 season, The Chevron Championship, which starts tomorrow at The Club at Carlton Woods in Texas. The diminutive golfer earned her place in the US\$8 million (RM36m) showpiece with a gutsy victory at last month's Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific championship in Vietnam.

Wong is one of eight amateur invitations in the field, including current World Amateur Golf Ranking No. 1 Lottie Woad of England.

"It's going to be my first appearance at The Chevron Championship and I'm looking forward to it," Wong, who is her junior (third) year at Pepperdine University in California, said.

"It'll be fun and I just want to soak up the experience and learn from playing with the LPGA players, who I want to compete with in the future."

This will be Wong's second Major outing following the 2023 US Women's Open at Pebble Beach, which she got into by finishing second in a qualifying event.

Although she missed the cut by three shots, Wong showed no signs of being overawed and gave a good account of herself.

Having arrived at Carlton Woods on Monday, Wong managed to squeeze in an early practice round at the highly-rated Jack Nicklaus Signature Course.

"The course is playing long, and yesterday's rainstorm

made it even longer as the balls weren't running out as much. I think the main goal at this course is hitting fairways and greens."

"The rough is pretty thick, and short siding yourself makes it tough to get up and down. Placing the ball in good positions is the key," said the 21-year-old.

Nicknamed "Pocket Dynamite", Wong stands just 1.55m tall but makes up for what she lacks in power with pinpoint iron play and a deft short game, along with a steely resolve - attributes which served her well at Hoiana Shores, where she birdied the last two holes to fend off a late charge by Korean Oh Soo-min.

Fresh off a third-place individual finish at the West Coast Conference Championship, the Malaysian shrugged off a missed cut in her second appearance at the Augusta National Women's Amateur earlier this month, following rounds of 73 and 74 at Champions Retreat Golf Club.

Wong also failed to progress to the third and final round at Augusta National Golf Club in the 2023 championship.

"My confidence has definitely increased following my Women's Amateur Asia-Pacific victory."

"I wasn't too disappointed at missing the cut at the Augusta National Women's Amateur as the Champions Retreat course plays tough for me."

"It was a great learning experience and just an honour playing in the event, especially getting to play Augusta National in the practice round," said Wong, who was born in Kuala Lumpur but moved to Australia when she was 10 years old. - LPGA Tour

KLSCM 2025 sells out in record time

THE Kuala Lumpur Standard Chartered Marathon (KLSCM) is sold out!

Public registration for the 17th edition of the marathon opened yesterday at 10am and KLSCM 2025 reached its capacity in record time, selling out in under four hours.

Registration began on April 17 for those eligible for Priority Registration as well as for the Run For A Reason (RFAR) programme and Corporate Challenge.

Runners still intent on securing a slot in KLSCM 2025 can opt to register under the RFAR charity initiative to run for a charitable cause to raise funds for RFAR beneficiaries.

The Corporate Challenge, on the other hand, is a

competitive yet fun platform for companies to register and compete as a corporate team while running for charity.

Those who did not manage to secure a slot are also advised to watch out for upcoming promotions offering entries.

This includes Standard Chartered Malaysia's promotions for selected Standard Chartered Priority Banking clients where they can enjoy a complimentary running slot when they deposit and invest with the bank from today till May 31.

"We are humbled every year by the overwhelming response from the running community and greatly appreciate their enthusiasm

and support for the sport and the event," said Rainer Biemann, the Director of Dirigo Events and Project Director of the KLSCM.

"The KLSCM has always been a platform for runners of all levels to raise their individual bars and we wish all participants the best of luck for this year's race."

"We believe in helping build champions and we look forward to seeing many personal bests as runners push themselves to become the champions that they are. We will be kicking off running clinics for participants soon," he added.

