



Keeping centuries-old Hindu tradition alive

Silver Chariot carrying statue of Lord Murugan to lead Thaipusam procession in George Town today.

Report on
page 6

NS 3.0 Series 2 begins in May

Participation mandatory for those picked at random for initiative aimed at shaping identity, patriotism and positive values among youth, says National Training Department DG.

Report on
page 2



What began as a small initiative in the front yard of a house in Subang Jaya has transformed into a classroom in a public field with sensory pathways, interactive play zones and accessible facilities for children with and without disabilities. —ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

Festive cheer for public housing folk

Better Malaysia Foundation teams up with Kusa Vegan restaurant and National Cancer Society of Malaysia to spread Chinese New Year joy at PRR Mutiara.

Report on
page 3

Integrating children of all abilities

Inclusive Outdoor Classroom allows participants to learn, play and grow together in an inclusive environment.

Report on
page 5

Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin opens Shah Alam cat park

SHAH ALAM: The Tengku Permaisuri of Selangor Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin officiated at the opening of Shah Alam Cat Park at Dataran Kemerdekaan in Section 14 yesterday, marking a new milestone in pet-friendly public spaces.

Her Royal Highness also unveiled Ikon Oyen, the official mascot of the park, known as Catopia Shah Alam. The charming feline figure serves as a symbol of responsible pet ownership, reinforcing efforts to promote animal welfare within the community.

Tengku Permaisuri Norashikin then explored the park, delighting in playful interactions with the resident cats at the facility, which opened its doors to the public in July 2024.

Shah Alam City Council mayor Datuk Mohd Fauzi Mohd Yatim described Catopia Shah Alam as not only a unique recreational space but also an initiative to foster greater awareness of animal welfare while boosting Selangor's tourism appeal.

Designed as an outdoor playground for pet cats, the mini park boasts 12 exciting features, including cosy shelters, dedicated feeding stations, a suspension bridge, tunnels, "helicopter grass" – a feline favourite, a water fountain and 10 interactive play structures to keep cats engaged.

"Since opening its doors in July last year, Catopia Shah Alam has welcomed over 1,500 visitors, and to date, admission remains free for both local and international guests."

Despite being in operation for just eight months, Catopia Shah Alam has already gained notable recognition. It received a Special Mention in the Placemaking and Public Space Award category and secured the Gold Award for Best Planning Content in Media at the MIP Planning Excellence Award 2024 – a testament to its innovative approach in urban planning and community engagement. – Bernama

Asean Trade in Goods Agreement to be upgraded soon

JAKARTA: Asean countries aim to conclude negotiations for an upgraded Asean Trade in Goods Agreement (Atiga) this year, following a virtual ministerial meeting last Friday.

Ministers addressed key outstanding issues and provided guidance to the Atiga Upgrade Trade Negotiating Committee, urging them to finalise the talks within the agreed timeline.

The upgraded agreement is expected to be modern and comprehensive, tackling both traditional and emerging trade issues critical for business communities in the region, according to the Asean Secretariat.

Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz said the meeting focused on reforms to Atiga designed to spur economic growth and expand market access for local traders.

"Atiga eliminates or reduces tariffs and other trade barriers between Asean countries, making imports and exports cheaper and easier," he wrote in a post on his Facebook page.

Indonesia's Deputy Trade Minister Dyah Roro Esti, in a statement, confirmed that 10 out of 17 new chapters in the Atiga upgrade had been agreed upon, with negotiations 89% complete.

"Indonesia supports all proposed landing zones to speed up negotiations and suggests mandatory liberalisation for Asean countries that have yet to meet the average Atiga commitment."

A key outcome of the meeting was the decision to maintain special arrangements for rice and sugar as strategic food commodities within Asean, ensuring their regulation under the upgraded Atiga.

She added that the move aligns with domestic policies and serves as a safeguard to stabilise rice and sugar prices in Indonesia. – Bernama



Attendance for the second and third series of the National Service Training Programme 3.0 this year would be mandatory for selected 18-year-olds. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA / THE SUN

National Service 3.0 second series begins in May

➤ New module includes 30% foundational content focusing on civics, nation-building and 70% basic military training

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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KUALA LUMPUR: The National Service Training Programme 3.0 will begin its second series this May, featuring a new module and concept in contrast with the previous versions, said National Training Department director-general Mej-Jen Datuk Ya'cob Samiran.

He said the programme's concept was developed based on the National Service Training Act (Act 628), the National Security Policy, the Defence White Paper and other relevant policies.

He added that the programme's pre-phase, which involves Form Four students, would be conducted in schools during co-curricular activities, involving around 320,000 individuals.

"Meanwhile the basic phase, involving youths aged 17 and above, will start this year at 13 Territorial Army camps, 20 public universities and several selected polytechnics nationwide involving approximately 1,000 individuals."

The programme's third version kicked off on Jan 12 with 142 volunteer trainees aged 18 to 25, including 44 females.

Ya'cob said the new module includes 30% foundational national service content, focusing on civics and nation-building topics

such as Malaysian history, political system and multicultural diversity.

He said about 70% of the National Service Training Programme 3.0 consists of basic military training, including navigation, marching, personal arms training and the Asas Kesejahteraan Hidup Malaysia Madani module.

"The new module also includes technical and vocational education and training, offering students the chance to explore careers they are interested in, with industries actively seeking the programme's graduates."

Ya'cob said attendance for the second and third series of the programme this year would be mandatory for selected 18-year-olds.

He said unlike the first series, which began last month on voluntary participation, the next two batches would be randomly selected and screened.

"The upcoming series will be screened through a computerised system and further vetted by the Social Welfare Department, Education Ministry and police, among others.

"Participants will be assigned to separate military camps, divided into two groups based on gender, and undergo six weeks of training at either the 515th Territorial Army Regiment Camp in Kuala Lumpur or the 505th Territorial Army Regiment Camp in Pekan, Pahang."

Ya'cob said it is mandatory for individuals selected to participate in the second series and subsequent batches to attend unless they have a valid reason and request a deferral.

He said under the National Service Training Act, those who are granted exemptions from attending would need to complete the course at a later date.

"Individuals who are employed must obtain permission from their employer. If permission is denied, the employer must provide a valid reason as the programme is governed by the Act.

"Trainees will also receive an allowance to cover their travel to the camps and will be insured for the 51 days of the programme.

"For next year, it will involve between 10,000 and 25,000 trainees who turn 18 in 2026, with priority given to young adults who are not pursuing higher education."

Ya'cob said participants would use Malaysian Army camouflage uniforms as it aligns with practices in many other countries running similar programmes.

"The decision to use the military uniform was approved at a national meeting chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. Additionally, using the existing uniforms helps reduce government spending, as they are already available in the inventory.

"These camouflage uniforms will be returned after the training and they will continue to be used in future."

Ya'cob said the programme is a crucial initiative aimed at shaping identity, patriotism and positive values among the youth as the nation's future leaders.

Turkiye president on two-day visit to Malaysia

PUTRAJAYA: Turkiye President Recep Tayyip Erdogan is on a two-day official visit to Malaysia from today at the invitation of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

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

It said Erdogan would be accorded an official welcoming ceremony at the Perdana Putra Complex in Putrajaya on Tuesday,

followed by a meeting with Anwar.

Both leaders are expected to review the progress of Malaysia-Turkiye CSP relations, particularly in areas such as trade and investment, defence, *halal*, energy cooperation, disaster management, health, science and technology as well as connectivity.

They are also expected to exchange views on various regional and international issues of mutual interest, including Malaysia's Asean chairmanship, Turkiye's hosting of the 4th Edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2025, Islamophobia and the recent ceasefire agreement in Gaza.

"Both leaders will then witness the exchange of MoUs, agreements and notes before holding a joint media conference. Anwar will also host a luncheon at the Seri Perdana Complex in honour of President Erdogan."

Malaysia, as the Asean chair in 2025, has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening regional integration and fostering partnerships beyond the region.

The ministry said Turkiye, as a sectoral dialogue partner of Asean, is well positioned to play a crucial role in advancing Asean's economic priorities. – Bernama

CNY celebration organised for residents of flats

➤ Better Malaysia Foundation and partners distribute groceries, *ang pow* and packed vegan lunch and organise health checkups

BY QIRANA NABILLA
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KEPONG: The Better Malaysia Foundation (BMF) partnered Japanese vegan restaurant Kusa Vegan, the National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM) and Residents Association of People's Housing Project (PRR) Mutiara to organise a Chinese New Year celebration for its 160 residents on Saturday.

BMF distributed grocery baskets and RM100 *ang pow*, Kusa Vegan provided packed lunches and NCSM conducted free health checkups.

BMF chairman and Berjaya Corporation Bhd founder and adviser Tan Sri Vincent Tan commended the initiative and stressed the importance of giving as such efforts contribute meaningfully to those in need.

"As we welcome a new beginning, let us share the blessings of the season and spread joy. Together, we can make this year brighter for everyone. I agree that more should be done, particularly in reaching out to low-income communities."

Tan expressed interest in providing more aid, given the growing needs on the ground due to rising inflation and the global situation that has driven up food prices. He also visited the homes of residents to better understand their needs.

Tan said while the flats serve their purpose, more can be done to alleviate the living standards of the B40 group.

"I think it is best to study how we can assist, including collaborating with City Hall to find better solutions."

He highlighted the role of the private sector and wealthy individuals in improving living conditions for low-income communities and exploring ways to contribute to better housing

and maintenance.

BMF trustee Datin Seri Sunita Rajakumar said assistance is being prioritised for the elderly, persons with disabilities and single mothers.

"We thank NCSM for running a medical camp and hope the groceries and *ang pow* would offer some relief at the start of this new year."

Resident Yap Kean Leong, 63, expressed gratitude for Tan's support, especially the donations to the residents.

He said in over 20 years of living in the flats, the residents hardly ever received such assistance and it has brought them a sense of hope.

"This help goes a long way in easing some of the challenges faced by our families, especially with the rising cost of living. I am grateful for the food and financial aid as it will help ease the burden of providing for my family."

He expressed hope that the visit would lead to improvements in the living conditions of the residents.



Tan presenting *ang pow* to PRR residents at the event. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

Move to educate fishermen on sustainable tech

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

He said the measures are crucial to alleviating pressure on fish stocks and allowing marine species to reproduce and thrive.

He also said the department is developing and promoting fishing equipment that minimises environmental impact.

"The department is conducting training and awareness programmes to educate fishermen on the importance of using sustainable fishing gear. The department also provides technical support and incentives to encourage the fishing community to transition to more eco-friendly equipment."

Adnan said the department is working with other agencies to ensure fishermen comply with the law. – Bernama

Ministry to boost anti-corruption agenda

PUTRAJAYA: The Education Ministry is committed to strengthening the anti-corruption agenda through the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Strategy (NACS) 2024-2028.

In a statement yesterday, it said as the lead ministry for the Strategy One: Education policy, it is responsible for raising awareness and knowledge of anti-corruption through the implementation of six sub-strategies, divided into short and medium term phases.

Under sub-strategy five of NACS, the ministry launched the Duta Sahsiah Kit on Nov 25 last year, serving as a catalyst for shaping the *karamah insaniah* character among students, which is based on noble values and exemplary conduct. – Bernama

RM2.5 million allocated for Chinese community in Malacca

MALACCA: The state government has allocated RM2.5 million in aid for 5,812 recipients, covering welfare, economic development and education for the Chinese community in Malacca this year.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh added that a special annual contribution of RM200,000 would be distributed through the Malacca Welfare Trust Fund to 1,000 recipients to help ease the financial burden of Chinese New Year expenses.

"The Chinese community in Malacca consists of only 203,400 individuals, which is 19.42% of the total state population. However, their contributions to state development are invaluable.

"The Malacca government has never sidelined any community. We

listen to the needs of all segments of society to ensure they receive the necessary attention and assistance."

He was speaking to reporters in Malim Jaya on Saturday after officiating at the Malacca Chinese New Year Open House, which was also attended by State Health, Human Resources and Unity Committee chairman Datuk Ngwe Hee Sem.

Ab Rauf said the allocation is in line with the state government's commitment to prioritising the needs of the people at all levels to ensure their welfare and well-being are protected.

He also said the state government is committed to organising the state level Chinese New Year celebration annually,

recognising it as a major festival for the Chinese community that is celebrated together.

"As Malaysians, we should be grateful to have a peaceful country with political stability, allowing us to share a common aspiration under the Malaysia Madani framework."

Ngwe, who was the organising committee chairman, said more than 15,000 visitors from various communities attended the event.

"Beyond celebrating Chinese New Year, individuals of different backgrounds are able to strengthen their bonds with one another. We can see that racial unity in Malacca is growing stronger under the leadership of Ab Rauf, reflecting public support for the state government." – Bernama

Urgent road repairs and upgrades needed, says Johor MB

JOHOR BAHRU: Many roads in the state require urgent repairs and upgrades as they pose significant safety risks to users, said Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi.

He said the state government, with the support of the federal administration, remains committed to resolving the issue to ensure roads are safe and comfortable.

"May all these efforts bring a positive impact in reducing traffic congestion, which has long been a major challenge for the people of Johor.

"With careful planning and effective implementation, we hope to resolve the congestion issue and create a smoother and more organised traffic system."

Onn Hafiz also said he inspected several ongoing road repair and upgrading projects while receiving updates on their progress and current status, Bernama reported.

The projects include the upgrading of the Pasir Gudang Highway (Phase 3) from the Perling interchange to the North-South Expressway ramp, expanding it from four lanes to six at a cost of RM301.5 million, with completion expected by June 2028.

The second project involves upgrading the Pasir Gudang Highway (Phase 2B) from the Bandar Seri Alam/Taman Rinting interchange to Pasir Gudang, expanding it from four lanes to six at a cost of RM78 million, with completion targeted for February 2026.

The third project is the upgrading of Jalan Persiaran Tanjung Langsat from the Sungai Kim Kim bridge to the entrance of Tanjung Langsat Port at a cost of RM14 million.

Expected to be completed by April, the project aims to improve access to industrial zones and the port.



Public libraries now modern knowledge hubs

➤ Many centres feature cafes, lounges, activity spaces, auditoriums, gyms and jogging tracks: Librarians Association

BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: Librarians Association president Dr Ghazali Mohamed Fadzil said although many imagine public libraries in Malaysia as drab places with shelves filled with books, this is not the case.

He said many public libraries, such as the National Library, the Raja Tun Uda Library in Shah Alam and the Sarawak Library, now feature cafes, lounges, activity spaces, auditoriums and gyms while some larger libraries even have jogging tracks.

"The public believe that libraries are obsolete but they have not seen how far we have come. They need to break this stigma and visit libraries so that we can continue to evolve.

"Our goal is to make libraries as welcoming as possible. We want Malaysians to be knowledge-based citizens who explore and utilise these spaces."

He said the public must move past their perception that libraries are "old school" and irrelevant in the digital age as libraries have continuously evolved with technology to meet the current needs of users.

Public libraries in Malaysia have embraced digital advancements, integrating artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as chatbots and search engines, into their services.

"We were among the first to introduce new technology in our products and services. We are using some of the best AI tools available at public libraries anywhere in the world."

He dispelled the misconception



Ghazali said many assume public libraries are outdated without seeing the improvements, adding that libraries are strategic agents for community development. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

that libraries must go fully digital, stressing that hybrid ones that blend traditional resources with modern technology are the way forward.

"Even the richest countries maintain hybrid libraries rather than replacing traditional ones.

"Our public libraries have significantly advanced in digitalisation and space planning while preserving conventional library functions."

Ghazali said despite these efforts, many still assume public libraries are outdated without seeing the improvements firsthand, adding that libraries serve as strategic agents for community development.

"This is a key role of libraries and librarians. We help build communities by being true knowledge hubs, providing lifelong learning opportunities and enhancing skills."

Council of State Public Library

Directors chairman Ungku Noorakmal Ungku Sulaiman said public libraries remain financially stable as they are funded by the state and federal governments.

"As of 2022, Malaysia has 1,435 public libraries and they continue to uphold high standards while transforming into dynamic community spaces that support education, innovation and creativity.

"Libraries have evolved into modern knowledge hubs, blending physical and digital resources to stay relevant."

She said while coworking spaces and cafes have gained popularity among youths, the perception that libraries are struggling to compete is untrue as they remain accessible to all, especially those who may not have the financial means to afford private workspaces.

She also said libraries today are nothing like what they used to be as

they have adapted to modern demands, integrating technology and community spaces to provide high-quality resources.

A frequent visitor to the Raja Tun Uda Library, Nur Qasrina Abdul Majid, 22, said public libraries in Malaysia are underrated.

"Libraries are my go-to place to study and do work. I have been coming here since high school and have never felt that it was a bad spot. They have progressed a lot over the years.

"Sometimes, I use the computers here when I do not bring my laptop or need quick internet access. The internet here is fast, which helps me work efficiently."

She said the quiet and comfortable environment is the biggest advantage although she also goes to read and unwind.

"It is always so calming here and the facilities are well maintained."

Islamic freelance preachers advised against high fees

LABUAN: The Islamic Development Department has advised freelance preachers against charging excessively high fees for their services, cautioning them not to equate their status with that of celebrities.

Its director-general Datuk Dr Sirajuddin Suhaimee said the department is working closely with state religious authorities and councils to monitor allegations that some preachers are imposing high charges for their activities.

"We are monitoring the situation as we have heard about such allegations. We advise preachers not to see themselves as celebrities who make a living from their voices," he said after officiating at the groundbreaking ceremony of the Al-Kausar Surau project at the Labuan Health Department yesterday.

He said the department has several mechanisms and committees working to address the issue.

He urged preachers to moderate their fees to preserve the sanctity of their mission and uphold a positive image of Islamic preaching.

"We urge preachers not to impose high charges as it may create an unfavourable perception of those entrusted with spreading religious teachings."

He also said the department has not yet found it necessary to introduce specific guidelines on preacher fees and the situation remains under control.

"The department prefers a harmonious approach in resolving the matter and will continue its efforts in coordination and advisory capacities."

He reminded foreign freelance preachers to obtain the required teaching credentials in accordance with Islamic enactments and administrative regulations, as determined at the *mufti* level. — Bernama

Sufficient coconut supply expected for holidays

KOTA BHARU: The Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama) expects the coconut supply in Kelantan to be sufficient for the upcoming Ramadan and Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebrations.

Its Kelantan director Wan Faizatul Aniza Ismayatim said the agency has taken several intervention measures to ensure a steady supply for wholesalers and traders.

"We are aware of the current shortage of coconuts. What we have done at the Fama operations centre is identify wholesalers and traders in need, with selling prices of between RM2.80 and RM3 per kg.

"Those requiring supply may contact the centre as we receive stock on a scheduled basis every week."

She said due to the limited number of coconut plantations in Kelantan, Fama had to source supplies externally in collaboration with the Agriculture Department and gather district-level data to balance supply and demand. — Bernama

Experts support proposed revival of high-speed rail project

KUALA LUMPUR: The proposed revival of the Kuala Lumpur-Singapore high-speed rail (HSR) could enhance land connectivity between the two cities, which is one of the busiest flight routes in the world.

Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs economist and assistant research manager Doris Liew said the HSR would reduce travel time for business travellers, especially between Johor and Singapore.

"The Kuala Lumpur airport is quite far from the city centre. It takes an

hour to travel to the city centre whereas the HSR reduces the overall travel time to 90 minutes."

The iconic project will include stations in Malaysia, namely Bandar Malaysia, Sepang-Putrajaya, Seremban, Malacca, Muar, Batu Pahat and Iskandar Puteri, before reaching its last destination in Jurong East, Singapore.

"The Johor-Singapore causeway and land checkpoints are heavily congested and often at full capacity, with trips between Johor Bahru and Singapore taking between two and six hours one way.

"For business travellers, wasting time stuck in traffic is not an option, making HSR an efficient solution."

Taylor's University School of Accounting Finance senior lecturer Paul Anthony Maria Das said one of the main benefits of the HSR project is enhanced connectivity between Malaysia and Singapore.

He said reducing travel time would facilitate the seamless movement of people and goods between the two nations, fostering regional trade and investment.

"The project would also bring notable social benefits. Improved

connectivity would strengthen the economic and cultural ties between Malaysia and Singapore.

"This would encourage greater mobility, offering individuals enhanced access to education, healthcare and employment opportunities."

As the project would benefit Malaysia in the long run, observers suggested that the project should be under the cooperation of the government and the private sector rather than solely banking on the full participation of private entities to develop the project. — Bernama

Enabling children to thrive in inclusive environment

► Unique initiative allows youngsters of all abilities to learn, play, grow together through sensory-rich activities and outdoor learning

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: Anne Sivanathan believes that every child, regardless of their abilities, deserves a space where they can belong and thrive in an inclusive environment.

It is with this aim that she founded the Inclusive Outdoor Classroom (IOC) on Jan 31, 2016.

"I wanted children of all abilities to learn, play and grow together in an inclusive environment through sensory-rich activities and outdoor learning.

"Doing so will create a future society with fewer prejudices and greater understanding for the differently abled."

Anne said as children with disabilities are taught separately in special schools or classes due to their unique learning challenges, she was concerned that their exclusion from mainstream schools meant that neurotypical children, who are those without any disabilities, had little interaction with them.

She said her dedication to inclusive education stems from a deep belief in equal opportunities for all children.

What began as a small initiative in the front yard of her home in USJ 11, Subang Jaya has since transformed into a classroom in a public field with sensory pathways, interactive play

zones and accessible facilities for children with and without disabilities.

Its celebrated programme partners with global organisations such as the US-based World Forum Foundation and the Subang Jaya Municipal Council to create an accessible outdoor play environment.

The IOC, which currently operates at a dedicated space in USJ12, is funded by grants, sponsorships and partnerships with the Selangor state government, Penang-based Whytehouse Education Group and FWD Takaful as well as individual donors and fundraisers.

It needs about RM30,000 annually to sustain its programmes, with costs varying based on individual projects and expansion.

Anne said the programme, which is rooted in sensory-rich, hands-on activities that engage children with diverse needs, challenges the norm and proves that inclusion is not just possible but transformative.

From gardening, loose play, being creative with recycled items, playing music to storytelling and group problem-solving, each activity fosters collaboration and empathy.

Anne said among the IOC's children are those with autism spectrum disorder, Down syndrome, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cerebral palsy and hearing problems.

"Some children face communication

challenges such as being non-verbal, while others may have difficulties with mobility, sensory processing or behavioural regulation."

The IOC teaches essential life skills, communication, social interaction and physical coordination. It relies on dedicated volunteers whose commitment is central to its operations.

It incorporates play-based learning and outdoor exploration to foster problem-solving, collaboration and creativity among children.

"I have witnessed the transformative power of inclusion in the children's lives. For instance, through our weekly outdoor sessions, a non-verbal child began interacting with his peers and expressing emotions through play.

"There was no prejudice among them and the children just played together. It was a beautiful moment that reinforced why our work is so important."

She said encouraging families with neurotypical children to see the value of inclusion was one of the biggest hurdles she initially faced, but building strong partnerships made a difference.

"The IOC is not just a place. It's a movement that redefines what it means to belong, and over the years we have witnessed numerous success stories that showcase the transformative power of inclusion."

Currently, the IOC supports 60 children enrolled in its programmes with ages ranging from three to 27.

Anne envisions a Malaysia where inclusive education for persons with disabilities becomes the norm, with schools having trained educators and resources.

Those who are keen to donate to the IOC or connect with it for collaboration can write to nsivanathan@hotmail.my



POPULAR BREW ...

The Starbucks booth at the Pemas International Franchise Festival at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

Kedah DOE probes complaint against quarry blast

ALOR SETAR: The Kedah Environment Department (DOE) has launched an investigation into a quarry explosion in Bandar Baharu, which allegedly caused damage to nearby homes.

Its director Sharifah Zakiah Syed Sahab said the department conducted an on-site investigation at the quarry and affected homes yesterday.

"Initial investigations revealed that no formal complaints had been lodged with the department on the incident. Checks with the state Minerals and Geoscience Department also confirmed that no reports had been filed," she said in a statement.

She added that a police check found that the complainants had filed a report the following day, citing damage to their homes allegedly caused by the quarry explosion.

"The department's review of the quarry explosion records, including peak sound pressure levels and peak vector sum parameters, confirmed that noise and vibration levels were within the prescribed limits. Noise and vibration measurements were also conducted at the complainants' homes, approximately 650m from the blast site.

"Following discussions, the quarry has agreed to cover the cost of repairing the complainants' houses, despite adhering to the buffer zone requirements — maintaining a distance of over 500m — and complying with noise and vibration limits. However, the impact on residential properties cannot be overlooked."

Sharifah Zakiah said the department would intensify monitoring of the quarry's operations and collaborate with relevant agencies to propose remedial measures to prevent similar incidents in the future.

"As a precaution, a notice under Section 37(1)(d) has been issued, requiring the developer to submit reports on blasting activities and control measures implemented at the site. They have also been instructed to strictly adhere to all regulations and promptly report incidents, particularly those causing disturbances to residents.

"Complaints can be directed to the department via the toll-free hotline at 1-800-88-2727, or through its e-complaint system at eaduan.doe.gov.my. Delayed reporting may hinder investigations, as crucial evidence could be compromised." — Bernama

More flood evacuees in Sabah

KUALA LUMPUR: The number of flood evacuees in Sabah continues to rise, while Sarawak has recorded a decline in the number of people seeking shelter at temporary relief centres yesterday.

In Sabah, the state Disaster Management Committee Secretariat said as of 8am yesterday, the number of evacuees had increased to 989 from 305 families, up from 721 individuals from 212 families.

Membakut, which was hit by floods yesterday, has evacuated 160 people from 53 families to a relief centre.

Meanwhile, in Sarawak, the number of evacuees has dropped to 2,465 from 3,082, with 16 relief centres still in operation as of 8am.

According to the state Disaster Management Committee Secretariat, the Bintulu Division recorded a significant decrease, with the number of evacuees dropping to 1,099 from 1,775. — Bernama

'Avoid speculation on shooting at shopping mall'

KUALA LUMPUR: Police are advising the public not to speculate on the shooting incident that took place at a shopping mall in Setia Alam, Selangor on Saturday night.

IGP Tan Sri Razarudin Husain said any speculation on the case could cause unnecessary public alarm.

"We understand that this incident has raised concern among the public. However, we urge everyone not to make speculations that could create anxiety."

He said security measures at shopping malls and other public places nationwide would be

tightened following the Setia Alam incident.

He added that auxiliary police officers and security personnel at such establishments have been instructed to remain vigilant about any suspicious activity.

"Regarding last night's incident, Selangor police have identified the suspect, and various police units are tracking his whereabouts.

"We have also informed police in neighbouring states and border authorities to remain alert."

It was reported that a shooting occurred at a shopping mall in Setia Alam at 10.50pm, injuring

a cleaner.

Selangor Police Chief Datuk Hussein Omar Khan said the suspect is a local male in his 30s with a fair complexion and has 11 prior records related to drug and criminal offences.

The case is being investigated under Section 3 of the Firearms (Increased Penalties) Act 1971 and Section 307 of the Penal Code.

Hussein said police had received seven reports from public witnesses, and urged anyone with information to assist in the investigation by contacting ASP Mohd Afandi Ahmad at 016-725 2948. — Bernama



Silver Chariot ready for Penang procession

➤ Same vehicle shipped from India in 1894 to be used in 131-year-old tradition

GEORGE TOWN: The Silver Chariot carrying the statue of Lord Murugan is set to keep alive a 131-year-old tradition by leading the Thaipusam procession tomorrow, symbolising the grandeur of the Hindu festival that has been observed for centuries from India to other countries with significant Hindu diaspora such as Malaysia.

Nattukottai Chettiar Temple trustee Dr A. Narayanan said the century-old chariot, which was built in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu, India and shipped to Penang in January 1894, has undergone refurbishing and cleaning for Thaipusam.

"We have been using the same chariot since 1894 and only changed a few parts, such as the wheels and damaged parts. This year, the preparations took about four weeks."

He said the Silver Chariot will be drawn by two oxen in turns, with 16 changes made using nine pairs of bulls to ensure the animals do not get stressed.

Narayanan also said each pair of oxen will draw the chariot for a distance of less than 1km. The entire procession from the Nagarathar Kovil Veedu Temple on Penang Street to the Nattukottai Chettiar Temple on Waterfall Road covers a distance of 9km.

He said the use of bulls in the chariot procession honours "Nandi", a sacred bull considered to be the protector of the family of Lord Shiva in Hindu tradition.

Narayanan added that a wooden chariot was used for 35 years for the Thaipusam celebration in Penang before being changed to the Silver Chariot, which is 7.07m high and weighs five tonnes.

He said the chariot will start its journey from the Nagarathar Kovil Veedu Temple at 7am today, passing through Chulia Street, Victoria Street, Maxwell Road, Jalan Datuk Keramat and Western Road, and is expected to arrive at the



A temple volunteer at the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple in Kuala Lumpur sprucing up a chariot for the procession to the Sri Subramaniam Temple. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

Nattukottai Chettiar Temple before midnight.

For the return journey, he said the chariot will depart at between 6.30pm and 7pm on Wednesday and is expected arrive at the Nagarathar Kovil Veedu Temple before 8am on Thursday, Bernama reported.

The festival in Penang is unique as it is celebrated a day earlier than Thaipusam, known as "Chetti Pusam", which is a procession on the eve by the Chettiar community in the state carrying peacock *kavadi* during the procession.

A central part of the festival features barefoot devotees carrying *kavadi* (an arched wood or steel structure) balanced on the shoulders with skewers and hooks piercing the skin, tongue and cheeks of the bearer, seeking divine aid or fulfilling vows. Devotees chant "vel, vel (glory unto) Muruga" accompanied by drums and cymbals, and smashing of coconuts on the road.

The *kavadi*-bearing devotees are a main attraction for western tourists, more so as Thaipusam in Penang features two chariots.

Unlike other states, the celebration is livelier, with the appearance of the Golden Chariot

since 2017.

The chariot carries a *vel* (divine spear), which is the sacred weapon of Lord Murugan. It will depart from the Maha Mariamman Temple on Queen Street at 6am today and arrive at the Sri Arulmigu Balathandayuthapani Temple on Jalan Kebun Bunga.

The celebration is also famous for the rows of over 100 stalls known as "Thaneer Panthal", which are festively decorated and provide free vegetarian food and drinks to devotees.

Hindus celebrate Thaipusam tomorrow, commemorating the occasion of Lord Murugan receiving the sacred spear from his mother, Goddess Parvati, to eliminate the evil force of Soorapadman and restore prosperity and well-being to humanity.

In Malaysia, Thaipusam is also celebrated on a grand scale at the Sri Maha Mariamman Temple in Jalan Tun H S Lee, Kuala Lumpur, Sri Subramaniam Swamy Temple in Batu Caves, Selangor, Arul Subramaniam Temple in Ipoh, Perak and the Sri Subramaniya Swami Devasthanam Temple in Sungai Petani, Kedah.

Memorable Thaipusam for Hindus in Labuan

KUALA LUMPUR: This year's Thaipusam in Labuan will be more significant for the Tamil Hindu community as the Thirumurugan Temple, the only Hindu temple on the island, has undergone extensive renovations.

Set against the backdrop of the South China Sea in Membedai and located adjacent to the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base, the temple has served as a spiritual and cultural hub for Hindus for over six decades.

Officially registered in 2018, the temple has now reached a historic milestone with its gazettelement as a place of worship under local jurisdiction.

Temple chairman M. Subramaniam said the consecration of the temple, which took place yesterday, marked the completion of renovations that included the three-tier Raja Gopuram entrance tower, which is usually ornately decorated at the entrance of a temple, with intricate architectural sculptures, granite flooring and door frames and a guesthouse for devotees.

"With the support of local authorities as well as RMAF and the Defence Ministry, the temple is now fully gazetted.

"It's a double blessing for our community. The consecration signifies a new beginning for the temple and Thaipusam allows us to celebrate our faith with even greater devotion and joy.

"The temple's location (by the seaside) and the supportive spirit of the community make Thaipusam in Labuan truly special."

The consecration drew around 1,000 attendees, including visitors and tourists keen to experience Hindu traditions.

The overall cost of the renovations was RM3.8 million. Subramaniam said although major works have been completed, more funds are needed to finish the remaining tasks.

"We appeal to all devotees, philanthropists and well-wishers to support this noble cause," he said.

Labuan, a federal territory, has a population of almost 100,000, of which 1% are Hindus. – Bernama

EDUCATION

FOCUS 2025

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Five Thai nationals return home from Gaza

➤ US\$18,000 for each returnee and US\$900 salary

BANGKOK: Five Thai nationals held captive by Hamas for over a year returned to Thailand yesterday, reuniting with their tearful families at Suvarnabhumi Airport.

The returnees – Watchara Sriaoun, Pongsak Tanna, Sathian Suwannakham, Surasak Lamnau and Bannawat Saethao – dressed in winter jackets, were met with emotional embraces from their families.

“We are all deeply touched to come back to our birthplace ... to be standing here. I don’t know what else to say, we are all truly thankful,” said Pongsak.

The handover of the five hostages last month in Khan Younis in southern Gaza was marked by chaotic scenes as Islamic Jihad and Hamas personnel struggled to hold back hundreds of spectators.

After the release, Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said she was “elated” that they were out of captivity and thanked Israel, as well as Qatar, Egypt, Iran, Turkiye and the United States for their work to secure the release.

Somboon Saethao, the father of Bannawat, said he was “so happy” and that his family would welcome his son home with a traditional Thai ceremony.

“I don’t think I want him to be far from home again,” said Somboon, who comes from Nan province in northern Thailand.

Bannawat moved to Israel nine months before his kidnap in search of a better income for the family, he said.



(From left) Surasak, Sayhian, Bannawat, Watchara and Pongsak pose with officials at Suvarnabhumi Airport yesterday. – AFP/PIIC

Boonsong Tapchaiyut, a Labour Ministry official, said each hostage would receive a one-time payment of around US\$18,000 (RM80,000), with a monthly salary of US\$900 (RM4,000) until the age of 80, to ensure they did not have to return to Israel.

According to Israeli authorities, gunmen abducted at least 240 people, including Israelis and foreign nationals, in an October 2023 attack on the Israeli border. During the attack, gunmen killed 41 Thais and kidnapped 30 Thai labourers. Later that year, the first group of Thai hostages was returned.

Thai Foreign Minister Maris

Sangiampongsa, who escorted the hostages from Israel, expressed relief at their return.

“This is emotional ... to come back to the embrace of their families. We never gave up and this was the fruit of that,” he said.

Before the conflict, an estimated 30,000 Thai labourers worked in Israel’s agriculture sector, making them one of the largest migrant worker groups in the country. Nearly 9,000 Thais were repatriated following the attack.

The workers primarily come from Thailand’s northeastern region, an area comprising villages and farming communities. – Reuters/AFP

Dhaka cracks down on Hasina loyalists

DHAKA: Bangladesh yesterday launched a major security operation after protesters were attacked by gangs allegedly connected to ousted prime minister Sheikh Hasina.

A government statement said the operation began after gangs linked to Hasina attacked a group of students, leaving them severely injured.

Interim government Interior Ministry head Jahangir Alam Chowdhury has dubbed it “Operation Devil Hunt”.

“It will continue until we uproot the devils,” Chowdhury told reporters.

The sweeping security operations come after days of unrest.

On Wednesday, six months to the day

since Hasina left for India as crowds stormed her residence in Dhaka, protesters smashed buildings belonging to her family.

Protests were triggered in response to reports that 77-year-old Hasina, who has defied an arrest warrant to face trial, would appear in a Facebook broadcast.

Buildings destroyed included the museum and former home of Hasina’s late father, Bangladesh’s first president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.

The interim government blamed Hasina for the violence.

On Friday, interim leader Muhammad Yunus pleaded for calm.

“Respecting the rule of law is what differentiates the new Bangladesh we are

working to build, from the old Bangladesh under the fascist regime,” Yunus said in a statement.

“For the citizens who rose up and overthrew the Hasina regime ... it is imperative to prove to ourselves and our friends around the world that our commitment to our principles, respecting one another’s civil and human rights and acting under the law, is unshakable.”

Hours later, members of the Students Against Discrimination, the protest group credited with sparking the uprising against Hasina, were attacked in the Dhaka district of Gazipur.

The group, whose members are in the Cabinet, had since demanded action. – AFP

North Korean leader vows to further develop nuclear forces

SEOUL: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un criticised trilateral military cooperation among the United States, Japan and South Korea for raising tensions in the region and vowed countermeasures, including further developing its nuclear forces.

Kim said US deployment of strategic nuclear assets, war exercises and military cooperation with Japan and South Korea were triggering military imbalance in the region and raising a grave challenge to the security environment, Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported yesterday.

“The DPRK does not want unnecessary tension of the regional situation but will take sustained countermeasures to ensure the regional military balance,” Kim said during a visit to the Defence Ministry on Saturday to

commemorate the founding day of its army. DPRK stands for the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, North Korea’s official name.

US President Donald Trump, after a meeting on Friday with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, said he would have relations with North Korea, as they expressed concern over its nuclear programme.

But during the visit, Kim “clarified once again the unshakable policy of developing the nuclear forces”, according to the report.

On Russia’s war with Ukraine, Kim said: “The army and people of DPRK will invariably support and encourage the just cause of the Russian army and people to defend their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity in keeping with the spirit of the treaty on the

comprehensive strategic partnership between DPRK and Russia.”

Last month, South Korea said it suspected North Korea of preparing to send more troops to Russia, in addition to about 11,000 soldiers who had been despatched for the three-year-long war.

In a separate commentary, North Korea’s KCNA again criticised South Korea’s military activity with the United States this year and warned that aggressive actions would be met with undesired consequences.

“Anyone could easily guess how we would take the fact that they carried out war exercises that were more intense than ever before at a time when diplomacy schedules were being cancelled due to political turmoil,” KCNA said. – Reuters

Philippines, Canada close to sealing pact

MANILA: Canada and the Philippines are in the final stages of negotiating a pact to allow them to deploy troops on each other’s soil, the Canadian envoy to Manila said yesterday.

Manila already has similar visiting forces agreements with the United States and Japan, and is also in talks with France and New Zealand in the face of China’s growing assertion of claims to the South China Sea.

“We are in the final stages of negotiating the agreement, which will enable us to have deeper cooperation and more substantive participation in training to build capacity,” said Canada’s ambassador to Manila, David Hartman.

“We are hopeful that the signing and ratification of the agreement by both governments can be expected before the end of 2025.”

Canadian officials held discussions last month with counterparts from the Philippine defence and foreign departments.

Hartman said the agreement would allow for future participation by Canadian troops in joint military exercises held every year between the Philippines and the United States.

The Canadian navy has taken part in several patrols in the South China Sea with the US, Australia, the Philippines and Japan to assert freedom of navigation and flights in the strategic waterway. – AFP

Jakarta drafts rules to shield children online

JAKARTA: Indonesia is drafting new regulations to safeguard children from online risks, including age restrictions on digital platforms.

Communications and Digital Minister Meutya Hafid said the measures aim to shield children from harmful content, such as violence and pornography, while promoting safe and responsible use of technology.

“Children are exposed to risky content such as violence and pornography. We must act immediately,” she said in a statement.

The regulations, expected to be finalised within two months, are part of President Prabowo Subianto’s push to strengthen child protection in digital spaces.

The rules will be included in a draft regulation on digital governance and will classify online platforms based on their risk levels for children.

The Indonesian Child Protection Commission (KPAI) has warned of online dangers.

“There are adorable cartoons, but when clicked, they turn out to be full of traps. Not to mention features that allow children’s locations to be tracked. This is dangerous,” said KPAI head Ai Maryati Solihah. – Bernama

Eight dead after drinking pure alcohol

JAKARTA: Eight people have died and four others are in critical condition after drinking 96% pure alcohol in Cianjur, West Java.

Mande police head Assistant Commissioner Dadeng said yesterday the surviving victims from Kademangan village are in intensive care at a hospital due to severe alcohol poisoning.

Initial investigations revealed that the victims ingested non-food-grade alcohol used for external purposes such as disinfectants.

Authorities have not yet questioned the survivors as they remain in critical condition, *Kompas* newspaper reported.

The group of villagers decided to drink pure alcohol last week and ordered a jerrycan online, which arrived on Thursday.

The alcohol was mixed with a flavoured drink. Shortly after drinking the concoction, the men began experiencing chest pain, dizziness and nausea.

Their condition worsened and one person died on Friday. The death toll rose to eight on Saturday. – Bernama



Experts grapple with AI rules

➤ 300 tools, technologies identified to help curb risks

PARIS: Experts have called for greater regulation of AI to prevent it escaping human control, as global leaders gather in Paris for a summit on the technology.

France, co-hosting the gathering with India, has chosen to spotlight AI "action" this year rather than put the safety concerns front and centre as at previous meetings in Britain's Bletchley Park in 2023 and Seoul in 2024.

The French vision is for governments, businesses and other actors to come out in favour of global governance for AI and make commitments on sustainability, without setting binding rules.

"We don't want to spend time talking only about risks. There's the very real opportunity aspect as well," said Anne Bouverot, AI envoy for President Emmanuel Macron.

US-based Future of Life Institute head Max Tegmark said France should not miss the opportunity to act.

Tegmark's institute backed the launch

yesterday of a platform dubbed Global Risk and AI Safety Preparedness (GRASP), that aims to map major risks linked to AI and solutions being developed around the world.

"We've identified around 300 tools and technologies in answer to these risks," said GRASP coordinator Cyrus Hodes.

Results from the survey will be passed to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) rich-countries club and members of the Global Partnership on Artificial Intelligence (GPAI), a grouping of almost 30 nations, including major European economies, Japan, South Korea and the United States that will meet in Paris today and tomorrow.

The past week also saw the presentation of the first International AI Safety Report on Thursday, compiled by 96 experts and backed by 30 countries, the UN, EU and OECD.

"Proof is steadily appearing of additional risks such as biological attacks or cyberattacks," said the report's coordinator and noted computer scientist Yoshua Bengio.

He fears a possible "loss of control" by humans over AI systems, potentially motivated by "their own will to survive".

"Many people thought mastering language at the level of ChatGPT-4 was science fiction as

recently as six years ago, and then it happened," said Tegmark, referring to OpenAI's chatbot.

"The big problem now is that a lot of people in power still have not understood that we're closer to building artificial general intelligence (AGI) than to figuring out how to control it."

AGI refers to an artificial intelligence that would equal or better humans in all fields.

Its approach within a few years has been heralded by the likes of OpenAI chief Sam Altman.

"If you just eyeball the rate at which these capabilities are increasing, it does make you think that we'll get there by 2026 or 2027," said Dario Amodei, Altman's counterpart at rival Anthropic said in November.

"At worst, these companies lose control over this, and then after that Earth will be run by machines," Tegmark said.

Stuart Russell, a computer science professor at Berkeley in California, said one of his greatest fears is "weapons systems where the AI that is controlling that weapon system is deciding who to attack, when to attack, and so on".

Russell, who is coordinator of the International Association for Safe and Ethical AI, places the responsibility on governments to set up safeguards against armed AIs. – AFP

New Zealand to loosen visa rules

SYDNEY: New Zealand will relax visa rules to attract more foreign investors, in efforts to stimulate economic growth, its centre-right government said yesterday.

Immigration Minister Erica Stanford said the country's investor visa category would be made "simpler and more flexible" to encourage investors to choose New Zealand for their "capital, skills and international connections".

"These changes will turbocharge our economic growth, bringing brighter days ahead for all Kiwis," Stanford said in a statement announcing that two new visa categories – for "higher-risk investments" and "mixed investments" – would be created.

The changes, to take effect from April 1, follow the government's recent relaxation of visa rules allowing holidaymakers to work remotely while visiting the country, aimed at boosting its tourism sector.

After slipping into a technical recession in the third quarter of 2024, the New Zealand government is seeking ways to bolster growth. In January, it announced plans to set up Invest New Zealand, part of the government's international economic development agency, to serve as a one-stop-shop for overseas investment. – Reuters



Police jostle with protesters at the proposed embassy site in London. – AFP/IC

Hundreds protest mega China embassy site

LONDON: Hundreds of demonstrators on Saturday protested at a site earmarked for Beijing's new embassy here over human rights and security concerns.

The new embassy, if approved by the UK government, would be the "biggest Chinese embassy in Europe", one lawmaker said earlier.

Protester Iona Boswell, a 40-year-old social worker, said there was "no need for a mega embassy here" and that she believed it would be used for harassment of dissidents.

China has for several years been trying to relocate its embassy from the upmarket Marylebone district to the sprawling historic site in the shadow of the Tower of London.

The move has sparked fierce opposition from nearby residents, rights groups, critics of China's ruling Communist Party and others.

"This is about the future of our freedom, not just the site of a Chinese embassy in London,"

Conservative Party lawmaker Tom Tugendhat said at the protest, adding that people living in the UK "sadly have too often been threatened by Chinese state agents".

"I think it would be a threat to all of us because we would see an increase in economic espionage ... and an increase in the silencing of opponents of the Chinese Communist Party (in the UK)," the former security minister said.

Housing the Royal Mint, the official maker of British coins, for nearly two centuries, the site was earlier home to a 1348-built Cistercian abbey.

Beijing bought it for a reported US\$327 million (RM1.4 billion) in 2018.

"It will be like a headquarters (for China) to catch the (Hong Kong) people in the UK to (send them) back to China," said another protester dressed all in black and wearing a full face mask, giving his name only as "Zero", a member of

"Hongkongers in Leeds", the northern English city.

The protest comes as British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, elected last July, wants more engagement with Beijing, following years of deteriorating relations over various issues, in particular China's rights crackdown in Hong Kong.

In November, Starmer became the first UK prime minister since 2018 to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping, when the pair held talks at the G20 in Brazil.

A national planning inspector will now hold a public inquiry into the scheme, but Communities Secretary Angela Rayner will make the final decision.

That has alarmed opponents, who fear the Labour government's emphasis on economic growth and improved China ties, could trump other considerations. – AFP

BRIEFS

PLAYSTATION OUTAGES FRUSTRATE USERS

WASHINGTON: "From the United States to Thailand, users of the popular Sony PlayStation consoles might encounter difficulties", the Japanese group said on Saturday, as game players around the world expressed their frustration. "You might have difficulty launching games, apps or network features. We're working to resolve the issue as soon as possible. Thank you for your patience," Sony said. The specialised site DownDetector.com reports that users' difficulties peaked sharply on Friday evening, before falling steadily but not quite returning to normal levels. – AFP

TRUMP DISMISSES TALK OF DEPORTING HARRY

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has ruled out deporting Prince Harry, citing the Duke of Sussex's marital issues as a reason for leniency, saying, "I'll leave him alone. I don't want to do that ... He's got enough problems with his wife. She's terrible," Trump told *The New York Post* on Friday. Harry's immigration status has been under scrutiny, with the Heritage Foundation alleging that he may have concealed past illegal drug use, which could disqualify him from a US visa. The conservative think tank sued the US Department of Homeland Security last year to release Harry's visa records. – Bernama

COOK ISLANDS MOVE WORRIES WELLINGTON

SYDNEY: New Zealand's foreign minister voiced "significant concern" yesterday as close Pacific partner the Cook Islands prepared to sign a cooperation deal with China. Cook Islands Prime Minister Mark Brown will make a state visit next week to Beijing, where he is expected to sign a "joint action plan" for a "comprehensive strategic partnership" with China. The visit comes at a sensitive time as China vies for diplomatic, economic and military influence in the strategically important Pacific. – AFP

Namibia 'founding father' Sam Nujoma dies, aged 95

WINDHOEK: Sam Nujoma (*pic*), the activist and guerilla leader who became Namibia's first democratically elected president after it won its independence from apartheid South Africa, died aged 95 on Saturday.

Nujoma rose to head the sparsely populated southern African country on March 21, 1990 and was formally recognised as "Founding Father of the Namibian Nation" through a 2005 act of parliament.

The acclaim was balanced out by domestic and international criticism over his intolerance of critical media coverage, his railing against homosexuality and over the 1998 amendment to Namibia's constitution that let him run for a third term.



He was an ally of Zimbabwean strongman Robert Mugabe, backing Mugabe's land seizures from white farmers, though at home Nujoma stuck to a "willing buyer, willing seller" policy.

"The foundations of the Republic of Namibia have been shaken," the presidency posted on X.

"Our venerable leader, Dr Nujoma did not only blaze the trail to freedom – but he also inspired us to rise to our feet and to become masters of this vast land of our ancestors.

The presidency said Nujoma had been hospitalised for medical treatment over the past three weeks, adding: "Unfortunately, this time, the most gallant son of our land could not recover from his illness."

Nujoma served his three terms as president from 1990 to 2005 and sought to project himself as a unifying leader bridging political divides.

In a country scarred by the legacy of apartheid and German colonial rule, Nujoma's SWAPO party oversaw a national reconciliation programme under the motto "One Namibia, One Nation".

Nujoma made a point of repeating the phrase: "A united people, striving to achieve a common good for all members of the society, will always emerge victorious." – Reuters

Peru police rescue 123 women

LIMA: Peruvian police have rescued 123 women and girls who were being sexually exploited by a powerful Venezuelan gang.

Hundreds of police officers took part in the Friday night raid in the Peruvian capital Lima, during which 23 men were arrested.

Police said 123 people including three minors were rescued, while a source within the force said they were all women and girls.

Those arrested are part of Los Hijos de Dios, a faction of Venezuela's biggest gang, Tren de Aragua, which has been operating in Peru since 2021.

In January 2024, Peruvian police rescued 40 girls who were being sexually exploited on social networks by the gang.

The Tren de Aragua gang was formed in 2014 in the Venezuelan state of Aragua, but is now present in several South American countries, including Colombia, Peru and Chile.

US President Donald Trump campaigned for office last year promising mass deportations targeting undocumented migrants, whom he accused of involvement in violent crime and frequently likened to "animals" and "monsters".

He took particular aim at Tren de Aragua, and on his first day in office on Jan 20 declared a national emergency to deal with the gang's activities in the United States.

On Wednesday, Washington said 10 members of Tren de Aragua had been deported to Guantanamo Bay prison in Cuba. – AFP



Arab-Israelis in the northern Arab town of Umm al-Fahem carry placards on Saturday against the plan on forced displacement of Palestinians. – AFP/IC

Saudi Arabia again rejects Gaza move remarks

Relocation represents threat to stability, says Iran

CAIRO: Saudi Arabia affirmed its categorical rejection of remarks by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about displacing Palestinians from their land, the Foreign Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

Israeli officials have suggested the establishment of a Palestinian state on Saudi territory. Netanyahu appeared to be joking on Thursday when he responded to an interviewer on pro-Netanyahu Channel 14 who mistakenly said "Saudi state" instead of "Palestinian state", before correcting himself.

While the Saudi statement mentioned Netanyahu's name, it did not directly refer to the comments about establishing a Palestinian state in Saudi territory.

Egypt and Jordan also condemned the Israeli suggestions, with Cairo deeming the idea as a "direct infringement of Saudi sovereignty".

The kingdom said it valued "brotherly states' rejection of Netanyahu's remarks.

"This occupying extremist mindset does not comprehend what the Palestinian territory means for the brotherly people of Palestine and its conscientious, historical and legal association with that land," it said.

Discussions of the fate of Palestinians in Gaza has been upended by Tuesday's shock proposal from President Donald Trump that the US would "take over the Gaza Strip" from Israel and create a "Riviera of the Middle East" after resettling Palestinians elsewhere.

Arab states have roundly condemned Trump's comments, which came during a fragile ceasefire in the Gaza war that Israel has been waging against Hamas, which controls the narrow strip.

Trump has said Saudi Arabia was not demanding a Palestinian state as a condition for normalising ties with Israel. But Riyadh rebuffed his statements, saying it would not establish ties with Israel without the creation of a Palestinian state.

Egypt will host a summit of Arab nations on Feb 27 to discuss "the latest serious developments" concerning the Palestinian territories, its Foreign Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The "emergency Arab summit" comes as Egypt has been rallying regional support against Trump's plan to relocate Palestinians from the Gaza Strip and establishing US control over the coastal territory.

Yesterday's statement said the gathering was called "after extensive consultations by Egypt at the highest levels with Arab countries, including Palestine, which requested the summit, to address the latest serious developments".

That included coordination with Bahrain, which chairs the Arab League, the statement said.

On Friday, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty spoke with regional partners including Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates to shore up opposition to any forced displacement of Palestinians.