KLSCM 2025 will be held on Oct 4 and 5 2025. For more information, visit the KLSCM website at www.kl-marathon.com or their social media pages.



the Sun Sports

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Nottingham Forest manager Nuno Espirito Santo celebrates after the match. - REUTERS/PIC



Unseeded surprise

Story on page 28

BY GEORGE SESSIONS

Nuno says Forest will 'embrace challenge' as Champions League battle heats up

NUNO ESPIRITO SANTO acknowledged no one at Nottingham Forest expected to be third in April but backed his team to embrace the challenge after they started a huge week with victory at Tottenham.

Forest had slipped to sixth in the Premier League after weekend wins for Champions League qualification rivals Manchester City, Chelsea and Aston Villa, yet responded with aplomb in the capital.

Early efforts by Elliot Anderson and Chris Wood put Forest in control and, while Spurs created a number of chances, Richardson's 87th-minute header proved too little too late as Forest

claimed a potentially pivotal three points in the race for the top five.

After they required a final-day win at Burnley last season to stay up, Nuno's men have gone from strength to strength and Wood's 19th goal of the season means they return to London on Sunday (11.30pm Malaysian time) for an FA Cup semifinal with Manchester City in buoyant mood.

"First of all we have to realise that we are in a fight that no one expected, us included, and it's normal, but I don't want to prove nobody wrong," Nuno said.

"It's about us. We have a big desire to compete and the players enjoy. We are in the mix against big teams and that can only make us proud.

"We embrace the challenge. We are ahead of a big week for us, we're going to Wembley to compete against a big team and there are a lot of games ahead of us. As long as we keep this approach, competing well, you never know."

Nuno watched Forest make the ideal start with Anderson's strike deflected past Guglielmo Vicario in the Spurs goal in the fifth minute and it was 2-0 after 17 minutes.

Wood ghosted in between Cristian Romero and Micky van de Ven to head home Anthony Elanga's cross.

Tottenham improved, but Mathys Tel and Richardson squandered first-half chances before Dejan Kulusevski's 59th-minute header was brilliantly cleared off the line by Harry Toffolo.

Matz Sels then thwarted Richardson twice before the Brazil forward did head home a Pedro Porro delivery with three minutes left, but Forest held on.

He added: "Of course the final minutes were full of anxiety, wishing the time to go faster and Tottenham put us against the ropes. We are very proud of the way we competed.

"I think the team competed well at the start of the game, we achieve goals and we were dominant even without the ball to try to contain Tottenham.

"Even though they had chances, we had Mats again at a high level, the clearance from Harry Toffolo, but spirit is about that."

Ange Postecoglou admitted an 18th League loss of the campaign was "unacceptable" but took encouragement from Tottenham's display.

"It's another game we have lost where we shouldn't lose and it's been a big part of our season in that we are just making things really difficult for ourselves in key moments," Postecoglou said.

"It's a shame because our football was outstanding and we totally dominated the

game. Even with the two goals we conceded, I still feel like we deserved to win the game.

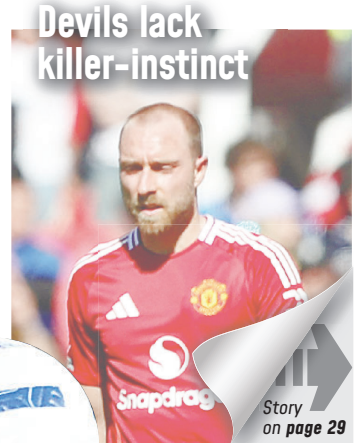
"We paid the price for lacking focus in key moments, and it's another game we let slip.

"It's happened to us a few times this year and we should learn from these things.

"At the same time it's another loss and another unacceptable loss and it's frustrating." Tension has been brewing between Spurs fans and their under-fire manager, and yesterday's loss at home will not have done much to mend the relationship.

Asked if he had a message for the fans after another painful result, Postecoglou said: "I don't need to say anything to the fans.

"The fans are disappointed and angry, I don't need to tell them anything, they clearly wouldn't be happy with our results but neither am I and neither are the players." - The Independent



Devils lack killer instinct

Story on page 29



Nottingham Forest's Morgan Gibbs-White (left) fights for the ball with Tottenham's Djed Spence during the English Premier League match. - AFP/PIC