Iran's top diplomat said the proposal to move Palestinians represents a threat to stability and security in the Middle East.

"Forcibly displacing Palestinians from Gaza is part of a scheme to eliminate Palestine in a colonial manner," Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a late Saturday phone call with his Egyptian counterpart Abdelatty.

Araghchi said: "It is essential that Islamic countries take a firm and unified stance against this project."

Araghchi also held talks with his counterparts from Tunisia and Turkey.

The discussions followed a meeting between Hamas officials and Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran.

It was the first such meeting since a fragile truce in the Israel-Hamas war went into effect on Jan 19, halting more than 15 months of war.

Iran, a staunch supporter of Hamas, has long championed the Palestinian cause as a cornerstone of its foreign policy since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

Tehran does not recognise Israel. – Reuters/AFP

Russia sees no positive steps on disarmament

MOSCOW: Russia is yet to see any positive steps from the new US administration on disarmament, Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations in Geneva said in an interview published yesterday.

"We are ready to maintain smooth relations of cooperation with any American administration," Gennady Gatilov told RIA Novosti news agency.

"We would be ready to do this within the framework of the Conference on Disarmament. So far, we do not see any positive progress in this regard in Geneva."

The conference, an international

disarmament forum that meets in the Swiss city, has negotiated arms limitation and disarmament agreements, including on non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

President Vladimir Putin indicated after last month's inauguration of Donald Trump as US president that he sees Trump's second term as a chance for a new era in US-Russian relations.

"We are monitoring the rhetoric and first steps of the representatives of the new US administration," Gatilov said.

"We expect that the Americans will move from words to action."

Trump and Putin have said they are keen to

meet in person. The US president said he will end the war in Ukraine as soon as possible.

Gatilov said talks with Washington on nuclear arms control and wider security issues have not resumed.

The New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, or New START, which caps the number of strategic nuclear warheads that the United States and Russia can deploy, and the deployment of land- and submarine-based missiles and bombers to deliver them, is due to expire on Feb 5 next year.

It is the last remaining pillar of nuclear arms control between the superpowers. – Reuters



LETTERS
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Embrace unity in diversity

THE statement by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, asserting that there is no need for new guidelines for Muslims visiting non-Muslim places of worship or events, is sensible and relevant.

Firstly, it was unnecessary for Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar to raise the matter without first bringing it up in the Cabinet, especially knowing this is a sensitive issue.

There have been negative responses over the announcement regarding the involvement of Muslims in non-Muslim festivities and funerals.

Our beloved nation was born 67 years ago as a multiracial, multicultural and multireligious country. We have always taken pride in celebrating unity in diversity.

Throughout the years, there has been no instance where Muslims expressed concern over religious sensitivities or felt insulted by interacting with non-Muslims.

Muslims and non-Muslims have frequently interacted at events similar to those mentioned by the minister, yet no Muslim has ever felt uncomfortable or had their religious faith shaken.

I recall one occasion when a group of Muslims attended a non-worship session at a church in Kuala Lumpur, where a pastor discussed certain practices. Not a single participant felt confused or intimidated.

Let us celebrate this maturity and not undermine it. Hundreds of Muslims have gone to schools – some of which even having crosses – run by Christian missionaries, and to this day, no Muslim student has faced any issues. In fact, if anything, their faith has only been strengthened. There is no threat, coercion or other issues that Muslims face when attending these functions.

Malaysia is home to a mix of races, cultures and religions. No Muslim has ever been confused or threatened by attending a non-Muslim funeral, a wedding, a performance, a restaurant, a celebration or a recital. Let us not look in the dark for a black cat that is not there. Instead, let us continue to celebrate our different religions, cultures, language, food and festivities, and be enriched.

Mutual respect and understanding have long been the foundation of Malaysia's harmony.

If we reaffirm, abide by and practise the principles of the *Rukun Negara* while strengthening mutual respect and interfaith harmony, there is no need for new guidelines regarding Muslim participation in non-Muslim events.

Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye
Member of National Unity Advisory Council

COMMENT

by Prof Chong Pei Pei, Assoc Prof Dr Khine Pwint Phyu, Dr Lim Yin Sear and Revati Ramakrishnan

Humanising paediatric healthcare

HOSPITALS can be a daunting environment for children as they are filled with unfamiliar sights, sounds and procedures.

Research has found that over 90% of children aged four to six experience fears related to hospitals, with concerns primarily revolving around nursing interventions and being a patient.

Some of the primary fears highlighted were ward environment and medical staff as well as apprehension about treatments and procedures. This issue is prevalent among Malaysian children as well, with some showing significant resistance to leaving home at the mention of a hospital visit. Therefore, humanising healthcare through education, empathy and play is a transformative approach to making paediatric environments more child-friendly and inclusive.

Initiatives like the "Teddy Bear Hospital", organised by Taylor's University's Digital Health and Medical Advancement Impact Lab, School of Medicine and School of Education aim to alleviate children's anxieties surrounding healthcare by creating a safe and playful environment where children can interact with medical tools and learn about healthcare in a non-threatening way.

The event, which involved young participants aged five to six, teachers, student volunteers and staff members from various disciplines, saw children bringing their furry toys to a simulated medical setting.

In this interactive environment, medical students acted as doctors while the children played caregivers for their "sick" toys. Through this role-play, children were introduced to healthcare procedures in a fun and non-threatening manner.

Featuring a variety of engaging activities, the event emphasised how play is an innate part of childhood and can serve as a powerful tool for healing and learning.

Children observing x-ray images to learn about the importance of diagnostic imaging in healthcare at the radiology station.



Among the activities was an anatomy station where children explored basic anatomy and organ functions. They observed X-ray images to learn about diagnostic imaging, practised proper handwashing to understand the role of hygiene and participated in simulated surgery on teddy bears to experience the operating room.

Other highlights included learning about injuries and casts, understanding the importance of vaccinations through a mock immunisation session, exploring dental health through brushing and flossing demonstrations, and discovering healthy eating habits.

These activities helped foster understanding and reduce anxiety, allowing healthcare professionals to explain complex procedures in a simplified, engaging way that resonates with young minds. Cuddly toys serve as comforting emotional anchors, allowing children to feel secure as they navigate the experience. Many children described their toys as non-judgemental companions, offering support in ways that even adults could not.

Hospital play interventions have been widely acknowledged as effective tools for preparing children for medical procedures. They provide a space for young patients to confront and manage their anxieties.

Moreover, these programmes offer invaluable learning opportunities for medical and educational students by enhancing communication skills through age-appropriate

interactions with children in a non-clinical setting. They foster empathy and bedside manners, encouraging sensitivity and compassion in patient care. Students also gain hands-on experience with basic procedures.

The success of the Teddy Bear Hospital underscores the power of collaboration between universities, medical and educational professionals and families. The initiative fosters trust and understanding in paediatric healthcare. Such programmes are reshaping paediatric healthcare by advocating for child-friendly environments and prioritising the emotional well-being of young patients to build a generation that views hospitals not with fear but with trust and confidence.

By breaking down psychological barriers and fostering empathy, humanising healthcare becomes more than just a trend; it becomes a necessary shift towards creating environments where children feel safe, supported and understood.

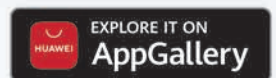
Prof Chong Pei Pei is the director of the Digital Health and Medical Advancement Impact Lab while Assoc Prof Dr Khine Pwint Phyu leads as a hub leader at Taylor's University. Dr Lim Yin Sear is a senior lecturer at the School of Medicine, Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences and Revati Ramakrishnan is a senior lecturer at the School of Education at Taylor's University. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

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Breaking barriers for inclusive future

THE world of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) holds the key to solving some of humanity's greatest challenges, yet one critical resource remains underutilised: the potential of women and girls.

The underrepresentation of women and girls in STEM is not a matter of capability but of cultural, societal and systemic barriers.

As the world marks International Day of Women and Girls in Science tomorrow, it is crucial to examine why these disparities persist and how they can be dismantled.

The cultural and societal influence on girls' career choices cannot be ignored. From an early age, societal norms and stereotypes subtly steer girls away from STEM subjects. The perception that STEM fields are more suited to men has been ingrained in various cultures for decades.

Educational materials and media portrayals often reinforce the notion that STEM is male-dominated, making it harder for young girls to visualise themselves in these professions.

Family expectations also play a critical role. In many societies, particularly in conservative or traditional households, girls are encouraged to pursue careers perceived as more "feminine", such as teaching, healthcare or the arts, rather than science and technology. These biases, whether overt or unconscious, lead to fewer girls developing an interest in STEM-related subjects.

The visibility of female scientists, engineers and technologists in mainstream media and academia remains low. Without relatable role models, many girls struggle to see a future for themselves in STEM careers.

Historically, women have made remarkable contributions to science, yet their stories often remain overshadowed by their male counterparts.

Efforts to celebrate and highlight women's achievements in STEM, such as the works of Marie Curie, Rosalind

Franklin and Katherine Johnson, have grown in recent years.

However, modern-day role models are still needed to show young girls that these careers are viable and fulfilling. More efforts should be made in schools, universities and workplaces to highlight successful female professionals in STEM.

Even for those who pursue STEM careers, systemic obstacles persist. Gender bias in hiring, promotions and research funding creates an uneven playing field. Women in STEM fields often report facing implicit biases that affect their career progression.

Studies indicate that male candidates are more likely to receive research grants and tenure-track positions compared to their female counterparts, despite equal qualifications and experiences.

Additionally, workplace cultures in STEM industries often lack inclusivity, leading to higher attrition rates among women. Many STEM fields, especially engineering and technology, have been male-dominated for years, fostering environments where women may feel isolated or undervalued.

The lack of family-friendly policies, such as maternity leave and flexible work arrangements, further exacerbates the problem, making it difficult for women to balance professional and personal responsibilities.

One of the critical factors contributing to the gender gap in STEM is the disparity in education. In many parts of the world, girls have limited access to quality education, particularly in science and mathematics. Socioeconomic factors, cultural norms and inadequate school resources all contribute to fewer girls enrolling in STEM-related courses.

Even when access to education is available, studies show that girls often underestimate their abilities in mathematics and science, even when they perform just as well as or better than their male peers. This confidence gap can deter them from pursuing STEM careers.

Artificial intelligence (AI) is one of



The underrepresentation of women and girls in STEM is not a matter of capability but of cultural, societal and systemic barriers. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

the most promising and rapidly advancing sectors in STEM, yet it starkly reflects gender disparity.

A 2020 report by the World Economic Forum found that women make up only 22% of AI professionals globally. Without diverse perspectives, AI systems risk being biased and exclusionary.

For instance, AI algorithms trained on datasets that lack female representation may perpetuate gender stereotypes or fail to address the needs of half the population. Ethical AI development requires input from diverse groups, making it imperative to encourage more women to enter and thrive in this field.

Addressing the gender gap requires multiple interventions. Schools should introduce STEM subjects at an early age in a way that is engaging for both genders.

Initiatives such as coding camps, science fairs and hands-on experiments can help spark curiosity

among girls. Gender-neutral learning materials and toys can help dismantle preconceived notions about STEM being a male-dominated field.

Creating visibility for female role models is equally essential. Media campaigns should actively showcase successful women in STEM to inspire girls. Schools and universities should invite female scientists, engineers and technologists for guest lectures and mentorship programmes.

Companies should implement structured mentorship programmes to support women entering STEM careers. Workplace inclusivity must also be prioritised. Organisations should implement policies promoting diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), regardless of the challenges DEI initiatives have faced under America's new president.

Companies need to provide equal pay, fair hiring practices and advancement opportunities for women. Workplace flexibility, such as

remote working options and parental leave, should be prioritised to retain female talent in STEM fields.

Investing in education and scholarships for women is another vital step. Governments and private organisations should provide financial support for women pursuing STEM degrees.

Governments should enforce equal pay laws and require companies to report gender pay gaps. Research institutions should ensure that funding opportunities are equally accessible to female-led projects.

Leadership development programmes should be created to prepare women for senior STEM positions.

While gender gaps in STEM exist globally, some regions face more significant challenges. In low- and middle-income countries, such as Pakistan and Nigeria, cultural norms and limited access to education disproportionately affect girls' participation in STEM.

In these regions, societal expectations often prioritise domestic roles for women over scientific or technological careers. Even in developed economies, such as Japan and South Korea, deeply ingrained gender norms hinder progress.

Despite having high-quality education systems, cultural attitudes discourage women from pursuing long-term careers in STEM.

The lack of women's participation in STEM is not just an issue of equality but one of global progress. Innovation thrives when diverse perspectives shape scientific and technological advancements.

Women must rise above self-doubt and excuses, for the time to act is now. By embracing STEM and the opportunities it holds, they can not only shape their futures but also pave the way for generations to come.

Dr Bhavani Krishna Iyer holds a doctorate in English literature. Her professional background encompasses teaching, journalism and public relations. She is currently pursuing a second master's degree in counselling. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Living together across generations

Comment
By Hazreena Hussein

OUR home is a humble symbol of tradition and togetherness in the bustling city of Kuala Lumpur, where skyscrapers typically pierce the sky and life races ahead.

In an era where independence often precedes interdependence, my family and I have chosen a less travelled path: living together across generations.

Sharing a home with my parents, siblings and immediate family members since 2018 has strengthened our bonds and enriched our lives in countless ways.

Our family home is a microcosm of life, brimming with laughter, occasional disagreements and shared moments of joy. Each generation brings its unique flavour to the mix.

My parents, the anchors of the family, offer wisdom and guidance, often regaling us with stories from their

past. My siblings and I contribute to the hustle and bustle of daily life, balancing careers and family responsibilities while the younger generation – my nieces and nephews – inject boundless energy, curiosity and a fresh perspective into our lives.

Life in Kuala Lumpur can be demanding, with its relentless traffic jams and work deadlines but having family close by provides an invaluable safety net. Whether it is my mother's comforting meals after a long day or my siblings stepping in to help with childcare, there is always someone to lean on.

Unlike many modern households where family members barely cross paths, our daily interactions foster deeper connections. Simple moments like shared dinners, weekend outings or gathering around the television become precious opportunities to strengthen our relationships.

The benefits of our living arrangement extend to every family member. For my nieces and nephews,

growing up in a multigenerational home offers an enriching environment where they are exposed to diverse perspectives, from their grandparents' old-school wisdom to their aunts and uncles' tech-savvy insights. This nurtures their adaptability and deepens their understanding of family values.

Living together also makes practical sense in an expensive city like Kuala Lumpur – shared expenses reduce individual burdens, and having multiple adults means household tasks can be divided more efficiently.

Perhaps the greatest gift of our living arrangement is the emotional security it provides. There is profound comfort in knowing you are never alone, whether you are celebrating milestones or navigating life's challenges.

Of course, living with multiple generations is not without its hurdles. Differences in opinions, lifestyles and routines can sometimes lead to conflict – my parents' traditional approach occasionally clashes with the younger generation's modern outlook, and

sharing common spaces can spark minor disagreements. However, we have learned that open communication and mutual respect are key to harmony.

Regular family meetings help us address issues before they escalate, and we are careful to respect each other's privacy by maintaining designated personal spaces.

Our home has become a vibrant sanctuary of heritage and continuity, where cultural traditions thrive and pass naturally from one generation to the next.

From celebrating Hari Raya with grandeur to teaching traditional recipes, we embody the *gotong-royong* spirit – the Malay ethos of cooperation. This spirit of togetherness extends beyond our immediate family to embrace friends and neighbours, creating a warm community within our urban setting.

As I look to the future, I see our multigenerational home as more than just a living arrangement – it is a powerful reminder of what matters

most in life.

In our fast-paced world where technology often replaces human connection, our home stands as testament to the irreplaceable value of face-to-face interactions and shared experiences.

Through the daily dance of compromise, care and celebration, we are not just preserving a traditional way of life; we are creating a blueprint for future generations about the profound richness that comes from choosing connection over convenience.

Our story shows that while the path of multigenerational living may not always be the easiest choice in modern times, it offers rewards that far outweigh its challenges – rewards that ripple through generations, strengthening not just our family but our community and culture as a whole.

Hazreena Hussein is an associate professor of architecture at the Faculty of Built Environment, Universiti Malaya. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Boost strengthens position in digital finance landscape

► Fintech player records strong growth in 2024, with gross transaction value exceeding RM5.6 billion

PETALING JAYA: Boost, a leading regional fintech player, closed 2024 on a stellar note, achieving major milestones that reinforce its position as a transformative leader in the digital financial landscape.

With a focus on innovation, accessibility and financial inclusion, Boost has continued to evolve its offerings, creating a seamless ecosystem that empowers individuals and small businesses alike.

As it looks to the future, Boost is accelerating its ambition to transition into a regional digital banking group, with a clear vision of shaping the next frontier of digital banking and financial services in Southeast Asia.

It was reported that Southeast Asia's digital financial services sector is on track to generate US\$33 billion in revenue, driven by the widespread adoption of QR payments and

digital lending. Boost has capitalised on this growth, with Boost Bank securing over RM700 million in deposits within just six months of its launch, and Boost PayFlex disbursing more than RM240 million since its introduction.

These achievements highlight Boost's ability to deliver innovative financial solutions that resonate with users. Further solidifying its position as a trusted platform, Boost recorded an impressive gross transaction value exceeding RM5.6 billion for the year.

Boost group CEO Sheyantha Abeykoon said, "2024 was a landmark year for Boost, solidifying our position as a leading fintech player that has now expanded our suite of services to include Banking products and services. Our growth reflects the trust our users and partners have placed in us and the increasing demand for innovative digital financial solutions.

"Through our expanding suite of services which now includes lending, payment gateway services, deposits and investment products offered via an embedded finance proposition, we are uniquely positioned to drive meaningful impact for both small businesses and consumers as we transition towards becoming a regional digital banking group."

Meanwhile, Boost Bank CEO Fozaia

Amanulla said the launch of Boost Bank represents a significant leap in Boost's journey to redefine financial inclusion.

"In fact, Boost Bank is not just a milestone for us; it's a milestone for Malaysia. This is about more than deposits or accounts; it's about creating a platform that truly empowers individuals and businesses to thrive. We are proud of our strategic partnerships which have allowed us to reach out to the underserved segment. This has been our key strategy to empower these communities to bank digitally," he added.

Boost Bank is set to build upon its existing offerings and roll out new, financially inclusive products to be at the forefront of financial empowerment. This product expansion roadmap will include consumer loans as well as other innovative products to financially empower MSMEs. Boost Bank will also champion the underserved and unbanked with the expansion of its partnership ecosystem with more collaborations centred on driving financial inclusion.

On the lending front, Boost will focus on strengthening its foothold in the consumer buy-now-pay-later segment with Boost PayFlex. With responsible lending at its core, Boost PayFlex will roll out initiatives to drive wider adoption among consumers.

Allianz General: Vital to ensure home, contents are covered against fire damage

PETALING JAYA: The recent wildfires that ravaged parts of Los Angeles in the United States have left many devastated and without a home as acres of townships and neighbourhoods have been burnt to the ground. The disaster shines light on the risk of fire obliteration to homes, which is commonly overlooked by homeowners.

On the domestic front, the Malaysian Fire and Rescue Department received 34,389 distress calls for fire in 2023 involving an estimated loss of RM2.6 billion in total. However, more than 50% of Malaysian homeowners still choose to leave their homes uninsured, making them financially vulnerable if a fire occurs.

"Homeowners who do have fire insurance typically have the one included in their housing loan. However, this coverage is limited as most of them only protect the building structure itself while high-value household contents like sofas, TVs, washing machines, computers, beds and jewellery are left uninsured," explained Allianz General Insurance Company (Malaysia) Bhd chief sales officer Horst Habbig.

He said home insurance in Malaysia typically consists of coverage of building and contents.

"The coverage is not just limited to fire damage but it also safeguards your home building and contents from a wide range of risks such as floods and theft. Homeowners should take the time to thoroughly review their policies, ensuring they have adequate coverage that aligns with their budget and needs," he added.

Whether you are a homeowner residing in your property or a landlord renting out your property to a tenant, Allianz General offers a wide range of coverage add-ons to suit your protection needs, such as the HomeFix coverage which covers home repairs costs as well as landlord insurance which covers malicious damage by a tenant or runaway tenant. These add-ons can be purchased on top of the building (house owner) or contents (house holder) coverage under the Allianz Smart Home Cover Policy.

Depending on their budget, homeowners have the flexibility to choose between an annual plan with yearly renewals or a multiyear plan, where they pay a single premium for a hassle-free three-year coverage.

TH Properties partners Affin Bank to launch flexible financing solutions for house buyers

PETALING JAYA: As property prices continue to rise, particularly in urban areas, affordability remains a significant concern for many Malaysians.

Recognising this, TH Properties has partnered with Affin Bank Bhd to roll out financing solutions designed to bridge the homeownership gap for fresh graduates, young home buyers, and property investors. The strategic collaboration, formalised at a signing ceremony between both parties on Jan 23, reflects the shared vision of both organisations to address housing affordability challenges while providing Malaysians with accessible pathways to homeownership.

"At TH Properties, we strive to make homeownership a reality for Malaysians, offering homes that resonate with their lifestyles and long-term vision," said TH Properties Group CEO Mohd Ismadi Ishak.

"This partnership with Affin Bank goes beyond providing financial solutions – it reflects our shared commitment to addressing the challenges faced especially for first-time buyers and young professionals. By introducing innovative, flexible financing options, we aim to empower more Malaysians to invest in homes that align with their aspirations and secure their future."

Under the strategic partnership, TH Properties and Affin Bank are offering a suite of flexible financing solutions tailored to meet the needs of various buyer segments, including those with irregular income streams. This includes the Affin Home Step Fast/i for fresh graduates, first-time home buyers, young buyers and property investors. This syariah-compliant financing solution features a flexible and competitive financing structure, allowing buyers to secure their dream homes with reduced upfront costs and manageable monthly payments.

Also available under the agreement is the Affinita Home Financing Programme, which caters to women seeking financial inde-



From left: TH Properties chief financial officer Anuarifaei Mustafa, Mohd Ismadi and Mohammad Fairuz looking at a model of one of the housing projects.

pendence through homeownership. A standout feature of this programme is that it empowers female home buyers by offering financing above RM500,000 through Affin Invikta Premier Banking, along with exclusive discounts and perks from nearly 100 merchants, including spas, dining outlets and boutiques.

Affin Bank group community banking executive director Mohammad Fairuz Mohd Radi said, "We are delighted to partner with TH Properties to empower more Malaysians on their journey towards homeownership. With innovative financing solutions such as the Affin Home Step Fast/i and the Affinita Home Financing

Programme, we aim to provide flexible and tailored options for young professionals, property investors, and a broader range of home buyers.

"We also believe that every woman should have the opportunity to build a foundation for herself and her family through homeownership. The Affinita Home Financing Programme is not just about offering financial support – it is about fostering independence, stability and empowerment for women."

The collaboration will initially cover properties in TH Properties' flagship developments, including Kota Semarak, and will be expanded later.

Garmin Malaysia joins hands with Public Bank to offer contactless payment

PETALING JAYA: Garmin Malaysia has launched Garmin Pay, in partnership with Public Bank, offering an easy, secure and contactless payment method for users in Malaysia.

The innovative payment solution is now available on compatible Garmin smartwatches, enabling users to make daily transactions with just a tap of their Garmin smartwatch.

Garmin Pay offers users the freedom to leave their wallets behind and embrace a streamlined payment experience for an active, on-the-go lifestyle. Whether users are fuelling up after a run, grabbing groceries or dining out with friends, Garmin Pay keeps transactions quick, secure and effortless for users.

Public Bank Visa and Mastercard credit or debit card members can seamlessly link their cards to the Garmin Pay Wallet. Users simply need to enter their passcode, select the credit or debit card from Garmin Pay Wallet, and hold their wrist near card readers to make payments.

To celebrate the launch, Public Bank is offering a cashback rewards promotion for users who activate and spend using Garmin Pay from Jan 21 to April 30. Further to that, Public Bank card members can also enjoy discounts when they purchase selected Garmin products until Dec 31.



the Sun Biz & Finance

MONDAY | FEB 10, 2025

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New auto landscape emerging in M'sia

➤ Rapid expansion of Chinese EV brands a challenge to local carmakers and parts suppliers but also opens doors for innovation, partnerships and supply chain development, say observers

BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
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PETALING JAYA: Despite their dominance in the domestic motor vehicle market, Proton Holdings Bhd and Perusahaan Otomobil Kedua Sdn Bhd (Perodua) will likely face increasing pressure in transitioning to electric vehicles.

Industry observers believe this is due to Chinese EV manufacturers' rapid expansion in Malaysia, intensifying competition, reshaping market dynamics, influencing investment trends and driving shifts in supply chain strategies.

Malaysia University of Science and Technology Prof Emeritus Dr Barjoiyi Bardai pointed out that Proton and Perodua account for nearly two-thirds of total industry volume.

He said Proton's partnership with China's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group offers a competitive edge, but more affordable EV models are needed to capture a larger market share.

"Malaysia's high EV import taxes and lack of charging infrastructure remain major barriers to widespread adoption.

"Chinese EVs can cost as little as a few thousand ringgit, making affordability a potential game-changer if pricing strategies adjust," he told *SunBiz*.

Leading Chinese brands such as BYD are capturing nearly 40% of

Malaysia's EV market, and local and global automakers are facing mounting pressure to adapt.

According to industry data, BYD leads Malaysia's EV market with a 39.33% share, followed by the US's Tesla at 23.58% and Germany's BMW at 9.06%.

Other notable players include Great Wall Motor, Chery and Smart, reflecting China's growing influence in the sector.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzani-zam Abdul Rashid also highlighted the significant market dominance of Chinese EV brands.

"It not only intensifies competition but could also spur innovation and collaboration among local players.

"Pricing remains the key differentiator, but factors such as charging infrastructure, maintenance and resale markets will shape long-term success," he said.

Malaysia Automotive Robotics & IoT Institute (MARii) said the entry of Chinese EV manufacturers into the Malaysian market is a strategic opportunity rather than a threat.

MARii emphasised that the increasing presence of Chinese brands is accelerating the adoption of EVs in the country, driving innovation and setting higher standards for technology, pricing and consumer experiences.

"This challenges local players to enhance their capabilities to



Chinese EV manufacturers' inroads into Malaysia are intensifying competition, reshaping market dynamics, influencing investment trends and driving shifts in supply chain strategies. —BERNAMAPIC

become a regional hub for next-generation vehicles.

"By spurring existing local automakers to invest more in research and development and for strategic alliances, Chinese competition fosters greater technological advancement and industry-wide growth, benefiting the entire Malaysian automotive ecosystem," a MARii spokesperson said.

On another note, traditional auto part suppliers face an urgent need to upgrade capabilities or risk being phased out, as EVs require fewer moving parts than conventional internal combustion engine vehicles.

The increasing presence of global automakers establishing direct operations in Malaysia is also reshaping the industry.

Companies such as Stellantis, Chery, Great Wall Motor and

Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation are bypassing traditional distributors, intensifying competition in the downstream automotive supply chain.

Maybank Investment Bank Bhd (Maybank IB) expects the increasing presence of global automakers also to put pressure on local distributors and parts suppliers, leading to industry consolidation.

"Technical partnerships and upskilling will be crucial for Malaysian firms looking to remain competitive," Maybank IB said in a research note.

As the competition intensifies, the bank-backed research firm said, Proton and Perodua will have to address several technological and strategic gaps to solidify their positions in the EV market.

MARii proposed that co-developing battery technology and

e-motors on a shared platform would be a strategic move.

"This collaboration would reduce production costs, enhance efficiency and accelerate innovation while ensuring scalability across different models.

"By leveraging shared R&D and local manufacturing, both companies can offer more competitive and high-performance EVs, driving wider adoption in Malaysia's growing EV market," the MARii spokesperson said.

Industry observers agree that the rapid rise of Chinese EV manufacturers is forcing a transformation across Malaysia's automotive industry.

While it presents challenges to local automakers and suppliers, it also opens doors for innovation, strategic partnerships and supply chain development.

Paragon Globe open to participating in data centres, digital economy

BY JOHN GILBERT
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KUALA LUMPUR: Paragon Globe Bhd's sale of land to Bridge Data Centres Malaysia IV Sdn Bhd (BDC) indicates the company's focus on digital infrastructure in Johor.

Executive chairman Datuk Seri Edwin Tan (*pic*) said the land sale to BDC underscores Johor's growing prominence as a regional digital hub and PGB's role in facilitating its development.

"While our primary role in this transaction is as a land provider, it aligns with our broader strategy to contribute to high-value sectors like digital infrastructure integral to the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ).

"At this stage, PGB is focused on optimising its land bank and enabling developments that drive regional economic growth. However, we remain open to exploring potential

partnerships or strategic initiatives that could involve more direct participation in the data centre or digital economy sectors.

"By acting as an enabler for such projects, we position ourselves to remain agile and responsive to future opportunities in this space, should they align with our strategic objectives," Tan told *SunBiz*.

He said PGB remains focused on its core business as a property developer, and the company's strategic direction is aligned with developing sustainable, high-quality properties.

"While we recognise the growing demand for digital infrastructure in Johor, especially with the state's strategic positioning under the JS-SEZ, we are always open to potential opportunities across various industries, including tech and digital infrastructure companies."



The recent disposal of two plots of industrial land in Desa Cemerlang, Johor, to BDC presents unique opportunities that allowed PGB to unlock significant value from its land bank while supporting Johor's ambitions to become a regional digital hub.

When asked about PGB's plans to expand its involvement in projects

that cater to the digital economy, Tan said Johor's strategic location and its inclusion in the JS-SEZ initiative offer immense opportunities in the digital economy.

"We are already contributing through land transactions that enable the development of data centres, and our future projects are designed to cater to the needs of a tech-driven demographic," he added.

At an extraordinary general meeting held in December last year,

shareholders endorsed PGB's plans to diversify its income streams and pursue strategic partnerships, including a proposed joint venture with Tropicana Danga Bay Sdn Bhd (TDB) to develop a landmark project in Danga Bay. The development rights agreement with TDB is valued at RM102.46 million.

Tan said Danga Bay is a highly sought-after location in Johor Bahru, known for its waterfront appeal, proximity to Singapore, and strong potential for urban development.

The project has a gross development value of RM1.49 billion, underscoring PGB's commitment to delivering high-quality, strategically positioned developments. The exclusive residential development is designed to meet the needs of professionals, expatriates, and investors seeking premium urban living in one of Johor's most vibrant and well-connected locations.

Tan said while the JS-SEZ initiative

primarily fosters commercial and industrial growth, its economic significance indirectly supports the residential property market.

"As the region's economy expands and attracts talent and businesses, the demand for well-located, high-quality residences in areas like Danga Bay is set to rise. This positions the development as a key residential offering catering to an affluent and discerning market.

"Additionally, the project is set to achieve the prestigious GreenRE Gold certification, reflecting PGB's unwavering commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship," Tan said.

With the shareholders' approval, PGB is well-positioned to execute its growth strategy and solidify its position as a leading property developer in Malaysia. The group remains focused on delivering innovative and sustainable developments that meet the market's evolving needs.

Fragmented contracts not a means for tax avoidance

INDUSTRIES that require significant expenditure in infrastructure and plant and machinery together with specialised technology from overseas will engage foreign contractors to implement such projects, and the cost of such contracts could run into hundreds of million, and even billions in some cases, of ringgit.

These contracts are found in the oil and gas industry, power sector and large government infrastructure projects, among others. To execute such contracts, there will be a need to bring in foreign contractors to supply specialised equipment, technology and specialists. The contracts would involve engineering, design, procurement, construction, testing and commissioning. In short, they are called EPCC contracts.

Taxation of EPCC contracts

It is not uncommon to expect the whole of the contract value to be brought to tax in Malaysia. However, in practice, this does not normally occur because there is a tendency to break up or fragment the contract into different parcels. The intention here is to minimise the taxes in Malaysia and the multinationals that enter into such contracts will use tax planning to locate the profits outside Malaysia possibly back to their home country, or to countries where taxes are lower than in Malaysia.

If the foreign EPCC contractor declares the full profits in Malaysia, then it will be subject to

tax at 24% of the profits in Malaysia. Any payments to non-residents by the EPCC contract will attract withholding taxes and imported service taxes.

Tax planning measures

Normally, such large contracts will be broken up into work carried out in Malaysia and the work carried out overseas. The large foreign taxpayers have a tendency to shift a larger part of the profits outside of Malaysia on the basis that a significant value of the work is actually performed overseas and consequently a significant part of the profits should be allocated to the overseas operation on the basis that the value created overseas is greater than the value created in Malaysia.

Transfer pricing methodologies will be used to support the shifting of the profits overseas.

What will the tax authorities do?

Many authorities around the world are aware of this practice and view such shifting of profits out of the home country such as Malaysia as aggressive tax planning.

They are already attacking such transactions from different perspectives. It could be from a transfer pricing perspective by challenging whether the profit left behind in Malaysia does not meet the arm's length test, and/or may challenge such allocations using the anti-avoidance provisions on the basis that the split of the profits may not be

commercially explainable.

The tax authorities have significant information that they can use to challenge such treatment of the taxation. The information easily available to them from the larger companies will be the CbCR (Country-by-Country Reporting) documentation which contains the information of the total multinational group. In addition, if the authorities were to request for information on the total profits of the contract made in Malaysia and overseas, the local tax authorities can see the full picture of the operations and can compare the level of profits left behind in Malaysia.

Such exchange of information is possible because, in most cases, the tax treaties allow the tax authorities to obtain the information from the other member states. Malaysia has more than 70 tax treaties with other countries and obtaining information from most developed countries cannot be ruled out. Among the larger countries, it is only with the United States that we do not have a full tax treaty.

The tax authorities in Malaysia are tracking such large contracts and are aware of such tax planning measures. In most cases, these issues will come up when the multinationals revert to the Malaysian authorities to obtain a refund of the excess withholding taxes paid. Inevitably, such refund applications will lead the Inland Revenue Board to examine each contract in depth.

This article is contributed by Thannees Tax Consulting Services Sdn Bhd managing director SM Thanneermalai (www.thannees.com).



TAX MATTERS
BY S. M. THANNEERMALAI

Pos Malaysia opens Pos Shop in Kota Kinabalu, first in East Malaysia

PETALING JAYA: Pos Malaysia Bhd, the national post and parcel service provider, has launched a Pos Shop in Kota Kinabalu, marking the expansion of its innovative retail concept to East Malaysia and a significant milestone in its transformation journey.

The occasion was officiated by Sabah Industrial Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Datuk Phoong Jin Zhe.

Strategically situated within Pejabat Pos Besar Kota Kinabalu on Jalan Segama, the milestone outlet is the first Pos Shop in East Malaysia, underscoring Pos Malaysia's dedication to modernising its services and evolving to meet the changing needs of consumers.

Speaking at the launch on Friday, Pos Malaysia CEO Charles Brewer said: "Following the success of Pos Shop in Peninsular Malaysia, we are delighted to bring this concept to Kota Kinabalu. This outlet is particularly meaningful, as it is not only our first location in East Malaysia, but also in Sabah, the Land Below the Wind. It reaffirms Pos Malaysia's commitment to bringing our services closer to Sabahans, enhancing the way we serve them and ensuring that we remain very relevant. But this is just the beginning. We believe Pos Shop Kota Kinabalu will be a catalyst in revolutionising retail experiences for communities across Sabah and Sarawak."

Phoong commended Pos Malaysia for its forward-thinking initiative, saying: "Pos Shop is a transformative concept that seamlessly integrates modern retail with the reliability of traditional postal services. By reimagining the post office as a versatile, customer-centric space, Pos Malaysia is enhancing accessibility and convenience for all Malaysians. What stands out most is the company's support for entrepreneurs by featuring a selection of products sourced from local businesses in Pos Shop, contributing to the local economy while catering to community needs."

Spanning more than 2,200 square feet, Pos Shop Kota Kinabalu combines a fully operational post office with a cozy and welcoming retail space. It offers services such as parcel drop, bill payments, mobile and e-wallet reloads, and a range of everyday essentials. The outlet also features the popular Pos Kafe, where customers can enjoy freshly brewed coffee and 'ready-to-eat' snacks.

KAB buys stake in firm, poised to become IPP

PETALING JAYA: Kinergy Advancement Bhd (KAB) has acquired a 47.5% equity stake in Jati Cakerawala Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned subsidiary of Pesaka Ventures Sdn Bhd. The acquisition, valued at RM35 million, marks KAB's entry into the independent power producer (IPP) sector.

KAB will assume the role as one of the project developers, alongside other stakeholders, in driving the repowering of the 650MW power plant.

The asset was a power plant on a strategically located 37.5ha coastal site in Perlis, owned by Teknologi Tenaga Perlis Consortium Sdn Bhd, an IPP in Malaysia. The plant completed its 21-year power purchase agreement and was decommissioned in March 2024.

The site has now reopened as a high-potential project.

PayNet, Fama roll out grocery vending machine

PETALING JAYA: Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd (PayNet) and the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama) have collaborated to launch Malaysia's first-ever grocery vending machine, marking a significant milestone in the evolution of automated retail.

The initiative brings fresh fruits and essential grocery items – including soy sauce, garlic, canned food and more – directly to consumers through a cashless, contactless and round-the-clock shopping experience.

Vending machines have rapidly gained popularity in Malaysia, driven by the rise of cashless payments and the demand for 24/7 retail accessibility.

According to industry reports, vending machine adoption has expanded beyond snacks and beverages to include health supplements, skincare items and fresh produce. This reflects a growing consumer preference for convenient, automated, and touch-free purchasing experiences, particularly in high-traffic locations such as malls, airports and hospitals.

"Consumers today prioritise convenience, and vending machines are transforming how we access food and groceries. By launching Malaysia's first grocery vending machine, we are embracing this global trend while integrating digital payments and automation to reshape fresh grocery retail," said PayNet government digitalisation division senior director Firdaus Ghani.

The vending machine is fully cashless, accepting payments through DuitNow QR and other digital payment methods, ensuring a seamless and secure transaction process for consumers.

The initiative aligns with PayNet and Fama's commitment to digital transformation in agriculture and retail, showcasing how automated grocery vending can enhance accessibility, reduce operational costs, and



From left: Fama market institution division director Sharizan Mansor, Shahrizan and PayNet group CEO Farhan Ahmad at the launch of the grocery vending machine.

modernise the way consumers shop for fresh produce.

If successful, Fama plans to scale the initiative by deploying additional vending machines in strategic locations, particularly in areas where access to fresh groceries is limited. To ensure efficiency and sustainability, designated Agrobazaars will manage the restocking and monitoring of the machines, ensuring fresh and essential groceries are always available.

"Vending machines play a crucial role in expanding market access and modernising

grocery retail. With this technology, agropreneurs can sell their produce directly to consumers without relying on traditional retail channels, thereby enhancing efficiency and sustainability within the agricultural marketing ecosystem," said Fama deputy director-general (food security and operations) Shahrizan Sudiman.

With growing consumer demand for contactless, 24/7 retail solutions, PayNet and Fama are leading the charge in revolutionising grocery shopping in Malaysia.

Manufacturing sales hit RM1.9 trillion in 2024

➤ Growth driven by food, beverages & tobacco, recording double-digit growth in December last year

PUTRAJAYA: The sales value of the manufacturing sector in 2024 reached RM1.9 trillion, surging 4.6% (2023: 0.2%), while the sales in December 2024 amounted to RM158.4 billion (5.7%).

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the growth of sales value in the manufacturing sector was primarily supported by the food, beverages & tobacco sub-sector which remained to record double-digit growth at 14.6% in December 2024 (November 2024: 12.3%).

Meanwhile, he added electrical & electronics products and non-metallic mineral products, basic metal & fabricated metal products sub-sectors also made contributions to the manufacturing sector's sales growth, registering increases of 8.7% (November 2024: 8.6%) and 3.2% (November 2024: 2.7%), respectively.

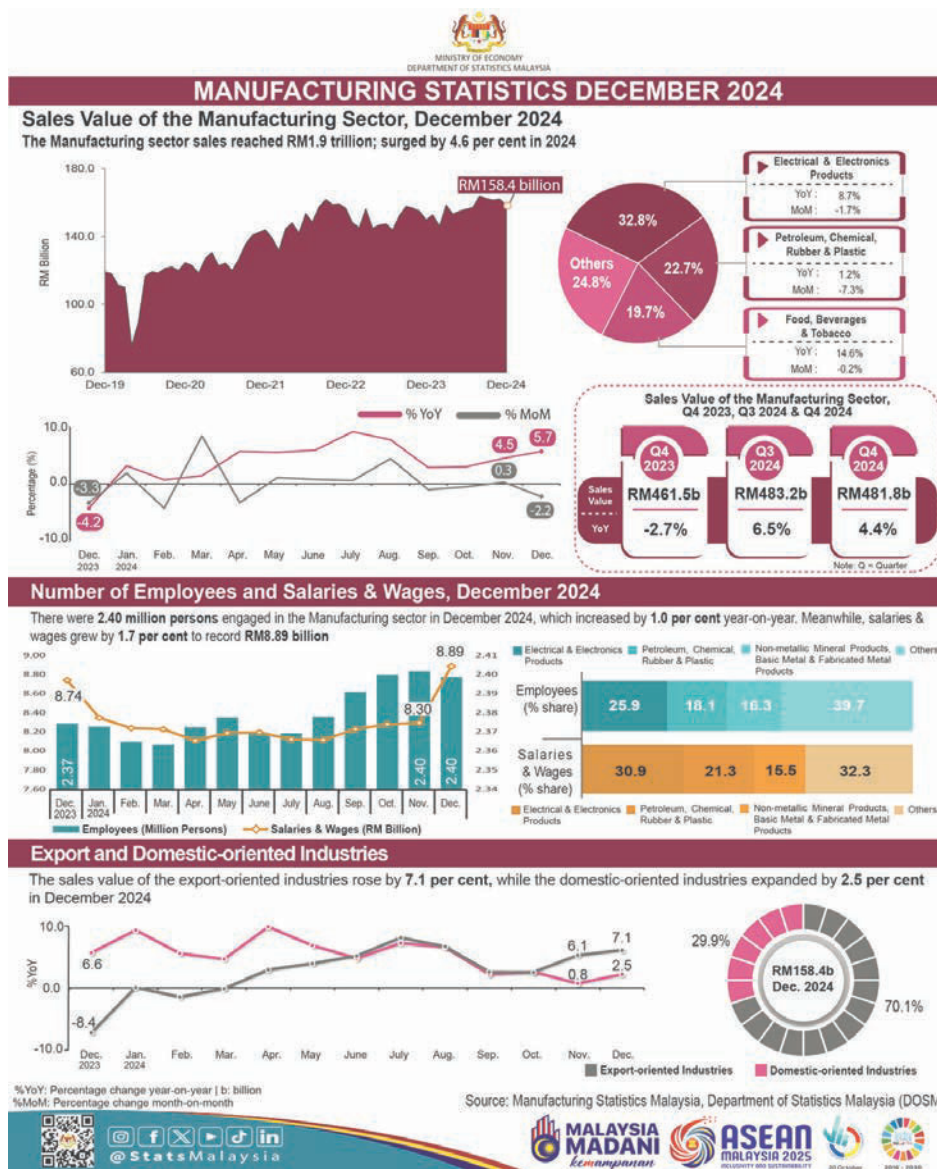
Comparison with the preceding month, he said the sales value shrank by 2.2% as against RM162 billion recorded in November 2024.

The sales value of export-oriented industries, representing 70.1% of total sales further expanded to 7.1% in December 2024 (November 2024: 6.1%). The expansion was predominantly attributable to the increase in the manufacture of computer, electronics & optical products at 9.4%; followed by manufacture of vegetable & animal oils & fats (17%); and manufacture of rubber products (10.7%) industries.

Similarly, the domestic-oriented industries also improved by 2.5% in December 2024 after registering 0.8% increase in November 2024. The increase was mainly contributed by a rise in the manufacture of food processing products which soared to 11.2% (November 2024: 8.7%); manufacture of fabricated metal products industry except machinery & equipment (4.8%); and the manufacture of beverages (16.3%) industries.

On a month-on-month basis, both export and domestic-oriented industries fell by 3% and 0.3%, respectively.

Commenting on the number of employees, Mohd Uzir said, "There are 2.4 million persons engaged in this sector as at December 2024, with a steady growth rate of 1% for two consecutive



months. The addition was mainly driven by food, beverages & tobacco (2.3%); non-metallic mineral products, basic metal & fabricated metal products (1.3%); and wood, furniture, paper products & printing (0.9%) sub-sectors. On a month-on-month basis, the number of employees in this sector declined 0.1%.

On the same note, he added that salaries & wages paid in the manufacturing sector also posted an increase of 1.7%, amounting to RM8.9 billion in December 2024.

Comparison by month-on-month, he said the salaries & wages paid increased by 7.1%. Subsequently, he added the sales value per employee went up to RM66,027 (4.6%), while the average salaries & wages per employee in December 2024 was RM3,706, up by 0.6% year-on-year.

In the fourth quarter of 2024, the sales value in the manufacturing sector grew by 4.4% year-on-year, achieving RM481.8 billion (Q3'24: RM483.2 billion, 6.5%).

PTP buys e-RTG cranes from Chinese firm to enhance handling capabilities

ISKANDAR PUTERI: Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP) has made another significant investment by signing an agreement with Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industry Co Ltd (ZPMC) for the purchase of 58 eco-efficient electrified rubber-tired gantry (e-RTG) cranes.

PTP CEO Mark Hardiman, and ZPMC vice-president Cellilia Shen Qiu Yuan inked and exchanged the agreement at PTP's premises on Feb 3.

PTP chairman Tan Sri Che Khalid Mohamad Noh remarked that the contract with ZPMC is a key part of PTP's on-going expansion strategy to ensure the port is equipped with the latest technologies and equipment to better serve its business customers, as Malaysia's leading transshipment hub and a prominent player in the regional maritime industry.

"This investment is crucial to guarantee e-RTG availability and reliability to meet the demands of PTP's continued growth, ensuring operational stability, sustained yard performance and the upgrading of our RTG fleet," he said.

Meanwhile, Hardiman emphasised that innovation and continuous improvement are key to PTP's growth and future advancements, and that the upgrade will enable PTP to maintain exceptional service standards for its customers, all while upholding the highest levels of safety. This is also particularly significant in accommodating the demands of the newly launched Gemini network.

"With the new cranes, we can better manage peak demand and handle heavier cargo volumes, which will lead to faster vessel turnaround times and more streamlined operations, ultimately ensuring a smoother and more consistent experience for all our customers. Moreover, these new electrified cranes are automation-ready and can be retrofitted to be fully automated in the future," said Hardiman.

"As we strengthen our handling capabilities, we remain steadfast in our commitment to sustainability, not only enhancing productivity and efficiency, but also actively reducing PTP's environmental impact," he said, highlighting PTP's dedication to its decarbonisation journey and broader sustainability efforts within its environmental, social and governance framework.

The new cranes are expected to be delivered in five batches between March and July 2026.

HK market wraps up week with gains, despite trade war

WARRANTS WATCH

OVERALL warrants turnover last week came in at RM453.3 million, where the main contributor to turnover came from the trading of warrants over the Hang Seng Index (HSI), which came in at 71.2% of the overall warrant's turnover, at RM322.9 million. Further, turnover for trading of warrants over Malaysian stocks came in next at RM108.3 million, which was at 23.9% of the total turnover. Notably, there was also a slight increase in activity in warrants over the Hang Seng TECH Index (HSTECH) and Hong Kong stocks, mainly due to persistent demand for warrants over Alibaba Group (9988.HK) and BYD (1211.HK).

The HSI February futures started off last week on a lower note following the

Chinese New Year holidays in the previous week, down by 2% in the morning session on Feb 3, before rebounding to close flat at 20,322. The sharp fall in the morning session was on the back of an announcement made by US President Donald Trump on the imposition of a 10% tariff on Chinese goods (South China Morning Post, Feb 3). The Hong Kong market then rallied on Tuesday as the futures closed 2.6% higher at 20,840 with Hong Kong tech stocks posting strong gains, but retreated to close 0.9% lower on Wednesday at 20,648, amid global trade tensions and uncertainty surrounding US tariffs (South China Morning Post, Feb 5).

Meanwhile, the HSI rallied on Thursday at its highest level in 3 months at 20,865.78, while the futures closed 1.4% higher at 20,937, tracking gains on Wall Street and following the US Postal

Top MYEG warrants by volume traded

Warrant name	Volume (mil)	Issuer	Exercise price	Expiry date
MYEG-C8E	40.3	Affin	RM0.980	28 Aug 2025
MYEG-C7D	19.6	Macquarie	RM0.800	14 Feb 2025
MYEG-C7V	14.6	Macquarie	RM0.940	30 Jun 2025
MYEG-C7Q	6.1	CIMB	RM0.900	30 Apr 2025
MYEG-C7Y	4.1	Macquarie	RM0.820	30 Jun 2025

Service's U-turn on a ban on parcels from China and Hong Kong, while investors eyed new policy measures coming out of Beijing (South China Morning Post, Feb 6). The HSI futures closed Friday at a higher note at 21,220 points. Both HSI call and put warrants garnered investors' interest last week, with HSI-CWA1 and HSI-CWAW amongst the top traded HSI warrants by value traded at RM89.4 million and

RM53.1 million, respectively.

In the local scene, trading was mostly focused in warrants over Gamuda Bhd (GAMUDA), MY E.G. Services (MYEG), Supermax Corporation (SUPERMX) and YTL Corporation (YTL), among others. The share prices of GAMUDA and SUPERMX rose 12.9% and 12.1% week-on-week (w-o-w), respectively, while the shares of MYEG rose 6.8% w-o-w. On the back of the

moves, warrants over GAMUDA collectively saw 227.8 million units traded, where the top traded warrant was GAMUDA-C2R with over 66 million units traded. Meanwhile, MYEG warrants also saw rise in demand, registering 96.5 million units traded for the week.

To view the full list of structured warrants available on Bursa Malaysia, kindly visit malaysiawarrants.com.my.

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Indonesia orders developer to halt project linked to Trump

JAKARTA: Indonesia has ordered property firm PT MNC Land to halt development of a Lido tourism project affiliated with US President Donald Trump over water management and environmental issues, its Environment Ministry said.

The 3,000ha integrated resort is located about 60km south of the capital Jakarta and is home to a new Trump golf course, which started offering membership last year.

The Trump Organization is also set to operate a luxury hotel and residential homes in the future, with MNC Land as developer.

The ministry said in a statement that mismanagement of rainwater at the resort had caused sedimentation in Lido lake, making it shallower and halving the size of the body of water to 12ha.

MNC Land also did not follow an environmental assessment document approved by the government for its development plan, the ministry said.

MNC Land and the Trump Organization did not respond to requests for comment.

"The mismatch between environmental plans and physical implementation has become a serious concern in an effort to preserve natural resources," Ardyanto Nugroho, director of environment supervision at the ministry, said in the statement.

The ministry expects MNC Land to submit a new environmental assessment if it wants to continue developing Lido, said ministry spokesman Sasmita Nugroho.

Lido has been one of the biggest projects for MNC Group, chaired by tycoon and politician Hary Tanoesoedibjo.

The company has been promoting the project for years and it gained momentum in 2023 after Indonesia's former president Joko Widodo gave it a special economic zone status, providing MNC Land with tax breaks and leniency on permits.

Tanoesoedibjo said in 2017 that he signed a management deal with the Trump Organization in 2015. – Reuters

Sumitomo raises annual profit forecast

TOKYO: Japan's Sumitomo Corp raised its net profit forecast by 6% for the fiscal year through March as stronger earnings in overseas power generation and higher aluminium prices offset a loss in its nickel project in Madagascar.

The trading house now predicts a net profit of ¥560 billion (RM16 billion) for the current year, up from previous guidance of ¥530 billion, despite a ¥6 billion loss from its Ambatovy nickel project due to the unrecoverable shareholder loans.

Net profit for April-December rose 3% from the same period a year earlier to ¥416.5 billion.

Sumitomo has been struggling to stabilise production and improve profitability at the Ambatovy project, launched in 2005. It wrote down the project's book value to zero in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2024, incurring an ¥89 billion impairment loss.

But it warned at the time that further losses could arise if additional funding is required to sustain operations, potentially leading to another impairment if deemed unrecoverable. – Reuters

China's consumer inflation at 5-month high in January

BEIJING: China's consumer inflation accelerated to its fastest in five months in January while producer price deflation persisted, reflecting mixed consumer spending and weak factory activity.

Deflationary pressures are likely to persist in China this year, analysts say, unless policymakers can rekindle sluggish domestic demand, with tariffs by US President Donald Trump on Chinese goods adding pressure on Beijing to spur growth in the world's second-largest economy.

The consumer price index rose 0.5% last month from a year earlier, quickening from December's 0.1% gain, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed yesterday, above the 0.4% rise estimate in a Reuters poll of economists.

Core inflation, excluding volatile prices for food and fuel, sped up to 0.6% in January from 0.4% the previous month.

Although consumer prices are expected to rise gradually, producer prices are unlikely to return to positive territory in the short term as overcapacity in industrial goods

➤ **Producer price index down 2.3% year-on-year amid weak factory demand**

persists, said Xu Tianchen, senior economist at the Economist Intelligence Unit.

"If measured by the GDP deflator, it will still take a few quarters to get out of deflation," Xu said.

The numbers were skewed by seasonal factors, as the Lunar New Year, China's biggest annual holiday, began in January this year versus February last year.

Typically, prices rise as consumers stockpile goods, particularly food for big family gatherings.

Prices of airplane tickets rose 8.9% from a year earlier, tourism inflation was 7% and movie and performance ticket prices rose 11%.

Consumer spending reports over the holidays were mixed, reflecting worries over wage and job security.

While the Chinese flocked to

movie theatres and spent more on shopping, catering and domestic travel, per capita spending during the holidays grew by only 1.2% from a year earlier, versus a 9.4% rise in 2024, analysts at ANZ estimated.

CPI edged up 0.7% in January from the previous month, below the forecast 0.8% rise and compared with an unchanged outcome in December.

For 2024, CPI rose 0.2%, in line with the previous year's pace and well below the official target of around 3% for last year, suggesting inflation missed annual targets for the 13th straight year.

China's provinces have announced 2025 economic growth targets with the average of target prices below 3%, showing that policymakers are anticipating changes and pressures on the price level, said Bruce Pang, adjunct

associate professor at CUHK Business School.

China's manufacturing unexpectedly contracted in January, while services activity weakened, keeping alive calls for more stimulus.

Beijing is widely expected to retain its economic growth forecast of around 5% this year, but fresh US tariffs will put stress on exports, one of the few bright spots in the economy last year.

The producer price index declined 2.3% on year in January, matching December's drop and deeper than the forecast 2.1% fall.

Factory-gate prices have remained deflationary for 28 straight months.

The government is not expected to change monetary or fiscal policy before the annual parliament session in March, said Zhiwei Zhang, president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.

"For policymakers, external uncertainty seems to rank higher than domestic economic challenges at this stage," Zhang added. – Reuters

Japan PM voices optimism over averting US tariffs

TOKYO: Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba expressed optimism yesterday that his country could avoid higher US tariffs, saying President Donald Trump had "recognised" Japan's huge investment in the United States and the American jobs that it creates.

At his first White House summit on Friday, Ishiba told public broadcaster NHK, that he explained to Trump how many Japanese automakers were creating jobs in the United States.

The two did not specifically

discuss auto tariffs, Ishiba said, although he said he did not know whether Japan would be subject to the reciprocal tariffs that Trump has said he plans to impose on imports.

Tokyo has so far escaped the trade war Trump unleashed in his first weeks in office.

He has announced tariffs on goods from Canada, Mexico and China, although he postponed the 25% duties on his North American neighbours to allow for talks.

The escalating trade tensions

since Trump returned to the White House on Jan 20 threaten to rupture the global economy.

Ishiba said he believes Trump "recognised the fact Japan has been the world's largest investor in the United States for five straight years, and is therefore different from other countries".

"Japan is creating many US jobs. I believe (Washington) won't go straight to the idea of higher tariffs," he said.

Ishiba voiced optimism that

Japan and the US can avoid a tit-for-tat tariff war, stressing that tariffs should be put in place in a way that "benefits both sides".

"Any action that exploits or excludes the other side won't last," Ishiba said.

"The question is whether there is any problem between Japan and the United States that warrants imposing higher tariffs."

Japan had the highest foreign direct investment in the United States in 2023 at US\$783.3 billion (RM3.4 trillion), followed by Canada and Germany, according to the most recent US Commerce Department data.

Trump pressed Ishiba to close Japan's US\$68.5 billion annual trade surplus with Washington but expressed optimism this could be done quickly, given a promise by Ishiba to bring Japanese investment in the US to US\$1 trillion.

Ishiba identified liquefied natural gas, steel, AI and autos as areas that Japanese companies could invest in.

He also touched on Trump's promise to look at Nippon Steel investing in US Steel, as opposed to buying the storied American company – a planned purchase opposed by Trump and blocked by his predecessor Joe Biden.

"Investment is being made to ensure that it remains an American company. It will continue to operate under American management, with American employees.

"The key point is how to ensure it remains an American company. From President Trump's perspective, this is of utmost importance," Ishiba said. – Reuters



Ishiba and Trump holding a joint press conference following talks in the White House. – AFP/PIC

BERLIN: Billionaire Elon Musk said that he was not interested in purchasing TikTok, the popular short-video app that the United States has been trying to ban over national security concerns with its Chinese owner ByteDance.

Musk's comments, made in late January, were released online on Saturday by The WELT Group, a part of the German media company Axel Springer SE, which hosted a summit where the Tesla chief joined the conference via video.

"I have not put in a bid for TikTok," Musk said a week after US President Donald Trump said he was open to the Tesla CEO buying the ByteDance-owned app if he wanted to do so.

"I don't have any plans for what I would do if I had TikTok," Musk said, adding that he does not use the short video app personally, and was not familiar with the app's format.

"I'm not chomping at the bit to acquire TikTok, I do not acquire companies in general, it's quite rare," Musk said, adding that his billion-dollar acquisition of social media platform Twitter, now called X, was unusual.

Musk not interested in acquiring TikTok

► Tesla chief says he usually builds companies from scratch

"I usually build companies from scratch."

The Republican president signed an executive order seeking to delay the enforcement of a ban on the popular short-video app that was slated to be shuttered on Jan 19.

ByteDance was given the January deadline to sell the American assets of TikTok or face a US ban, following lawmakers' concerns that the app poses national security risks because China could compel the company to share the data of its US users.

TikTok has denied that it has or ever would share US user data.

Apple and Google have not reinstated TikTok to their app stores since a US law took effect.

TikTok said on Friday that it was allowing US Android users to download and connect to the app through package kits on its website, in an effort to circumvent restrictions on the popular platform in the country.

Trump has said that he was in talks with multiple people over TikTok's purchase and would likely

have a decision on the app's future this month. It has about 170 million American users.

Last week, Trump signed an executive order to create a sovereign wealth fund within the year, saying it could potentially buy TikTok.

ByteDance has previously denied any plans to sell TikTok.

Trump saving TikTok represents a reversal in stance from his first term in office when he unsuccessfully sought to ban the app over concerns the company was sharing Americans' personal information with the Chinese government.

More recently, Trump has said he has "a warm spot in my heart for TikTok," crediting the app with helping him win over young voters in the 2024 presidential election. – Reuters

Hilton warns of weak leisure travel demand

NEW YORK: Hotel operator Hilton Worldwide forecast 2025 profit below Wall Street estimates last week, weighed down by weak leisure travel demand in the US.

While wealthy Americans are taking advantage of a strong dollar and traveling abroad, low- to middle-income people are grappling with increasing costs and have cut back on discretionary expenses like vacations.

The McLean, Virginia-based company expects 2025 adjusted profit between US\$7.71 and US\$7.82 per share, compared with analysts' average estimate of US\$8.02 per share, according to data compiled by LSEG.

It expects system wide revenue per available room (RevPAR) to increase between 2% and 3% from a year earlier, and net unit growth of about 6% to 7%.

Hilton's RevPAR grew 3.5% for the fourth quarter, while occupancy remained fairly steady at 69.9%, up 110 basis points from a year earlier.

RevPAR in the US, the company's biggest market in terms of hotel rooms, came in at US\$114.18, up 2.9% from a year earlier, but down nearly 10.7% on a sequential basis.

Quarterly RevPAR in Asia-Pacific rose 1.7% as travel demand in China remains muted, but the region is now showing signs of recovery after contracting 3.4% in the third quarter.

Hilton's development pipeline during the quarter grew 8% to 498,600 rooms.

Incentive management fees came in at US\$86 million, down about 10.5% from a year earlier.

Hilton posted a fourth-quarter profit of US\$1.76 per share, compared with analysts' average estimate of US\$1.68. – Reuters

Ford expects lower earnings on pricing pressure

NEW YORK: Ford reported a profitable fourth quarter in results that topped estimates but signaled it expects lower 2025 operating earnings on pricing pressure.

The US auto giant, which has enjoyed robust returns in its commercial vehicle and conventional gasoline businesses that have offset deep electric vehicle (EV) losses, expects a 2% drop in industry-wide pricing in 2025, executives said.

As a result, Ford sees adjusted operating profits of between US\$7 to US\$8.5 billion, down from US\$10.2 billion in 2024, when it scored record revenues on higher vehicle sales.

Profits in the fourth quarter came in at US\$1.8 billion, compared with a loss of US\$526 million in the year-ago period.

Revenues rose 5% to US\$48.2 billion, reflecting a double-digit increase in US vehicle sales in the period.

Ford executives described this year's pricing outlook as set by global conditions in autos as well as an expected glut of EVs in the US market.

"There's still pockets of strength, but there's areas where we're seeing incentives to get deals done," said John Lawler, vice-chairman of the

company and the outgoing chief financial officer.

Lawler characterised pricing in the first half of 2024 as "much stronger" than in the second half, with the trends continuing thus far in 2025.

Sherry House, Ford's incoming CFO, told a call with reporters that the company had not taken any actions in response to trade tariff moves by Donald Trump's administration.

On Monday, the White House suspended for 30 days a plan to enact 25 percent tariffs on Mexico and Canada following commitments by the governments to address

concerns about immigration and fentanyl.

Tariffs of the scale "would have a major impact on our industry," House said.

"We've mobilised our team across all the scenarios to ensure we minimise disruptions and protect our business."

Ford's projections also do not include changes from Washington on EVs, such as talk that the White House could remove a tax credit of up to US\$7,500 on new EV purchases.

Ford's 2025 forecast includes an operating loss of between US\$5 and US\$5.5 billion in EVs. – AFP

Lilly forecasts 2025 profit largely above estimates on weight-loss drug strength

NEW YORK: Eli Lilly forecast annual profit largely above Wall Street estimates, banking on the launch of its popular diabetes and weight-loss treatments in new markets.

On an adjusted basis, the US firm expects to earn between US\$22.50 and US\$24.00 per share in 2025.

Analysts were expecting a profit of US\$22.86 per share.

Quarterly sales of diabetes drug Mounjaro came in at US\$3.53 billion, compared with analysts expectations of US\$4.27 billion.

Zepbound, its weight-loss treatment, reported revenue of US\$1.91 billion, below the US\$2.03 billion analysts were expecting.

Lilly last month said it expected Q4 sales of Zepbound and Mounjaro to miss Wall Street estimates.

The company has blamed physical and financial constraints at wholesalers, but some investors have expressed concerns about cooling demand for GLP-1s, the class of treatments to which both Zepbound and rival Wegovy belong.

Lilly's Zepbound and Danish rival Novo Nordisk's Wegovy dominate a market for weight-loss treatments that analysts expect to be a US\$150 billion market by the early 2030s.

Both firms have seen rapid growth in recent years, fuelled by investor interest in their weight-loss and diabetes treatments. – Reuters



An Eli Lilly manufacturing plant at 50 ImClone Drive in Branchburg, New Jersey. – REUTERS/PIC

Bank of England cuts rates and growth outlook

BoE blames US tariff threats and deteriorating business confidence

LONDON: The Bank of England (BoE) halved its forecast for British economic growth this year, blaming global risks amid American tariff threats and deteriorating business confidence in the UK.

The sharp downgrade, which estimates gross domestic product at 0.75% in 2025 compared with an BoE forecast of 1.5% in November, came alongside a cut to its key interest rate.

In an expected decision, the central bank trimmed borrowing costs by a quarter point to 4.5% at a regular policy meeting, with weak growth concerns offsetting concerns about above-target UK inflation.

Downgrades to growth – the BoE also said the UK economy likely grew 0.75% last year rather than 1% – heaps more pressure on the Labour government which has pledged to drive forward the economy since winning power in July.

A third interest-rate cut in six months “is

welcome news, helping ease the cost of living pressures ... and making it easier for businesses to borrow to grow”, Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves said in a statement.

“However, I am still not satisfied with the growth rate.”

BoE governor Andrew Bailey said the central bank will be “monitoring the UK economy and global developments very closely and taking a gradual and careful approach to reducing rates further”.

At 4.5%, borrowing costs are at the lowest level since June 2023.

Seven BoE policymakers including Bailey voted for a quarter-point cut but the remaining two wanted a deeper reduction that would have taken the rate to 4.25%.

“GDP growth has been weaker than expected ... and indicators of business and consumer confidence have declined,” minutes of the meeting said.

“Tariffs and other trade barriers would likely have adverse effects on UK activity,” the BoE added.

Donald Trump has stated that Britain may not escape levies on its exports to the United States, having already imposed tariffs on imports from China and threatened similar action against the European Union.

The US president has delayed measures against US neighbours Mexico and Canada, pending talks.

There is widespread concern that such tariffs will cause a renewed spike in inflation that risks hikes to interest rates.

The US Federal Reserve last month left borrowing costs unchanged but the European Central Bank cut eurozone rates.

The Bank of England cut in August for the first time since early 2020, from a 16-year high of 5.25% after UK inflation fell sharply.

It reduced further in November, aiding mortgage holders but hurting savers as retail banks tend to pass on similar cuts to customers.

Britain’s annual inflation rate fell to 2.5% in December but remains above the BoE target of 2%.

Major central banks last year began to cut interest rates that had been hiked in efforts to tame inflation.

UK inflation had soared to above 11% in October 2022, the highest level in more than four decades, as the Russia-Ukraine war cut energy and food supplies, sending prices soaring.

Companies faced supply constraints also as they struggled to return to the pre-Covid rhythm of working. – AFP

Telenor core operating earnings in line with estimates

OSLO: Norwegian telecom operator Telenor reported fourth-quarter core operating earnings in line with estimates and forecast low single-digit organic growth in Nordic service revenues in 2025.

The company also said it expects mid-single-digit organic growth in earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization (EBITDA) in the Nordic region for 2025, and low-to-mid single-digit organic growth in the group’s EBITDA.

In the Nordics, organic service revenues grew by 2.3% in the October-December quarter, driven by a 3.3% increase in mobile service revenues, Telenor said in a statement.

“Our financial ambitions and new outlook are not without risks, but our line of sight has improved considerably and we are confident in our ability to meet our 2025 outlook,” Telenor CEO Benedicte Schilbred Fasmer said.

The company said in Asia, its performance was hampered by the macro-economic situation in Bangladesh as well as a number of one-offs but that Telenor Pakistan showed strong performance.

Adjusted earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization, and other items was at 8.48 billion Norwegian crowns (RM3.3 billion) in the reported quarter, slightly higher than 8.47 billion crowns a year earlier.

Analysts had on average expected an adjusted EBITDA of 8.49 billion crowns in a company-provided poll.

Telenor proposed a dividend of 9.60 crowns per share for 2024, compared with 9.50 crowns in 2023. – Reuters

Thomson Reuters reports higher organic revenue

TORONTO: Thomson Reuters reported last week higher fourth-quarter revenue and issued 2025 organic revenue growth targets that would exceed 2024 rates.

The Toronto-based content and technology company reported quarterly revenue rising 5% to US\$1.909 billion, slightly ahead of analyst expectations of US\$1.907 billion.

“2024 marked important progress at Thomson Reuters,” said CEO Steve Hasker in a prepared statement.

“Looking ahead to 2025, we continue to focus on investing in content-driven technology that helps professionals make complex decisions with confidence.”

The company reported fourth-quarter adjusted earnings per share of US\$1.01. Wall Street expected a profit per share of 96 cents.

Operating profit rose 29% to US\$722 million, boosted by the sale of FindLaw.

Thomson Reuters said it expected organic revenue to rise by 7% to 7.5% in 2025 and 7.5% to 8% in 2026.

The company raised its annualised dividend per share by 10%. – Reuters



A person eating near the Bank of England building in London. – REUTERS/PIC

Carlsberg sees higher than expected 2025 growth

LONDON: Carlsberg last week reported annual operating profit growth at the top of its guided range and forecast higher than anticipated growth for 2025.

Carlsberg, the world’s third largest brewer behind Anheuser-Busch InBev and Heineken, said organic operating profit grew 6% for the full year, versus a guided range of 4% to 6%, though volumes missed analysts’ expectations.

The company anticipates between 1% and 5% growth in organic operating profit for the current

year. Some analysts, including at Jefferies and Barclays, had anticipated 0% to 4% growth for the maker of brands like Kronenbourg 1664, Tuborg and Somersby cider.

CEO Jacob Aarup-Andersen cast 2024 as a year that will “shape the future of Carlsberg”, including via major shifts like its acquisition of British soft drinks maker Britvic and the troubled sale of its Russian business.

The Britvic deal, completed in January, has weighed on Carlsberg’s shares and price-earnings

ratio since it was announced in July, with investors questioning its merits.

Carlsberg reiterated that the deal would help the brewer diversify to offset declines in beer consumption in western markets and deliver cost synergies.

Demand in China, Carlsberg’s largest market, remained subdued, driving down volumes, and challenges there were expected to continue, Aarup-Andersen said.

Carlsberg did, however, outperform the wider

beer market in China, which it projected was down 4%, which it attributed to gaining market share.

It flagged strong growth for its portfolio of expensive beers in markets including China, comments likely to be welcomed by investors after an economic slowdown saw drinkers in Carlsberg’s largest market ditch its pricier labels.

For the current year, it forecast a “relatively stable” consumer environment, but warned uncertainty around consumer sentiment in Asia and Europe. – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: FEBRUARY 7

Bursa Trade Statistic

07 Feb 2025

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

Participation

Retail (21.30%) Institution (44.38%) Foreign (34.32%)

Net (in RM mil.)

-45.54 **-47.68** **+93.22**

Bought (in RM mil.)		Sold (in RM mil.)	
450.64	496.18	962.67	1010.35
Bought (in RM mil.)		Sold (in RM mil.)	
809.38	716.16		

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



Need Some Ideas?
Our Monthly Trader's Talk will be held Every 1st Monday of the Month Live webinar with Q&A

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

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

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,149.50 +58.13
FBMKLCI	1,590.91 +5.74
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	528.31 +1.77
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	166.51 +0.06
CONSTRUCTION	287.15 +5.06
FINANCIAL SERVICES	19,233.40 +83.69
ENERGY	826.44 -1.04
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	529.40 +3.28
HEALTH CARE	2,235.62 +16.53
TRANSPORTATION	1,070.14 -2.77
PROPERTY	1,077.06 -0.43
PLANTATION	7,453.90 -14.40
FBMSHA	11,985.60 +44.44
FBMACE	5,260.35 -4.16
TECHNOLOGY	60.67 +1.61

TURNOVER: 2.956 bil **VALUE: RM2.222 bil**

Bursa up for fourth day in a row on tech, construction gains

BURSA Malaysia ended higher for the fourth consecutive session last Friday, with buying mainly in technology and construction stocks, ahead of the release of US jobs report, said an analyst.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said the benchmark FBM KLCI closed in the positive territory as investors continued to bargain hunt for blue chip stocks after the recent sell-off.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI rose 0.36%, or 5.74 points, to 1,590.91, compared with Thursday's close of 1,585.17.

The benchmark index, which opened 1.55 points lower at 1,583.62, moved between 1,582.92 and 1,591.49 throughout the trading session.

On the broader market, gainers outpaced decliners 642 to 369, with 478 counters unchanged, 828 untraded and 22 suspended.

Thong meanwhile said the key regional markets posted mixed performances following mixed cues from Wall Street overnight.

China and Hong Kong led the gains in the region driven by renewed interest in technology firms following DeepSeek's artificial intelligence (AI) model launch.

"As for the local bourse, the FBM KLCI is testing its 1,590 resistance level. If the benchmark index can hold above this level for longer, it could form a solid base for further gains," Thong told Bernama.

Among the heavyweights, CIMB jumped 17 sen to RM8.39, YTL Power surged 21 sen to RM3.44 sen, YTL Corporation climbed 5 sen to RM2.02, Gamuda increased 14 sen to RM4.56, and Telekom Malaysia increased 11 sen to RM6.75.

Of the most active stocks, Key Alliance remained flat at half-a-sen, MyEG Services gained 3.5 sen to RM1.02, while TWL, Veleso Energy and Supermax were unchanged at 2.5 sen, 19 sen and RM1.20 respectively. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWA1	0.180	+0.025	+16.13	1,451,812
KGROUP	0.005	-	-	1,104,325
HSI-CWCC	0.165	+0.020	+13.79	1,094,016
HSI-PWDC	0.110	-0.015	-12.00	1,021,812
HSI-PWBZ	0.040	-0.015	-27.27	962,436
MYEG	1.020	+0.035	+3.55	920,615
TWL	0.025	-	-	792,091
VELESTO	0.190	-	-	594,386
YTL-CIF	0.040	+0.005	+14.29	461,337
SUPERMX	1.200	-	-	455,921
HM	0.170	-0.025	-12.82	428,983
INARI	2.720	+0.290	+11.93	389,748
YTL	2.020	+0.050	+2.54	357,127
ASIAPLY	0.125	+0.015	+13.64	335,003
HSI-PWBW	0.030	-0.010	-25.00	317,174
YTLPOWR	3.440	+0.210	+6.50	303,208
ALIBABA-C41	0.190	-0.005	-2.56	299,192
YTLPOWR-C77	0.050	+0.005	+11.11	295,364
SRIDGE	0.520	+0.010	+1.96	289,764
NATGATE	1.990	+0.010	+0.51	274,908



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
HLIND	13.660	+0.460	603
F&N	26.200	+0.340	240
INARI	2.720	+0.290	389,748
NSOP	4.080	+0.260	201
PANAMY	17.500	+0.260	195
UTDPLT	31.300	+0.260	3,403
MPI	22.740	+0.240	725
YTLPOWR	3.440	+0.210	303,208
CIMB	8.390	+0.170	215,505
MSM	1.450	+0.160	138,712
BURSA	8.400	+0.140	5,614
CARLSBG	20.260	+0.140	701
GAMUDA	4.560	+0.140	228,717
GESHEN	4.990	+0.140	475
KOTRA	4.490	+0.130	151
AJI	15.200	+0.120	180
ITMAX	3.750	+0.120	20,744
TM	6.750	+0.110	25,782
CHINAETF-MYR	4.870	+0.110	54
VSTECs	3.710	+0.110	5,520

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
INARI-C3A	0.055	+266.67	77,334
DIGISTA-WC	0.015	+200.00	1
TFP-WB	0.015	+200.00	1,102
INARI-C2Y	0.025	+150.00	205,669
CMSB-C51	0.010	+100.00	100
DIGISTA-WD	0.020	+100.00	182
HONGSENG	0.010	+100.00	5,106
HSTECH-C16	0.040	+100.00	1,300
JCY-C15	0.010	+100.00	9,001
MPI-C8	0.010	+100.00	500
MYEG-C7H	0.020	+100.00	6,501
YTLPOWR-C61	0.010	+100.00	2,560
YTLPOWR-C70	0.030	+100.00	26,271
INARI-C2Z	0.055	+83.33	245,372
MYEG-C7Z	0.060	+71.43	2,215
INARI-C3B	0.025	+66.67	5,622
YTLPOWR-C79	0.025	+66.67	5,102
MSM-C3	0.115	+64.29	46,965
INARI-C3C	0.065	+62.50	5,100
HSI-CWA2	0.055	+57.14	3,690

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	44,303.40	-444.23	-0.99
S&P 500 (US)	6,025.99	-57.58	-0.95
NASDAQ (US)	19,523.40	-268.59	-1.36
NYSE (US)	20,039.48	-118.1	-0.59
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	5,325.40	-31.23	-0.58
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,700.53	-26.75	-0.31
DAX (GER)	21,787.00	-115.42	-0.53
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	38,787.02	-279.51	-0.72
TOPIX (JPN)	2,737.23	-14.97	-0.54
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	21,133.54	241.92	1.16
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,892.70	49.87	1.3
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	185.71	0.46	0.25
SH SE COM (CHN)	3,303.67	33.01	1.01
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,521.92	-14.83	-0.58
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	77,860.19	-197.97	-0.25
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,511.43	-9.28	-0.11
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,780.28	-4.82	-0.05
FBM KLCI	1,590.91	5.74	0.36
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,861.42	31	0.81
WTI (US\$/BBL.)	71	0.39	0.55
BRENT (US\$/BBL.)	74.66	0.37	0.5
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	2,887.60	10.9	0.38
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	32.44	-0.18	-0.56
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	978.49	-11.46	-1.16
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	458.9	12.8	2.87
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,407.50	131	1.41
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	487.5	-7.75	-1.56
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	582.75	-5	-0.85
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	46.48	0.55	1.2
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	10,113.00	-14	-0.14
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	196.6	0.6	0.31

As at 5pm, Feb 7

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
PETGAS	17.480	-0.320	2,484
NESTLE	90.500	-0.200	599
HSI-PWDV	0.195	-0.185	498
PETDAG	19.520	-0.180	489
FAREAST	3.430	-0.170	68
MISC	7.380	-0.160	4,691
HSI-PWB9	0.190	-0.125	2,279
AXIATA-C1J	0.040	-0.110	300
MI-C27	0.050	-0.100	3,000
UNIMECH	1.400	-0.100	471
INARI-C2X	0.055	-0.090	312
SIME-C89	0.060	-0.090	3,000
D&O-C14	0.070	-0.080	27,393
GCB	4.230	-0.080	14,996
HTPADU	2.580	-0.080	4,658
PPB	11.780	-0.080	2,033
KMLOONG-WB	0.910	-0.075	37
MYEG-C8G	0.075	-0.075	2,479
IOIPG	2.120	-0.070	12,607
CMSB-C58	0.085	-0.065	10

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
ERDASAN-WC	0.005	-80.00	66
AXIATA-C1J	0.040	-73.33	300
HSI-PWBR	0.005	-66.67	18,940
MI-C27	0.050	-66.67	3,000
PBBANK-C1E	0.005	-66.67	2,350
INARI-C2X	0.055	-62.07	312
SIME-C89	0.060	-60.00	3,000
HSTECH-H15	0.015	-57.14	600
CKK-CB	0.025	-54.55	1,700
D&O-C14	0.070	-53.33	27,393
BAT-C33	0.005	-50.00	6,000
CFM-WA	0.005	-50.00	7,386
EAH	0.005	-50.00	4,012
ENKKAH-WB	0.010	-50.00	860
HSI-HZV	0.005	-50.00	2,500
HSI-PWBD	0.005	-50.00	10,115
INARI-C2W	0.005	-50.00	860
JAKS-WC	0.005	-50.00	700
MSM-CX	0.005	-50.00	500
MYEG-C8G	0.075	-50.00	2,479

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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Android support for World ID Credentials in M'sia launched

KUALA LUMPUR: World Network has launched Android support for World ID Credentials in Malaysia.

This expansion significantly enhances global accessibility, enabling more individuals and developers to engage with a privacy-preserving, human-verified digital ecosystem.

World ID Credentials strengthen World ID by allowing people to verify their World ID using a passport, reinforcing security and privacy. Initially launched on iOS in Korea, Malaysia, Colombia, and Chile in November last year, the service is now available on Android, extending its reach to millions more worldwide. With this expansion, individuals can receive additional benefits upon verification, further enhancing their experience within the World Network.

Beyond improving access to the World Network, the expansion of World ID Credentials also unlocks new opportunities for developers. The World Network continues to provide a verified, human-based audience – enabling direct engagement with real users. With over 23 million participants, the platform simplifies app distribution and onboarding, eliminating common barriers such as high costs and bot-driven traffic.

Recent Tools For Humanity (TFH) data highlights the rapid growth of World's Mini Apps ecosystem, which sees approximately 3.8 million daily opens, 6.7 million daily impressions, and 3.4 million weekly World ID verifications. Mini Apps, a core feature of World App 3.0, enable seamless integration for developers – offering self-custodial wallets, zero transaction fees, and World ID authentication for secure, efficient interactions.

"Expanding Android support for World ID Credentials is a major milestone in making the World Network more accessible globally," said World ID tools for humanity head Ajay Patel.

Ringgit drops slightly on US tariff uncertainty

THE ringgit ended the week slightly lower against the US dollar last Friday, as cautious market sentiments prevailed due to uncertainties over the US tariff policies.

Additionally, the hotly contested move to take over Gaza has given rise to a potential escalation in the Middle East conflict, said an analyst.

At 6pm, the ringgit eased marginally to 4.4375/4420 against the greenback from Thursday's close of 4.4320/4385.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the prevailing market condition would continue to favour the US dollar as the US Federal Reserve seems to be not inclined to ease its monetary policy in the near term.

Meanwhile, the ringgit was traded lower against other major currencies.

It fell against the Japanese yen to 2.9217/9249 from 2.9036/9080 on Thursday, slipped against the euro to 4.6101/6148 from 4.5920/5987 yesterday, and depreciated against the British pound to 5.5278/5334 from 5.5090/5171 previously.

The local note was also weaker against Asean currencies.

It was lower against the Singapore dollar at 3.2866/2901 from 3.2742/2793 at the close on Thursday, and decreased against the Thai baht to 13.1853/2041 from 13.1175/1433 previously.

The ringgit also declined against the Indonesian rupiah to 272.4/272.9 from 271.2/271.7 yesterday and fell against the Philippines' peso to 7.65/7.66 from Thursday's close of 7.62/7.63. – Bernama

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.5055	4.3725	4.3625
1 Australian Dollar	2.8500	2.7350	2.7190
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3330	3.2360	3.2280
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1450	3.0620	3.0500
1 Euro	4.6840	4.5330	4.5130
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5710	2.4770	2.4610
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3330	3.2360	3.2280
1 Sterling Pound	5.6080	5.4310	5.4110
1 Swiss Franc	5.0090	4.7960	4.7810
100 UAE Dirham	124.0900	117.7100	117.5100
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7570	3.5260	3.3260
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.2300	59.6200	N/A
100 Danish Krone	64.3400	59.2300	59.0300
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.4600	55.5700	55.3700
100 Indian Rupee	5.2300	4.9100	4.7100
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0285	0.0258	0.0208
100 Japanese Yen	2.9760	2.8820	2.8720
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.8000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	41.2800	37.9800	37.7800
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6400	1.5400	1.3400
100 Philippine Peso	7.8800	7.4300	7.2300
100 Qatar Riyal	124.9600	118.6300	118.4300
100 Saudi Riyal	121.4700	115.3200	115.1200
100 South Africa Rand	25.3300	22.8800	22.6800
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5500	1.4300	1.2300
100 Swedish Krona	42.6600	38.8600	38.6600
100 Thai Baht	13.9400	12.3600	11.9600

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

SDS Group Bhd Not Rated



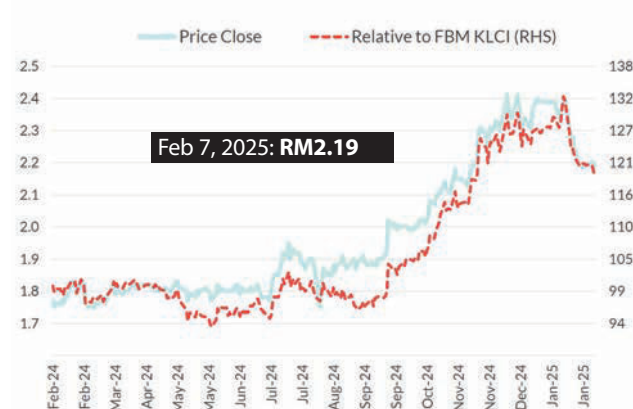
Source: Maybank Investment Bank

DERIVING more than 40% of its revenue from Johor and 6% from Singapore, SDS Group is well-positioned as a Johor consumer play, and a potential beneficiary of increased cross-border activity and the influx of Singaporeans and other foreigners into the southern state.

SDS Group Bhd is an investment holding company, which engages in the manufacturing and distributing of bakery products. The group's core businesses comprise a) the wholesale channel i.e. the manufacture and distribution of bakery products and b) the retail channel i.e. the operation of F&B outlets. While it has its roots in Johor, SDS is on an expansionary trail across Peninsular Malaysia, which is still a relatively untapped market. In August 2024, it increased its delivery fleet size to 350 from 300 to expand its distribution across the peninsula. As for its retail channel, SDS has 42 outlets currently, of which 10 are located outside of Johor. The group typically opens about 3-5 new outlets a year.

SDS' revenue grew at a 4-year CAGR of 14% from FY20 to FY24, while its operating profit surged at a 4-year CAGR of 51%. The group's operating profit margin rose from 6% in FY20 to 19% in FY24, while its net profit margin improved from just 2% in FY20 to 10% in FY24. Alongside the rapid growth in earnings coupled with the expansion in margins, SDS' ROE has burgeoned from 6.3% in FY20 to 28.4% in FY24. SDS was in a net cash position of RM11.5 million end-Sept 2024. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Feb 7**

Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd Buy. Target price: RM2.72



Source: Bloomberg

WE are positive on Matrix Concepts' strategic exposure to the healthcare segment. Post visit, we believe Mawar Medical Centre (MMC) will not only provide a steady stream of recurring income, but also much stronger growth upon the completion of the ward expansion by end 2025. For the property segment, MVV City is expected to be the main growth driver upon its maiden launch in FY26.

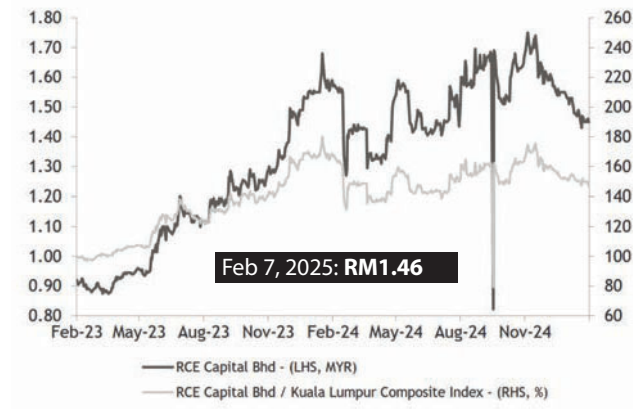
MMC is currently among the top three largest private hospitals in Negri Sembilan by bed capacity. MCH has successfully turned around the hospital after taking over in 2020. MMC's revenue hit RM94.9 million in FY24 from RM32.8 million in FY21, while revenue per bed reached RM1.23 million (RM664k excluding dialysis) from RM575k. Its gross profit margin is now at around 55% from 46% three years ago. Its average bed occupancy rate is at 83% last year. Despite being a small hospital in a suburban area, MMC's PBT margin of around 15% as well as revenue per bed are very much comparable to larger peers based in the Klang Valley region.

MMC's management plans to focus more on orthopaedics, cardiology and gastroenterology going forward. Given the strong demand for healthcare services in Negri Sembilan, the hospital is now undergoing an expansion.

MVV City's maiden launch is expected in FY26, with 1,000 of its 2,382 acres for industrial use. About 120-130 acres are already booked, potentially generating earnings from FY26.

BUY with new RM2.72 TP. – **RHB Research, Feb 7**

RCE Capital Bhd Hold. Target price: RM1.45



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

CIVIL servants received a 8% salary hike on 1 Dec 2024 and will receive another 7% salary hike on Jan 1, 2026. Recall that there is a strong correlation between RCE's financing receivables and government emoluments. RCE stated that demand has been 'overflowing' to the point that some staff have to work weekends to process applications. Yet, it cautioned that the credit quality of many new applicants are less than desirable. Thus, it is not ready to guide on financing growth yet. We forecast financing growth of 15% over 2 years from Dec 2024.

Under R78, payments in the earlier part of financings go more towards paying interest than principal. Thus, a customer has relatively more principal to redeem if he/she settles the financing early. If R78 is abolished, RCE will have to charge less fee income should a customer settle his/her financing early as it is based on the principal outstanding. That said, RCE explained that it usually gives a discount on the fee income to customers and can vary it should R78 be abolished.

Notwithstanding, we believe that any reduction in the tenure of new personal financings to 7 years from 10 will crimp financing growth as it will push the debt service ratio of customers towards the 60% cap. When the tenure of new personal financings was reduced to 10 years from 25 in July 2013, RCE's FY3/14 financing receivables eased 2% YoY even though the salaries of civil servants were hiked by 7% to 13% on Apr 1, 2012.

HOLD with RM1.45 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Feb 7**



Worldwide **AI** arms race

Get to know major players in high-stakes contest - **P22**



WEEKLY FOCUS

MONDAY
Technology and social media

TUESDAY
Travel and leisure

WEDNESDAY
Fashion and beauty

THURSDAY
Home and living

FRIDAY
Food and beverage

Major global contenders in AI race

▶ Players raise, spend billions in scramble to be number one

SINCE ChatGPT was launched in 2022, generative artificial intelligence (AI) has blossomed around large US companies, with a few European and Chinese rivals.

Ahead of the Paris AI summit today, here are the main players:

Pioneering OpenAI

US-based OpenAI emerged as the figurehead of generative AI when it released chatbot ChatGPT.

The tool popularised everyday use of AI and sparked massive investment.

Since its founding, OpenAI has raised US\$20 billion (RM88.3 billion), especially from top shareholder Microsoft.

It is in talks to line up a further US\$40 billion, the *Wall Street Journal* reported in January.

CEO Sam Altman, briefly fired before returning in November 2023, co-founded OpenAI as a non-profit with other Silicon Valley heavyweights, including Elon Musk.

But the business is gradually changing its governance structure towards a regular profit-making enterprise.

DeepSeek, China's entry to the crowded AI field, is famous for sending the stocks of several US tech giants plunging.



Mistral is France's attempt to challenge established US industry players.

– AFP/IC

US rival Anthropic

Two former OpenAI workers Dario and Daniela Amodei founded Anthropic in 2021.

It has made the tighter safeguards on its Claude model a selling point compared with competing AIs.

Anthropic has not matched OpenAI's fundraising, but has the eye of several major players in the tech world.

Amazon has pumped in



The race for AI supremacy raises multiple concerns, not least ethical ones affecting human interactions and behaviour.



US\$8 billion, half of it in November last year.

Other backers, including Google parent company Alphabet with US\$3 billion, have brought Anthropic's total fundraising to US\$12.9 billion since its creation.

Established players: Google and Meta

ChatGPT spurred existing tech giants into an innovation arms race fuelled by vast war chests.

Meta opened its Llama model to developers in February 2023, since developing it further with versions 2

and 3.

On its Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp and Threads platforms, Meta has been pushing its MetaAI conversational assistant.

Meta has blocked access to the tool from Europe, citing the "unpredictable nature of the European regulatory environment".

Last month, Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg announced plans to invest up to US\$65 billion per year, mostly in AI.

Google followed in OpenAI's footsteps with its Bard chatbot, released to the public in 2023.

It was renamed Gemini in February 2024 after an update to the model.

Google chiefs "do not talk about our specific numbers" for AI investment in public, the head of its Deepmind AI research unit Demis Hassabis said in April last year.

French underdog Mistral

Mistral was founded in May 2023 by French developers Arthur Mensch, Guillaume Lample and Timothee Lacroix, all with experience working in the tech giants' research labs.

The start-up announced at launch that it had raised 100 million euros (RM459 million), setting itself up as a European alternative to US giants.

Mistral's chatbot "Le Chat" – a play on the French word for "cat" as well as the English "chat" – was released in February 2024.

The company also revealed a partnership with Microsoft, which invested US\$15 million.

Last month, AFP news agency signed a deal with Mistral allowing the startup's chatbot to draw on the news agency's articles to formulate responses.

Later, at the World Economic



Alibaba claims its Qwen 2.5 will outperform its rivals. – PIC FROM FACEBOOK @IFEANYICHRISTOPHER

Forum in Davos, the firm said it was aiming for a stock market flotation to preserve its independence from bigger players.

In total, Mistral has raised over one billion euros in funding.

DeepSeek shock

Chinese startup DeepSeek revealed its R1 chatbot at the end of January. Its stunning entry into the crowded AI field sent stocks of several tech giants including chipmaker Nvidia plunging.

Its great innovation was achieving results similar to other models for a much lower cost.

"DeepSeek's R1 is an impressive model, particularly around what they are able to deliver for the price," OpenAI's Altman posted on X in response.

But the US company has accused DeepSeek and others of reverse-engineering its models from OpenAI's offerings in a process known as "distillation".

Alibaba joins race

The most recent arrival in conversational tools is Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's Qwen2.5-Max, launched on Jan 30.

Available only to developers for now, the company has claimed its AI model is capable of outperforming competitors. – AFP



An overcrowded AI sphere means a mad scramble to lure investors. – PICS FROM PEXELS

BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ

THE Asus Zenbook S 14 combines sleek design, cutting-edge performance and advanced AI (artificial intelligence) capabilities into a compact and portable form factor. Here, *theSun* explores the laptop's features, benchmarks and user experience, demonstrating why it is a game-changer for professionals, content creators and casual users alike.

Premium, lightweight portable

The Asus Zenbook S 14 stands out with its ultra-slim and lightweight design. Weighing just over 1kg, this laptop is ideal for those constantly on the move. Its sleek metallic finish gives it a premium look, while its sturdy construction ensures durability for daily use. The compact 14-inch frame is easy to carry, making it a reliable companion for work and travel.

The laptop's 14-inch display supports up to a 4K resolution, delivering vibrant colours and sharp details. It is ideal for professionals working on design, video editing or content creation. Paired with narrow bezels, the screen feels immersive without compromising portability.

The Zenbook S 14 is powered by the Intel Core Ultra 7 processor, part of Intel's second-generation Core Ultra series (formerly Lunar Lake). Featuring a hybrid architecture of performance-cores (P-cores) and efficient-cores (E-cores), it handles demanding tasks such as video editing, AI workloads and multitasking quite well.

The built-in Intel Arc graphics, based on the advanced Xe2 architecture, deliver excellent performance for both productivity and light gaming. Whether users are creating professional-grade content or running AI applications, the laptop proves itself as a capable performer.

New era of AI workloads

The Zenbook S 14 leverages Intel's built-in neural processing unit (NPU), enabling fast and efficient AI operations. From generating images with stable diffusion models to performing real-time machine-vision tasks, the NPU significantly accelerates workloads that rely on artificial intelligence.

The laptop shines in creative applications such as GIMP with stable diffusion, where it can generate high-resolution images from text prompts effortlessly. For video editing, Adobe Premiere Pro's AI-powered features such as Transcribe & Caption and Scene Edit Detection enhance productivity by automating tedious tasks.

Users can also customise their workflows using AI-powered tools



Open or closed, the Zenbook S 14 is always stylish.

Compact powerhouse for productivity, AI workloads

➤ Laptop for today's multitasking professionals

such as Geekbench AI and UL Procyon benchmarks to determine the optimal configuration for their needs.

The Intel Arc GPU offers 8 Xe-cores, complete with ray tracing and AI acceleration capabilities, making the Zenbook S 14 suitable for both professional graphics work and casual gaming. AAA games like *Cyberpunk 2077* and *Shadow of the Tomb Raider* run smoothly at 1080p with XeSS performance mode enabled, delivering higher frame rates and improved visuals.

While it is not a gaming laptop, these benchmarks demonstrate that it can handle popular games with respectable performance, making it a versatile choice for occasional gamers.

Packed with ports, features

Equipped with a 72Wh battery, the Zenbook S 14 delivers exceptional battery life. With over 16 hours of productivity on the Procyon Office Productivity benchmark, it easily lasts a full workday without needing a



This laptop delivers vibrant colours and sharp details.

recharge. For users who frequently travel or work remotely, this longevity is a major plus.

The laptop's power efficiency is further enhanced by Intel's new hybrid architecture, which optimises performance per watt. Additionally, fast charging support ensures that users can get back to work quickly when the battery runs low.

The Zenbook S 14 features Thunderbolt 4 ports, providing lightning-fast data transfer and support for multiple 4K monitors. The inclusion of a USB-C nano dongle allows smooth connectivity across various platforms, from external GPUs to mobile devices.

Thunderbolt 4 also supports Intel's innovative Thunderbolt Share,

enabling PC-to-PC screen sharing, file synchronisation and fast data migration. This feature is particularly useful for users upgrading to a new device or collaborating on multi-system projects.

Silent, cool, comfortable

Despite its powerful performance, the Zenbook S 14 remains impressively quiet, even under heavy workloads. The advanced cooling system effectively dissipates heat, ensuring a comfortable typing experience during long sessions.

The keyboard is well-spaced, with excellent tactile feedback, while the large trackpad is responsive and precise. Combined with Windows 11's intuitive interface, navigating the laptop feels effortless and enjoyable.

The Asus Zenbook S 14 is designed for modern professionals, content creators and casual gamers who demand portability and performance. Its AI capabilities make it an excellent choice for those exploring machine learning, while its lightweight design and long battery life cater to frequent travellers.

Future-ready for work

The Asus Zenbook S 14 is proof of what modern laptops can achieve. It delivers top-tier performance in AI workloads, productivity and graphics-intensive tasks, all while maintaining a sleek, portable design.

Whether you are editing videos, running machine-learning models or simply enjoying a marathon work session, the Zenbook S 14 rises to the challenge. Its versatility, combined with innovative features like Thunderbolt 4 and built-in AI acceleration, makes it a compelling choice for anyone seeking a powerful yet lightweight laptop.

For those looking to stay ahead of the curve, the Zenbook S 14 is a worthy investment that blends cutting-edge technology with everyday usability.

It is slim, powerful and refined.



The ergonomic keyboard is designed for comfort and precision.



The lightweight yet powerful portable is for work and play.



Realme's rugged AI pioneer

➤ Entry-level 5G phone mixes military-grade durability with next-gen artificial intelligence

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

REALME has unveiled its latest entry-level 5G smartphone, the Realme 14x, positioning it as a device that combines durability with artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities. The new model represents the company's effort to bring premium features to the more accessible segment of the smartphone market.

At first glance, the Realme 14x impresses with its slim profile, measuring just 7.94mm in thickness and weighing 190g. Available in Carbon Black and Peridot Green, the device features a distinctive transparent light and shadow texture on its back panel, designed for both aesthetics and improved grip.

Military-grade testing

Durability stands out as a key focus for the 14x. The device comes equipped with ArmorShell Protection and has passed Military-Grade Shock Resistance Testing. The engineering team has implemented several protective measures, including a raised screen protection ring that extends 0.23mm around the edges,

internal buffer materials strategically placed around core components and a robust die-cast aluminum structure reinforced with metal ribs. The phone's IP64 rating is the cherry on top of its steely exterior, as it ensures protection against dust and water splashes.

Under the hood, the 14x is powered by the MediaTek Dimensity 6300 5G chipset, built on a 6nm process. The processor architecture combines two high-performance Arm Cortex-A76 cores running at up to 2.4GHz with six Arm Cortex-A55 cores at up to 2.0GHz. According to Realme, this configuration delivers GPU performance that exceeds similar products by over 50% and provides up to 13% higher game frame rates.

Expandable storage

The device's memory configuration is particularly noteworthy for its segment, featuring 18GB of Dynamic RAM, which combines 8GB of native memory with 10GB of expandable memory. This setup allows users to keep up to 19 apps active in the background. Additionally, storage needs are addressed with 256GB of ROM, expandable up to 2TB.



Its military-grade shock resistance provides protection from accidental drops.

Display technology receives special attention with a 120Hz refresh rate screen that incorporates 10 distinct eye protection features. These range from full brightness DC dimming for flicker elimination to intelligent bedtime modes that adjust colour temperature. The display adapts to various conditions, including strong sunlight and offers specialised modes for reading and low-light environments.

Power management is handled by a 5000mAh battery supported by 15W fast charging. The battery life is substantial, with the ability to support 12 hours of continuous video playback or video-heavy social media usage. The charging system demonstrates resilience by

functioning even in low temperatures, with quick charging capabilities that provide nearly two hours of call time from just a five-minute charge.

Another AI smartphone

The 14x embraces AI with several practical applications. It integrates Google Gemini for complex reasoning tasks and advanced coding support. The AI Clear Face feature addresses both blurry portraits and aging photographs, while AI Smart Image Matting simplifies subject isolation for creative purposes. The device also includes Circle to Search functionality and AI Smart Loop for enhanced content sharing between applications.

Photography enthusiasts will find a 50MP AI camera with an F1.8 aperture, optimised for well-lit environments and capable of producing detailed images with natural depth effects.

The camera system is complemented by innovative features like Rainwater Smart Touch, which maintains touch accuracy even with water droplets on the screen or when used with slightly oily hands.

An intriguing addition is the Free Call feature, which enables communication without internet connectivity. This function works across various scenarios, reaching up to 210 meters in unobstructed underground garage conditions and maintaining effectiveness even in challenging environments like crowded subway stations.

Extensive testing

The device's commitment to quality is evidenced by its extensive testing regime, having undergone over 320 test stages. These include durability tests such as 500,000 power button cycles and 14,000 micro drop tests, along with temperature resistance evaluations from -20°C to 75°C.

With Realme UI 6.0 providing the software foundation, featuring redesigned icons and an optimised notification system, the 14x proves to be a

comprehensive package in the entry-level 5G segment. It successfully combines durability, performance and AI capabilities in a device that aims to meet the evolving needs of budget-conscious smartphone users.



Realme's 14x is the most affordable phone with some of the best features in the mid-range market.

Average smartphone price hits new record as consumers flock to premium devices

SMARTPHONE shipments grew in 2024, with a record average selling price of US\$356 (RM1,575). Consumers are not hesitating to pay the price for access to the latest high-performance features.

According to Counterpoint Research, the average selling price of a smartphone has never been so high. In 2024, it rose to US\$356, a 1% increase on the previous year. This increase reflects a trend towards the premiumisation of the market, with consumers increasingly inclined to invest in top-of-the-range devices, meeting their needs better and running longer. Unsurprisingly, Apple boasts the highest average selling price, at over US\$900 – another new record.

For the rest, the global smartphone market returned to growth in 2024 after two years of decline. This growth is attributed to improved macroeconomic conditions and renewed consumer



According to research, the average selling price of a smartphone has never been so high. – PEXELSPIC

confidence, favouring upgrades to devices with 5G and advanced features such as better cameras and faster processors. In terms of sales, Samsung and Apple still dominate the market, with a market share of

18% each, ahead of China's Xiaomi (14%), Oppo and Vivo (8%). The trend is likely to remain upward for 2025, especially if the 5G smartphone offer expands into the mid-range and low-end segments. – ETX Studio



The phone's Ultra Volume Mode gives immersive entertainment value.

UMOBILE, Malaysia's future second 5G network provider, has achieved over 120Mbps seamless 5G network coverage during a trial across the entire 13.5km span of the iconic first Penang Bridge using Huawei's Meta Active Antenna Unit (MetaAAU) technology.

As one of the world's longest sea-crossing bridges, it has been challenging for consumers to get consistent coverage due to network engineering hurdles because of its length and fluctuating traffic patterns.

The industry took years to resolve these challenges, which required the installation of a 4G base station in the middle of the bridge to maintain connectivity. However, U Mobile has changed the approach with 5G technology and network engineering.

Previous limitations have now been addressed with the MetaAAU, by using an Extremely Large Antenna Array and beamforming algorithm to double antenna elements, enhance coverage distance and improve user experience by over 30%.

The MetaAAU sites are positioned at each end of the Penang Bridge and effectively eliminates the need for a base station in the middle of the bridge.

Its "0 Bit 0 Watt" mode allows modules to shut down up to a rate as high as 99% during low-traffic periods, which ensures optimal energy efficiency without affecting performance. The mode makes it suitable for locations like the Penang Bridge, where traffic fluctuates between day and night. The system can reactivate within minutes when traffic demand increases, ensuring optimal energy use while maintaining efficient, high-quality performance.

As a result, the trial demonstrated that users experienced network



U Mobile has leveraged next-gen technology to significantly improve connectivity across the Penang Bridge.

Penang Bridge gets connected

➤ U Mobile sets new benchmark for 5G coverage over entire span of sea-crossing structure

speeds at a minimum of 120Mbps, with an average of 597Mbps and zero dropped calls even at vehicle speeds of 80km/h, significantly outperforming legacy 4G solutions.

Once the 5G network is commercialised and made available

to the public, passengers and commuters on the first Penang Bridge can enjoy smooth 4K video viewing, seamless short video switching, immersive game experiences and even HD live broadcasts.

Data centres chase water, energy savings as AI race ramps up

THREE data centres squatting alongside the cruise ships and freighters in French Mediterranean port Marseille are testing water-saving cooling methods by pumping out an old coal mine.

Efforts such as these are under the spotlight as generative artificial intelligence (AI) consumes growing volumes of water, one of the environmental priorities for February's global AI summit in Paris.

The portside data centres "pump water at a rate of about 3,000 cubic metres per hour", said Fabrice Coquio, president of their operator Digital Realty's French business.

Water keeping the banks of servers

at optimal temperature is "unfit for human consumption... laden with minerals and particles," Coquio added.

Digital Realty counts major platforms, from Microsoft to Disney and TikTok, among clients for its processing and storage.

In recent months, the Marseille site has seen installation of a supercomputer powering AI start-up Sesterce's operations.

Every door on the heavily secured site is opened by fingerprint scanner.

Available year-round at a steady 14°C, the coal mine water enters the server rooms' heat exchangers in a closed-loop system dubbed "river cooling".

The data centre's machines must be kept at 25°C and with atmospheric humidity of 60–80% for top performance, Coquio said.

Different class

"If the cooling system stops, any computer room will climb to 45°C within 10 minutes," potentially halting work, he said.

"Cold is just as vital as the electrical socket powering the machines," Coquio added.

Digital Realty said its river cooling has all but eliminated the need for energy-hungry air conditioning, lowering the three data centres' consumption by 20%.

Exploiting such savings will be vital if use of generative AI and its attendant infrastructure grows in line with forecasts.

"The electrical densities our clients are asking for are in a different class than what we've been doing for the last 25 years," Coquio said.

AI chips tend to be more powerful, consuming more energy and producing more heat than traditional processors.

Chipmaker Nvidia's latest hardware is like a "radiator", clocking in at "several hundred watts" of power usage, said Jacques Sainte-Marie, director of the environment programme at France's Inria computing research institute.

To cool all these chips, many data centres still turn to air conditioning or a water-evaporation system known as adiabatic cooling, in use at Microsoft among others.

Contested cooling

Water usage is a major environmental challenge for the AI sector, alongside consumption of power and raw materials.

Google's data centres used 14% more water in 2023 than the year before to reach 24 million cubic metres – enough to fill 9,600 Olympic swimming pools to a depth of two metres – while Microsoft's surged 22%.

Alternative cooling methods include ambient air cooling, used by Microsoft in northern Europe and by Digital Realty, French operator Data4

and others.

"Our water strategy is localised and specific to the areas that we operate in, because there is different requirements" depending on the site, said Alistair Speirs, infrastructure chief at Microsoft's Azure cloud-computing arm.

Microsoft is even experimenting with immersing computer components in a coolant that carries heat away but does not damage the parts as water would.

It is not deploying the method widely because "the chemicals that exist to do this right now generally have a high PFAS quotient," Speirs said, referring to so-called "forever chemicals" that have made headlines in recent years as widespread pollutants.

But even methods touted as green alternatives can meet resistance.

In Marseille, the city government and a local campaign group have blasted Digital Realty for monopolising water they say could be used in other ways.

The water "can't be drunk directly, but it could be used to relaunch local agriculture projects, clean streets, water parks," said campaigner Antoine Devillet.

While data centre cooling is getting better, companies could still use that for "greenwashing", he said.

"You have to look at the whole production chain, from ores to chips, with huge consumption of electricity, water and sometimes rare raw materials at each step," he said. – AFP



The portside data centres pump water at a rate of about 3,000 cubic metres per hour to keep servers cool. – AFP/IC



Too old for Swift?

➤ Younger adults have negative view of over-50s attending pop star concerts

FEW artistes draw crowds such as Taylor Swift. Her Eras Tour drew hundreds of thousands of spectators, becoming the most lucrative tour in history, grossing more than US\$2 billion (RM8.8 billion). Yet, according to some fans, attending one of her shows is not for everyone since there is an appropriate age to go and see the American superstar on stage.

A survey by the Age Without Limits campaign revealed 24% of adults in England think it is “embarrassing” to see people over 50 attending shows by contemporary pop stars such as Swift or Dua Lipa. This ageist prejudice is particularly prevalent among 25-34 year-olds (40%) and men (27%).

Similarly, a third of people (31%) believe that those aged 50-60 should always dress appropriately for their age. This opinion is even more pronounced among 25-34 year-olds, nearly half of whom (47%) feel the over-50s should adapt their style of dress to their age. By contrast, only 23% of 55-64 year-olds share this view.

No more crop tops, miniskirts or tight-fitting clothes after a certain age, then. Social norms expect the over-50s to adapt their clothing style to avoid being ridiculed for trying to look like something they are not - young.

The idea would be to dress “age-appropriately” without falling into the trap of looking too old-fashioned or outdated. This precarious balance between “too young” and “too old” hinders the freedom of choice and actions of people over 50, especially women, who are far more exposed to sartorial pressures or judgements than

their male counterparts.

The survey also revealed 34% of those polled think that people over 50 should slow down when it comes to certain physical activities.

Alarming, these stereotypes are more pronounced among young people: 25-34 year-olds are up to four times more likely to judge their elders’ leisure activities negatively.

This attitude is not insignificant. It reflects a reductive perception of aging and fosters the idea that certain pleasures are the prerogative of youth. With age, many people are forced to give up activities that were close to their hearts, thus limiting their personal fulfillment.

“As we age, we might encounter health, wealth or other barriers but ageism should never restrict us from wearing the clothes we want to wear, the music we want to listen to, the activities we want to do or the aspirations we set ourselves,” said Centre for Ageing Better CEO Dr Carole Easton.

In a world in which the boundaries between generations are becoming increasingly blurred, why should the over-50s stick to leisure activities deemed “of their age?”

Combating ageism is not limited to the world of work or to the representation of seniors in the public arena. It also means recognising the obvious: enjoyment, whether musical, fashionable or sporting, should never be a matter of age.

This survey was carried out between Dec 12 and 17, 2024 among 2,057 people over the age of 18 living in England. - ETX Studio



Nearly a quarter of survey respondents think it is embarrassing to see over-50s attending a Swift gig. - PIC FROM FACEBOOK @TAYLORSWIFT

TV's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* to make comeback



Gellar will reprise her role as Buffy in the re-booted series. - AFPPIC

FANS of the cult show *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* can rejoice: TV's most famous vampire slayer is about to return from the dead. After years of anticipation, a long-awaited follow-up is reportedly in the works, with Sarah Michelle Gellar reprising her iconic role.

The “Buffyverse” is set to expand again. More than 20 years after the show's end, the world of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* is set to make its return to television. According to information revealed by *Deadline*, a sequel should soon be in development for the Disney-owned Hulu platform. The rumour was already circulating in 2022.

Gellar, who played Buffy Summers for seven seasons, is in talks to return regularly in this new adventure. Although she will not be the main character in the new show, her presence is a mark of quality and credibility for long-time fans. For the moment, no other original actors from the series created by Joss Whedon have been announced for the cast.

Director Chloe Zhao, who won an Oscar for

Nomadland, will take the reins of this new show. Zhao describes herself as a lifelong Buffy fan.

The project is still in the early stages of development, with the writers due to meet shortly to begin working on the script.

In addition to stepping back in front of the camera, Gellar will also join the director as executive producer. The producers of the original series, Gail Berman, Fran Kuzui, Kaz Kuzui and Dolly Parton, will also be part of the project.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer left its mark on a whole generation in the 1990s and 2000s, across the show's seven seasons. The story then continued in a comic book series, published by Dark Horse Comics and produced, once again, by Joss Whedon. Recently, the creator of the fantasy series was accused of abuse during filming by Charisma Carpenter, also known as Cordelia Chase.

Buffy is not the only cult series being revived. A sequel to *Scrubs* has also been announced for ABC. - ETX Studio



302 **Jobs**

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 (Closing Date: 28th February 2025)

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR AT WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN, MALAYSIA (COMMERCIAL DIVISION) COMPANIES WINDING UP NO: WA-28NCC-1174-12/2024

In the matter of Section 464 & Section 465(1)(e) Companies Act 2016

And

In the matter of CHINA RAILWAY 17TH BUREAU GROUP (M) SDN. BHD. [Company No: 201601039816 (1210757-X)]

BETWEEN

PRINCIPLE PERSPECTIVE ENGINEERING SDN. BHD. [Company No: 201401027158 (1103248-P)] ... PETITIONER

AND

CHINA RAILWAY 17TH BUREAU GROUP (M) SDN. BHD. [Company No: 201601039816 (1210757-X)] ... RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the abovenamed Company by the High Court was on 6th December 2024 presented by PRINCIPLE PERSPECTIVE ENGINEERING SDN. BHD. and that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at the Kuala Lumpur High Court (Insolvency Court 2 (D11)) at 9.00 a.m. on 10th April 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 hearing by himself/herself or his/her Counsel for that purpose and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at Lot 2220, Jalan Kasawari, Kg. Kebun Baru, Batu 10, Telok Panglima Garang, 42500 Kuala Langat, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Petitioner's Solicitor is Messrs Chia Hui Ming & Co., of Lot 4-401 & 4-402, Level 4, The Starling Mall, No. 6, Jalan SS 21/37, Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Solicitors for the Petitioner
MESSRS CHIA HUI MING & CO.

Note: - Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the abovenamed solicitors, notice in writing of his/her intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or her solicitors (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovenamed not later than 12.00 noon of the 9th April 2025.

This Advertisement of Petition is taken out by Messrs Chia Hui Ming & Co., solicitors for the Petitioner abovenamed whose address for service is at Lot 4-401 & 4-402, Level 4, The Starling Mall, No. 6, Jalan SS 21/37, Damansara Utama, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel: 03-7890 0831
 Fax: 03-7890 0832
 [Our Ref: 202423083]

322 **Notices**

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT JOHOR BAHRU IN THE STATE OF JOHOR DARUL TA'ZIM, MALAYSIA COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) NO. JA - 28NCC - 17 - 01 / 2025

In the matter of Section 464(1)(b) of the Companies Act 2016.

And

In the matter of Section 465(1)(e) read together with Section 466(1)(a) of the Companies Act 2016.

And

In the Matter of REI HOLDINGS SDN. BHD. [Company No: 199701036105 (451605-A)]

BETWEEN

SHARIKAT SUKMA KEMAJUAN DAN PERUSAHAAN SDN. BHD. [Company No: 197201000188 (11709-N)] ... PETITIONER

AND

REI HOLDINGS SDN. BHD. [Company No: 199701036105 (451605-A)] ... 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 24th day of January, 2025 presented by SHARIKAT SUKMA KEMAJUAN DAN PERUSAHAAN SDN. BHD. [Company No: 197201000188 (11709-N)] of No. 22-01, Jalan Padi Emas 1/4, UDA Business Centre, 81200 Johor Bahru, Johor.

AND that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at the High Court of Malaya at Johor Bahru at 9.00 a.m. on Wednesday the 26th day of March, 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 hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is No. 22-01, Jalan Padi Emas 1/4, UDA Business Centre, 81200 Johor Bahru, Johor.

The Petitioner's Solicitors are Messrs Tan Vincent & Co., Advocates & Solicitors of No. 151A, Jalan NB 2/22, Taman Nusa Bestari 2, 79150 Iskandar Puteri, Johor.

Signed -
 Messrs Tan Vincent & Co.,
 Solicitors for the Petitioner
 Advocates & Solicitors

No. 181A, Jalan NB 2/22
 Taman Nusa Bestari 2
 79150 Iskandar Puteri, Johor

NOTE: Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named Messrs Tan Vincent & Co., notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or her solicitors (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovenamed not later than 12 noon of the 25th day of March, 2025 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the Petition). (Ref: TNA/VLIT/21/123/SSKPSB/WU/h)

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI JOHOR BAHRU DALAM NEGERI JOHOR DARUL TAKZIM, MALAYSIA WRIT SAMAN NO. JA-22NCC-59-05/2024

ANTARA

KHATIJAH BINTI AHMAD (NO. K/P: 611122-01-6438) ... PLAINTIFF

DAN

1) FAUZIAH BINTI AHMAD ALWI (NO. K/P: 610930-01-6438)

2) ISMAIL HAYATI BIN ABDUL WAHAB (NO. K/P: 520717-10-5379) ... DEFENDAN-DEFENDAN

NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN GANTI-BENTUK IKLAN

Kepada:-
 FAUZIAH BINTI AHMAD ALWI No. 34, Jalan Barli 1/3, Bandar Baru Uda, 81200 Johor Bahru, Johor Darul Takzim.

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan Tuntutan Sivil bertarikh 27 Mei 2024 telah dimulakan di Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya Johor Bahru melalui kes No. JA-22NCC-59-05/2024 oleh Plaintiff, Khatijah binti Ahmad yang beralamat di No. 14, Jalan Nangka, Kampung Pasir, Tampoi, 81200 Johor Bahru, Johor Darul Takzim DAN telah diperintahkan melalui Perintah Penyampaian Ganti Mahkamah bertarikh 23 Januari 2025 bahawa, penyampaian satu salinan termeterai Writ Saman bertarikh 27 Mei 2024, Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 23 Mei 2024 tersebut kepada kamu dalam tindakan tersebut hendaklah diserahkan melalui penyampaian ganti dengan menampalkan satu salinan kertas-kertas kausa tersebut di papan notis Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya Johor Bahru dan di alamat terakhir Responden Pertama di No. 34, Jalan Barli 1/3, Bandar Baru Uda, 81200 Johor Bahru, Johor Darul Takzim dan dengan mengiklankan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhbar tempatan The Sun. Penampalan dan pengiklankan tersebut hendaklah dianggap penyampaian sempurna dan cukup ke atas kamu tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan dan pengiklankan tersebut. Sekiranya kamu berhasrat untuk membantah Tuntutan Sivil ini, kamu mestilah dalam tempoh tujuh (7) hari daripada penyampaian ganti ini menghadirkan diri sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguambela kamu di Mahkamah, yang mana keagamaan untuk memastikan kehadiran akan menyebabkan suatu Perintah seperti dipohon oleh Khatijah binti Ahmad direkodkan terhadap kamu dalam ketidakhadiran kamu.

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa Tuntutan Sivil tersebut ditetapkan untuk pendengaran di hadapan Penolong Kanan Pendafar pada 28 Februari 2025 pada 9.00 pagi bertempat di Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya Johor Bahru, Tingkat 25, Menara MSC Cyberport, No. 5 Jalan Bukit Meldrum, 80300 Johor Bahru, Johor.

Bertarikh pada 23 Januari 2025.

T.T

Tetuan G. K. Sriharan & Co.

NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN GANTI-BENTUK IKLAN ini difailkan oleh Tetuan G.K. Sriharan & Co., Peguambela dan Peguambela yang mempunyai alamat di Unit 6.05, Tingkat 6, Menara TJB, No. 9, Jalan Syed Mohd Mufti, 80000 Johor Bahru, Johor, peguambela Plaintiff (Ruj No.: GKS/LIT/3528/23).

302 **Jobs**



1 MEDIA SALES Executive / Specialist

Job Description:

- Building and sustaining strong working relationship with advertising agencies and clients.
- New business development and business retention.
- Conceptualize, plan, and execute creative and innovative marketing campaigns to enhance brand visibility and engagement.
- Create, develop and continuously improve marketing material, presentations and proposals that showcase our products/services effectively.

Requirement:

- SPM Level with at least 2 years of experience.
- Diploma or Bachelor's degree in business, marketing or other related fields.
- Fresh graduates are encourage to apply, training will be provided.
- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing
- Possess own transport and willing to travel.
- Able to start work immediately.

Office based in Petaling Jaya (5 days a week)

2 MEDIA SALES Representative / Agent (Freelance)

Requirement:

- Minimum 1 year sales experience in classified ad, print and digital advertising
- Those without sales experience but with media advertising knowledge can apply.
- Attractive commission package and incentive.
- Able to start immediately.
- Central, Northern, Southern, East Coast and Sabah/Sarawak.

Send in your CV with your photo via email to : thesun.hr2@gmail.com

322 **Notices**

FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358698-H)
NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNTUK DILELONG SEPERTI SEDIA ADA TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG : Northern Region (Alor Setar, Butterworth & Ipoh) 13-02-2025 (Khamis) Pukul 11:00pagi

TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Pukul 9:00pagi - 4:00petang)
PERTANYAAN (Tel): Butterworth 04-3567972, Alor Setar 04-787 7972, Ipoh 05-5293971

FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) Mr. Chew Wool Kok, b) Mr. Steven Lim Peng Seng (02097), c) Pn Hasniza Binti Abu Samah (00919)

Alamat : 352, Permatang Tok Jaya Maklom Sg Dua 13800 Butterworth.
 : Lot 138-A, Batu 5 Jalan Langgar 05460 Alor Setar
 : PT51683, Jalan Jelapang, Kws Perindustrian Tmn Meru 30020 Ipoh

SILA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : <http://www.focalpark.com.my>

Item	Reg No	Jenis & Model	Tahun
AM1	G1M1380	CHEVROLET CAPTIVA (A) 2.0	2010
AM2	WWL9411	CHEVROLET CRUZE LT 1.8i	2011
AM3	AKJ3714	HYUNDAI SONATA 2.0	2013
AM4	WBS4688	KIA CERATO (A) 1.6	2015
AM5	AJXS577	KIA RIO H/B (A) 1.4	2015
AM6	BPK2706	NISSAN ALMERA (A) 1.5	2017
AM7	JUQ8310	NISSAN NAVARA	2021
AM8	WXM6508	PROTON EXORA 1.6	2012
AM9	AKG2124	PROTON EXORA 1.6	2015
AM10	PATRIOT6825	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2017
AM11	ALF932	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2018
AM12	AKX5908	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2018
AM13	PPB1795	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2019
AM14	AKU7085	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2017
AM15	AKT7893	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2017
AM16	WMN6922	TOYOTA COROLLA (A) 1.8	2005
AM17	AKL3473	NISSAN X-TRAIL 2.0	2016
AM18	VKL505	PERODUA AXIA 1.0	2023
AM19	PKJ1925	PERODUA VIVA	2011
AM20	AHB6465	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2010
AM21	ALH4943	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2019
AM22	DCC5055	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2012
AM23	QS3077U	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2024
AM24	AJG5557	TOYOTA CAMRY 2.5	2012
AM25	VAP9460	VOLKSWAGEN VENTO 1.6	2017
AM26	PMY5361	PERODUA BEZZA 1.3	2017
AM27	CDB2035	PROTON PREVE 1.6	2012
AM28	VGP9503	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2021
AM29	PN01140	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2018
AM30	SMS7819	VOLKSWAGEN JETTA 1.4	2014

(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perolehan akan dilelong semula pada 20-02-2025)

322 **Notices**

NOTIS PEMBERITAHUAN

Phoon Sik Yin (No. I/C: 831029-06-5017)

Satu kes telah difailkan di Mahkamah Sesyen di Ipoh. Anda diminta untuk hadir ke firma kami bagi membincangkan perkara ini dengan kadar segera. Kegagalan untuk memberikan maklum balas dalam tempoh yang ditetapkan boleh menyebabkan Mahkamah meneruskan permohonan kes ini tanpa sebarang notis lanjut kepada anda.

Sila hubungi kami:

Firma : **Low & Partners**
 No. Telefon : **+605-241 8293** atau **+6012-514 2178**
 Alamat : **No. 8B, Persiaran Greentown 1, Greentown Business Centre, 30450 Ipoh, Perak.**
 Rujukan Fail : **IP/DV/14936/09/24/LHY/TYF_CIP**

LOST CERTIFICATES

The following Share Certificates have been reported lost or destroyed

Certificate No	Name	No Of Share
43284	LAM SOON (M) BHD PANG AH CHOY	3 x 1000
35768 - 769	1292	CHONG KEE ONN
30117 - 118	3764	LAU CHAI CHEE
32482 - 483		
00160458	MALAYSIAN OXYGEN BERHAD HASNIMAH BT ATAN	1 x 500
00160459	HASNIMAH BT ATAN	1 x 1000
00018127	HASNIMAH BT ATAN	1 x 1000
00018128	HASNIMAH BT ATAN	1 x 1000

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that if within fourteen (14) days from the date hereof, no claim or representation in respect of such certificates is made to the Directors, they will then proceed to issue replacement certificates and the original certificates will be deemed cancelled and void.

REGISTRARS
 BOARDROOM SHARE REGISTRARS SDN BHD
 Registration No. 199601006647(378993-D)
 Date: 10.02.2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF TAN SWEE LONG HOLDINGS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 239404-M (CREDITORS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 439(2) of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by members of the Company on 07.02.2025 "That the Company be wound-up voluntarily and that Mr. Wong Soon Fong of 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed liquidator for the purpose of such winding-up."

Dated this 10.02.2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF T.S.L PROPERTIES SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 381991-T (CREDITORS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 439(2) of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by members of the Company on 06.02.2025 "That the Company be wound-up voluntarily and that Mr. Wong Soon Fong of 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed liquidator for the purpose of such winding-up."

Dated this 10.02.2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF TAN SWEE LONG HOLDINGS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 239404-M (CREDITORS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the abovenamed Company which is being wound-up voluntarily are required on or before 13.03.2025 to send their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company and if so required in writing by the said liquidator, are by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefits of any such distribution made before such debts are proved.

Dated this 10.02.2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF T.S.L PROPERTIES SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 381991-T (CREDITORS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the abovenamed Company which is being wound-up voluntarily are required on or before 13.03.2025 to send their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company and if so required in writing by the said liquidator, are by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefits of any such distribution made before such debts are proved.

Dated this 10.02.2025

Liquidator
Wong Soon Fong
 c/o SFW Insolvency Services
 221B, Jalan Mahkota,
 Taman Maluri
 55100 Kuala Lumpur

Liquidator
Wong Soon Fong
 c/o SFW Insolvency Services
 221B, Jalan Mahkota,
 Taman Maluri
 55100 Kuala Lumpur

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF DIAMOND AXIS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 380635-M (CREDITORS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 439(2) of the Companies Act, 2016 that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by members of the Company on 05.02.2025 "That the Company be wound-up voluntarily and that Mr. Wong Soon Fong of 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed liquidator for the purpose of such winding-up."

Dated this 10.02.2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF LUTIANSHUI LOGISTICS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 209649-U (MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 439(1) of the Companies Act, 2016, that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by members of the Company on 06.02.2025 "That the Company be wound-up voluntarily and that Mr. Wong Soon Fong of 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed liquidator for the purpose of such winding-up."

Dated this 10.02.2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF DIAMOND AXIS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 380635-M (CREDITORS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF LUTIANSHUI LOGISTICS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 209649-U (MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the abovenamed Company which is being wound-up voluntarily are required on or before 13.03.2025 to send their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company and if so required in writing by the said liquidator, are by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefits of any such distribution made before such debts are proved.

Dated this 10.02.2025

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the abovenamed Company which is being wound-up voluntarily are required on or before 13.03.2025 to send their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company and if so required in writing by the said liquidator, are by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefits of any such distribution made before such debts are proved.

Dated this 10.02.2025

Liquidator
Wong Soon Fong
 c/o SFW Insolvency Services
 221B, Jalan Mahkota,
 Taman Maluri
 55100 Kuala Lumpur

Liquidator
Wong Soon Fong
 c/o SFW Insolvency Services
 221B, Jalan Mahkota,
 Taman Maluri
 55100 Kuala Lumpur

CARLOS ALCARAZ scrapped his way into the final of the Rotterdam Open yesterday with a hard-fought and entertaining three-set win over Hubert Hurkacz.

Superior court coverage and retrieving from the Spanish world No. 3 overcame stubborn resistance from the Pole for a 6-4, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3 win to set up a clash with Australia's Alex de Minaur in the final.

"It was a very tight first set. I think he had chances to make it 6-0 so I just tried to fight every ball, every point," said Alcaraz.

"I just tried to stay in there, keep fighting all the time and it paid off," he added.

Alcaraz got off to a slow start, broken to love in his very first service game and allowing Hurkacz to race into a 3-0 lead in the first set.

He faced another break point in his next service game but saved it with a glorious crosscourt forehand and managed to hold onto serve.

Alcaraz survived another three break points and then fought his way back into the match with a break of his own, seizing the game with a forehand smash after a lengthy rally.

The momentum shifted in the Spaniard's favour and a double-fault from Hurkacz gave the top seed the opportunity to serve out the set.

Again Hurkacz had the opportunity to break, but Alcaraz held firm and sealed the set with a forehand drive volley winner.

After the topsy-turvy first set, the second proceeded more conventionally, on serve until the tie-break.

The tie-break was also nip and tuck, both players squandering chances to seize the advantage.

But a double-fault from Alcaraz at 5-4 up gave Hurkacz an opportunity, and the Pole needed no second invitation, taking the set as the Spaniard netted a simple backhand groundstroke.

The decisive set started the same way as the first, with an early break of serve – this time to Alcaraz who brought the crowd to its feet.

That eventually proved enough to break the Polish resistance, as Hurkacz failed to make inroads into the Alcaraz serve.

Serving for the set at 5-3, Alcaraz booked his place in his 22nd ATP tour final with a trademark forehand winner up the line.

"I want to be the first Spanish player to be able to win this tournament. I'm going to go for it. I'm really happy to be able to play a final in Rotterdam," said the 21-year-old.

Alcaraz battles into Rotterdam final

World No. 3 overcomes stubborn resistance to book date with De Minaur

In the first semifinal, De Minaur brought to an end the extraordinary giant-killing run of Italian qualifier Mattia Bellucci with a straight-sets win.

De Minaur was too consistent for the

error-prone Bellucci, who was unable to repeat his earlier heroics against Daniil Medvedev and Stefanos Tsitsipas, going down 6-1, 6-2.

"I'm very happy with the level today," said De Minaur.

"He's been playing with a lot of confidence this whole week, so I knew it was going to be a very tough battle," added the third-seeded Australian.

"The Dutch crowd always treats me very well, and I love coming back here. So hopefully I can get a title this time," he said. – AFP



USA's Yealimi Noh lines up a putt on the 18th green during the third round of the Founders Cup at Bradenton Country Club yesterday in Bradenton, Florida. – AFP/PIIC

Noh scorches back nine at Founders Cup

YEALIMI NOH birdied eight of her last 11 holes to seize a one-stroke lead at 18-under par through three rounds of the Founders Cup yesterday at Bradenton (Florida) Country Club.

Noh's 8-under 63 pushed her ahead of South Korea's Jin Young Ko, the second-round leader and a three-time winner of this tournament.

Ko followed her 63 on Friday – which had broken the course record

– with a bogey-free 5-under 66.

The course record lasted all of one day, as Megan Khang fired a 62 highlighted by 10 birdies and marred only by a bogey at the par-3 No. 15. Kang is tied for third with South Korea's Jin Hee Im (68) at 13-under.

Noh, a San Francisco native seeking her first LPGA Tour victory, heated up with birdies at Nos. 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 15, 17 and 18 to come in at 29 on the back nine. She made par on

the first seven holes.

"I didn't even realise how many birdies I made until I finished the round today," said Noh, 23.

"The first few holes, they were slow and I was hitting it well; just not making many putts," Noh said.

"Then I was telling myself I just needed to see one go in. I guess I just needed a birdie, on 8, and that really just helped me keep going." – Field Level Media

Detry builds lead in Phoenix

BELGIUM'S Thomas Detry has yet to raise a trophy following a PGA Tour event, so he will improvise his mental approach going into the final round of the WM Phoenix Open at Scottsdale, Arizona.

After his third-round, 6-under 65, Detry has a five-shot lead with 18 holes remaining.

"It's OK to think about it, but then try to come back in the present," Detry said. "I think that will be the key (for the final round)."

Detry moved to 18-under 195 overall with a group of four at 13-under. Daniel Berger (66), Jordan Spieth (67), Michael Kim (68) and Denmark's Rasmus Hojgaard (65) share second place.

Detry had birdies on four of the first

five holes of the TPC Scottsdale Stadium course and tallied three more to override his one bogey.

"Getting off to such a good start was kind of the dream," he said.

His strong third round followed a 66 and 64 during the first two days of the tournament.

Detry, after hitting his drive into a bunker on No. 18, closed the round with a par putt from about 19 feet.

"Definitely pretty happy with the way I handled the whole day," he said.

Berger said he's aware that Detry hasn't won on the tour and will be intent on doing what he can do to challenge for the top spot.

"Really just keep doing the things that I've been doing and make birdies," Berger said. "That's what I've got to do.

I've got to make birdies."

Hojgaard likes being in contention in a tournament with an electric atmosphere.

"It's what we all try to do," he said. "We just try to embrace the crowds and how loud it is."

Spieth hasn't won on the PGA Tour since 2022, but he's gaining confidence.

"To be able to shoot a score like this where the pins were, and they were a lot harder today," Spieth said.

"So to be able to do that with not my best stuff makes me feel even better because it takes a little bit of pressure off maybe trying to be perfect and coming back."

Now, he'll see if he has enough to make a final-round charge. – Field Level Media

BRIEFS

Ruud clash for Shapovalov

CANADIAN Denis Shapovalov continued his giant-killing run at the ATP Dallas Open yesterday, beating defending champion Tommy Paul 7-5, 6-3 to book a title clash with second-seeded Casper Ruud. Norway's Ruud outlasted Spain's Jaume Munar 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (7-4) to reach the final. Unseeded Shapovalov, who ousted world No. 4 Taylor Fritz in the second round, needed just an hour and a half to get past a second top-10 opponent in a week in ninth-ranked Paul. He'll get a chance at another against world No. 5 Ruud, who regained a break in the 10th game of the final set to force the deciding tiebreaker. "Second and third set (Munar) really stepped it up," said Ruud, who thought he might have benefitted from a few nerves from Munar as he served for the match in the third. "I know what the feeling is like," Ruud said. "You can get tight. You kind of see the finish line a few yards in front of you and then you kind of stumble. I've done it myself and I was fortunate to be on the right side of it today."

Mom Bencic wins first title

BELINDA BENCIC came from behind to beat Ashlyn Krueger 4-6, 6-1, 6-1 and capture the Abu Dhabi WTA 500 title yesterday, four months after returning to the circuit from maternity leave. The Swiss former world No. 4, who is now outside the top 150, gave birth to her daughter Bella in April last year. She becomes the first mother to claim a WTA singles title since Elina Svitolina won in Strasbourg in May 2023. "It was a big dream for me to come back and play in front of her (Bella) and to win the tournament," Bencic said. "This is the first tournament I've won twice... I will have to come back here for the rest of my career!" After two hours and 23 minutes, Bencic fired her 30th winner to claim the title, later posing with the trophy in one arm and her daughter in the other. "It's so impressive, you coming back, being a mother. It's really inspirational," Krueger said.

Kiwi Ravindra bloodied in Lahore

NEW ZEALAND said Rachin Ravindra was recovering well after taking a ball full in the face during a warm-up match for the Champions Trophy against Pakistan in Lahore yesterday. The all-rounder was left bloodied by the blow to his forehead after losing sight of the ball in the floodlights as he attempted a catch in the 38th over of Pakistan's innings. "He's been conscious the whole time, which is fantastic," his teammate Glenn Phillips told reporters at Gaddafi Stadium. "Obviously it was a pretty terrifying moment, he lost the ball in the lights and unfortunately the ball won that situation this time. He's being monitored and I'm sure he'll be raring to go as soon as possible." Phillips was named Player of the Match after scoring his maiden one-day international century to drive New Zealand to a victory by 78 runs. His unbeaten 106 came from just 74 deliveries and helped the Black Caps to a bumper score of 330 for six in their 50 overs before they bundled out their hosts for 252.

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF EINSAM SDN. BHD. (Company No. 201901017290 (1326618-H))

(In Members' Voluntary Liquidation)
 At a General Meeting of the Members of the abovenamed Company, duly convened and held at No. 76A, Jalan Molek 2/1, Taman Molek, 81100 Johor Bahru, Johor on 1st January 2025 at 11.00 am, the following Special Resolution was duly passed :-

"That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Mr. Gwee Chin Siang of c/o No. 76A, Jalan Molek 2/1, Taman Molek, 81100 Johor Bahru, Johor be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up with all powers given by Section 456 of the Companies Act, 2016.

And that the Liquidator be indemnified by the Company against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred in or sustained by him in the execution and discharge of his duties as Liquidator and in relation thereto."

GWEE CHIN SIANG
 Director

Dated this 9th January 2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF EINSAM SDN. BHD. (Company No. 201901017290 (1326618-H))

(In Members' Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Creditors of the abovenamed Company, which is being voluntarily wound up, are required on or before 11th February 2025 to send in their names and addresses with particulars of their debts and claims, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned liquidator at No. 76A, Jalan Molek 2/1, Taman Molek, 81100 Johor Bahru, Johor and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are, by their solicitors or personally, required to come in and prove their debts and claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

GWEE CHIN SIANG
 Liquidator

Dated this 9th January 2025

SEAMLESS JOURNEY WITH JOJO FLIGHT

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THE TAARAS

BY **SUNNY BADWAL**

Willock let 'football do the talking': Howe

EDDIE HOWE hailed Joe Willock for letting his "football do the talking" after the striker fired Newcastle into the FA Cup fifth round a week after being the target of racist online abuse.

Willock was abused on *Instagram* in the wake of Newcastle's 2-1 defeat home at Fulham the previous weekend, with the Magpies describing the comments as "appalling".

But the 25-year-old was the centre of attention for different reasons yesterday after his brace of goals, including an 82nd-minute winner, helped Newcastle overcome Birmingham 3-2 in a hard-fought cup clash at St Andrew's.

Howe said: "I think Joe has handled himself

this week really well. His response to what he suffered was really admirable, really strong willed.

"He loves his football and I think he's just concentrated on that this week and tried to put all other distractions behind him. He let his football do the talking.

"Really pleased for him because he's such a talented lad. You want to see Joe at his best, it's been a stop-start season for him but today is a big moment I think.

"The two goals are typical Joe. I was really

pleased with the second one because from our perspective we didn't want extra time.

"It was a second half with not a lot of goalscoring opportunities so we needed to be clinical when they came and thankfully Joe was."

Having booked a spot in the Carabao Cup final with victory over Arsenal in midweek, Newcastle edged a step closer to another trip to Wembley with their win over Birmingham, although it was far from comfortable for the Magpies against a Birmingham side on an 18-match unbeaten run.

The League One leaders went ahead inside 40 seconds through Ethan Laird, and while Newcastle hit back thanks to goals from Willock and Callum Wilson, Birmingham were level at the break following a Tomoki Iwata thunderbolt.

Newcastle were ultimately indebted to Willock's late winner as they sealed their place in the fifth-round draw, and Howe was especially relieved to settle the tie in regulation time.

He added: "We did it in the 90 minutes which was massive for us, we didn't want to go to extra time." - The Independent

City survive 'Leyton' scare

Guardiola's Premier League champions avoid FA Cup banana skin at Orient

BY **GEORGE SESSIONS**

PEP GUARDIOLA lauded the magic of the FA Cup and the behaviour of his players after Manchester City avoided a scare with a hard-fought 2-1 win at Leyton Orient.

The League One hosts took a surprise lead after 16 minutes when a sensational 40-yard lob by Spurs loanee Jamie Donley hit the crossbar and bounced in off City goalkeeper Stefan Ortega.

Orient dared to dream at this point, but Abdulkodir Khusanov diverted in Rico Lewis' shot to level after 56 minutes before substitute Kevin De Bruyne struck a 79th-minute winner to help the faltering Premier League champions stumble into the fifth round.

Guardiola had ticked off some Orient fans when he referred to them as "Leyton" during the pre-match press conference, but applauded all four corners of a buoyant Brisbane Road crowd following a rip-roaring cup tie.

"Sorry. Listen, I don't want to offend anyone. I have been offended many, many times, but I don't want to offend," Guardiola responded when told of his minor error.

"I am so sorry for the people of this lovely stadium. I said Leyton Orient, so I say it properly now, I said before it is special. You feel it, you feel it.

"I like it. I said many times, so I know it is not perfect for us, lack of perfect grass and different conditions but that is the FA Cup

right?"

"Because any team and any competition has the right to fight against top teams to try to beat them. We knew it and we knew it before.

"It is my ninth season in England. I play many times in lower divisions and in this incredible competition, so the vibe, the smell of the crowd and everything, you play in FA Cup and you don't find it in other places, especially in these games.

"I remember Newport, with Michael Flynn the manager, with Cheltenham and many others. Always we behave really good and we were lucky at the end because they had chances, but we created a lot and the keeper (Josh Keeley) was really, really good.

"Yeah, it was a tight game and we knew it for the situation that we have, but we behave really well, we react really well with great character and yeah, we are in the next round. It is always nice.

"We have been last

four or five years in semifinal stages all the time and it's good to continue."

Guardiola also reserved special praise for Tottenham academy graduate Donley, who was able to write his name into FA Cup folklore with a remarkable first-half moment.

He added: "What a goal. Fantastic he shoot, the quality, the technique and the speed, the flight of the ball." - The Independent



Man City's Abdulkodir Khusanov (left) in action against Leyton Orient's Darren Pratley during the English FA Cup 4th round match yesterday. - AFP/IC

Cardiff down Stoke in epic FA Cup battle

CARDIFF CITY overcame fellow Championship strugglers Stoke City on penalties in an exhilarating FA Cup tie to reach the fifth round.

Cardiff made a flying start with two goals in the opening 19 minutes as Rubin Colwill fired them ahead before Yousef Saleh exploited hesitant Stoke defending to poke in.

Lewis Koumas struck with a firm low finish shortly before half-time to pull a goal back for the hosts, and the Wales forward scored again a minute after the restart to equalise.

Stoke then led through Lewis Baker's penalty, conceded by Bluebirds substitute

Jasper Daland who managed to injure himself in fouling Emre Tezgel.

But the Welsh side were not done. Colwill scored his second with a low strike from the edge of the penalty area which seemed to take a touch on its way in.

After both sides missed chances in extra-time, Cardiff goalkeeper Ethan Horvath made what proved to be the decisive save in the penalty shootout from Michael Rose and Colwill converted his spot-kick to send Omer Riza's team through.

Cardiff can now look forward to a first fifth-round FA Cup tie in 11 years - with the draw to

come today - while Stoke will focus solely on avoiding relegation to League One.

"We showed really good character and togetherness. It's really important we show that going forward," Omer said via www.irishnews.com.

"I said to the boys that this can elevate us even more if we keep showing that character and togetherness.

"I'm really happy to be in the fifth round. I'm really pleased with the boys.

"We made hard work of it in the end. We gave them a lifeline just before half-time to go in 2-1. The start to the second half wasn't quite good enough and we were punished for it.

"The boys showed great character from 3-2 down and win the game so that was satisfying." - Agencies

SHORTS

McKenna always knew Clarke could do it

KIERAN MCKENNA insisted he had no doubts about Jack Clarke's quality after his first half brace helped Ipswich into the last 16 of the FA Cup for the first time in 18 years in a 4-1 win away to Coventry.

Ipswich spent £15 million (RM83m) to bring in Clarke having seen him score 15 goals for Sunderland, but he has been made to bide his time in Suffolk.

"You can't underestimate the jump and the change for someone like Jack," McKenna said. "We've probably got a few players in that category, signing late in the transfer window, into a new group, never played in the Premier League, joining a club that hasn't been in the Premier League for 22 years.

"Trying to settle into all that change in the toughest League in the world as an attacking player is not easy.

"We know how talented he is. He's a player who we signed to help us this year, which he is, and for the future as well.

"I'm sure he's going to keep improving and this today was not a big surprise to me."

Frank Lampard felt the final scoreline was harsh on Coventry, who edged possession and had more shots at goal but lacked the clinical touch.

"I thought it was a competitive game against a Premier League team," Lampard said. "Overall they had the better chances but predominantly from mistakes from us which is disappointing."

Devils must fix home form, says Maguire

HARRY MAGUIRE says Manchester United must turn Old Trafford into a fortress and rediscover confidence that has been dented by this season's woeful form.

The previous weekend's 2-0 defeat to Crystal Palace was the Red Devils' seventh Premier League loss on home soil of a campaign to forget and threatened to be compounded by lowly Leicester in the FA Cup.

United were booed off at half-time of Saturday's FA Cup fourth round tie, with a lifeless display by Ruben Amorim's men punished when Bobby De Cordova-Reid scored just before the break.

The hosts bounced back to secure a 2-1 win through substitute Joshua Zirkzee and Maguire's controversial offside header at the death, but the latter knows vast improvements are necessary.

"No TV today!" the England defender said with a smile when asked whether Amorim had punched a dressing room television in anger as he reportedly did after last month's 3-1 home defeat to Brighton.

"No, he was calm (at halftime). He was speaking tactics and he said we need to get the next goal and we'll go on to win the game and he was proven right.

"I think the run of results at Old Trafford has been so poor that I think now the boys have lost maybe that confidence of playing in front of a crowd and things.

"It's something we need to address because if we want to be a successful team we've got to make it hard for teams to come here and play and the first half wasn't good."



Gimenez strikes as Milan see off Empoli

SANTIAGO GIMENEZ scored his first goal for AC Milan yesterday as the seven-time European champions won 2-0 at Empoli in a Serie A clash which finished with both teams down to 10 men.

Mexico striker Gimenez, who signed from Feyenoord during the winter transfer window, classily struck Milan's second in the 76th minute in Tuscany to seal the three points.

Rafael Leao headed home Milan's opener eight minutes before Gimenez's first Serie A strike as Milan moved up to seventh, five points off the Champions League positions with a game in hand.

Gimenez's goal is good news for Milan and the 23-year-old who will face his old club Feyenoord in Eindhoven in the Champions League playoffs on Thursday.

"It's going to be really tough, it's a lot of

emotion because Feyenoord gave me a lot, they are like family," Gimenez told *DAZN*.

Milan looked unlikely to win when defender Fikayo Tomori was sent off for a second bookable offence 10 minutes after the break.

"The temptation at that moment was to take off a striker and put on a defender," Milan coach Sergio Conceicao told *DAZN*, adding he opted not to shore up his back line because "a draw here is like a defeat for Milan, so I had to take the gamble."

"Football is simple" he said. "There is one net you want the ball in and another you don't."

Milan only played a man down for 10 minutes before Empoli's Luca Marianucci was shown a straight red card 10 minutes later for kicking out at Gimenez and Leao soon sent Milan on their way to victory.

In addition to Gimenez, January signings Kyle Walker and Joao Felix also started for Milan.

"This is the spirit we need, we have a lot of quality in the squad, now even more with the new signings," Milan's Christian Pulisic told *DAZN*. - AFP



Real Madrid's Kylian Mbappe (left) is tugged by Atletico Madrid's Clement Lenglet during their La Liga match yesterday. - AFP/IC

Mbappe rescues point for Real

KYLIAN MBAPPE secured Real Madrid a 1-1 draw against rivals Atletico Madrid which kept *Los Blancos* top of La Liga yesterday.

Julian Alvarez dinked home a controversial first half penalty for Atletico but Mbappe was in the right place at the right time to bundle home early in the second half on his first appearance in the tense derby clash.

Reigning champions Real Madrid lead second-place Atletico by a single point.

Atletico shaded a close first half but were left holding on in the second period as the hosts stepped up a gear at the Santiago Bernabeu.

"The team is disappointed because they think they deserved more... but we're happy because we're still leaders," Real Madrid coach Carlo Ancelotti told reporters.

"In the second half we had total control, we had a lot of chances."

Ancelotti opted to deploy his four key attacking players in Mbappe, Vinicius Junior, Jude Bellingham and Rodrygo Goes, in lieu of a more conservative approach.

The star names got stuck in, not always a given in a defensive sense, and the first half was a hard-fought, intense battle with few clear openings for either side.

Atletico were upset when Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos was only booked for an ugly challenge on Pablo Barrios, but it was the hosts who were left raging when referee Cesar Soto Grado pointed to the penalty spot.

Aurelien Tchouameni, covering at centreback for Madrid with Antonio Rudiger and Eder Militao out among others, clumsily trod on Samuel Lino's foot in the box.

After a VAR review Soto Grado

French forward secures Madrid derby draw against Atletico

awarded a controversial penalty to Madrid's frustration, with the incident happening after the ball had run past the duo.

Los Blancos attacked Spanish refereeing earlier in the week after they were upset by a decision in a shock defeat last weekend, bringing heavy scrutiny on the officials ahead of the derby.

Alvarez took the penalty, the first given against Madrid in La Liga this season, and cheekily executed a Panenka down the middle.

"I can't say I wasn't a bit nervous (with the penalty), but I was sure, I knew what I would do, and it was a great goal for the team," Alvarez told *Movistar*.

"Corruption in the federation," chanted Real Madrid fans in response to falling behind, buying into their club's stance.

Ancelotti refused to talk about the refereeing but appeared exasperated on the sideline as Grado pointed to the spot.

Madrid pulled level early in the second half when Rodrygo broke loose on the right of the box and crossed for Bellingham.

The England international's shot was blocked but Mbappe was on hand to turn home the rebound and score on his first Madrid derby appearance.

Bellingham twice came close to putting Madrid ahead, nodding against the crossbar from Vinicius' cross and then heading straight at Atletico goalkeeper Jan Oblak from a similar position, kicking the post in frustration. - AFP

SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 5924/2025 DATE: 09/02/2025 (SUN)
 STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.
 196901000090 (8420-D)

TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

1st Prize	4869
2nd Prize	5045
3rd Prize	3828
Special	9730 8829
Consolation	8277 6621
	7030 4366
	1300 0594
	8231 1339
	8880 4614
	3734 4206
	2501 8992
	6419 3730
	8809 0630

4D JACKPOT

Jackpot 1 **RM 9,982,289.55**

4869	5045	5045	4869
4869	3828	3828	4869
5045	3828	3828	5045

Jackpot 2 **RM 925,251.98**
 Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D Zodiac

1st Prize	4869	+	ROOSTER
2nd Prize	5045	+	
3rd Prize	3828	+	
4th Prize	Special Prize	+	
5th Prize	Consolation Prize	+	
6th Prize	Any 4D drawn number		

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

5D	1ST	2 1 0 8 6
	4TH	1 0 8 6
	5TH	0 8 6
	6TH	8 6
	2ND	3 9 7 6 4
	3RD	2 4 8 0 6

6D	1ST	4 0 2 4 2 1
	2ND	4 0 2 4 2 1
	3RD	4 0 2 4 2 1
	4TH	4 0 2 4 2 1
	5TH	4 0 2 4 2 1

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POWER 6/55 15 32 34 37 49 50

Jackpot **RM 8,318,719.54**

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Jackpot 1 **RM 3,473,059.34**

Jackpot 2 **RM 423,361.17**

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WINNING NUMBERS damacai

Draw Date: 09/02/25 (Sun) Draw No: 5871/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

1+3D SUPER 1+3D

1st Prize	8739
2nd Prize	0825
3rd Prize	7228
Starters	Consolation
4082 8471	4777 0292
7284 4446	4359 7638
8769 0600	9141 5140
3035 3048	2939 3881
1074 2748	3809 6230

1-3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 **RM16,663,370.50**

8739 + 0825	0825 + 8739
8739 + 7228	7228 + 8739
0825 + 7228	7228 + 0825

Jackpot 2 **RM392,789.10**

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

3-3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
318 739 +	TIGER	RM230,000.00
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
960 825 +	SNAKE	RM1,225,904.60
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
177 228 +	TIGER	RM1,721,506.00
Starters	Consolation	
994 082 258 471	494 777 610 292	
037 284 144 446	774 359 827 638	
598 769 340 600	429 141 425 140	
183 035 433 048	092 939 253 881	
281 074 952 748	723 809 806 230	

3D

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
739	825	228

3D Jackpot

Jackpot **RM731,557.00**

739 + 825 + 228	825 + 228 + 739
739 + 228 + 825	228 + 739 + 825
825 + 739 + 228	228 + 825 + 739

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

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RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH FA CUP (4th round): Birmingham 2 Newcastle 3, Brighton 2 Chelsea 1, Coventry 1 Ipswich 4, Everton 0 Bournemouth 2, Leeds 0 Millwall 2, Leyton Orient 1 Man City 2, Preston 0 Wycombe 0 (Preston win 4-2 on pen), Southampton 0 Burnley 1, Stoke 3 Cardiff 3 (Cardiff won 4-2 on pen), Wigan 1 Fulham 2.

CHAMPIONSHIP: Sunderland 2 Watford 2, West Brom 2 Sheff Wed 1, Sheff Utd 2 Portsmouth 1, Norwich 1 Derby 1.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leeds	31	19	9	3	62	19	66
Sheff Utd	31	20	6	5	43	22	64
Burnley	31	16	13	2	37	9	61
Sunderland	31	16	11	4	47	28	59
West Brom	31	11	14	6	41	28	47
Blackburn	31	13	6	12	35	31	45

LA LIGA: Celta Vigo 3 (Beltran 63, Rodriguez 65, Swedberg 87) **Real Betis 2** (Antony 10, Llorente 22), **Athletic Bilbao 3** (Sanctet 42-pen, 45+1, 79) **Girona 0, Las Palmas 1** (Fuster 84) **Villarreal 2** (Baena 53, Perez 66), **Real Madrid 1** (Mbappe 50) **Atletico Madrid 1** (Alvarez 35-pen).

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	23	15	5	3	51	22	50
A. Madrid	23	14	7	2	38	15	49
Barcelona	22	14	3	5	60	24	45
A. Bilbao	23	12	8	3	36	20	44
Villarreal	23	11	7	5	46	34	40
R. Vallecana	23	9	8	6	27	24	35

SERIE A: Empoli 0 AC Milan 2 (Leao 68, Gimenez 76), **Torino 1** (Thorsby 45+1-og) **Genoa 1** (Pinamonti 68), **Verona 0 Atalanta 5** (Retegui 21, 25, 44, 56, Ederson 37).

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Napoli	23	17	3	3	38	16	54
Inter Milan	23	15	6	2	56	22	51
Atalanta	24	15	5	4	54	26	50
Juventus	24	10	13	1	41	21	43
Fiorentina	23	12	6	5	40	23	42
Lazio	23	13	3	7	40	31	42

BUNDESLIGA: Borussia Moenchengladbach 1 Eintracht Frankfurt 1, Borussia Dortmund 1 Stuttgart 2, Hoffenheim 0 Union Berlin 4, Freiburg 1 Heidenheim 0, Wolfsburg 0 Bayer Leverkusen 0, Mainz 0 Augsburg 0.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B. Munich	21	17	3	1	65	19	54
B. Leverkusen	21	13	7	1	49	27	46
E. Frankfurt	21	11	6	4	46	28	39
Stuttgart	21	10	5	6	39	31	35
RB Leipzig	20	9	6	5	34	29	33
Freiburg	21	10	3	8	28	36	33

FRENCH LIGUE 1: Nice 2 Lens 0, Lille 1 Le Havre 2, Saint-Etienne 0 Rennes 2.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	21	16	5	0	58	20	53
Marseille	20	12	4	4	43	25	40
Nice	21	10	7	4	41	26	37
Monaco	21	11	4	6	37	28	37
Lille	21	9	8	4	34	22	35
Lens	21	9	6	6	25	20	33

Aruwin makes history

Malaysian skier secure stunning fourth-place finish at Asian Winter Games

NATIONAL alpine skier Aruwin Idami Salehuddin made a remarkable debut at the 9th Asian Winter Games in Harbin, China, securing a historic fourth-place finish in the women's slalom event. In a Facebook post, the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) said the 21-year-old athlete impressed onlookers at the Yabuli Cluster in Heilongjiang Province, displaying grit and determination in a fiercely contested race. She finished just 1.82 seconds behind the bronze medallist, clocking a time of 1:36.74.

Japan's Chisaki Maeda clinched the gold medal with a time of 1:33.50, while South Korea's Sohui Gim took silver with 1:34.06. Japan's Eren

Watanabe rounded out the podium, claiming bronze in 1:34.96.

Aruwin was one of four Southeast Asian skiers competing in the event, alongside Tallulah Proulx (Philippines), Karyssa Vasavanont (Thailand) and Phichayaporn Thipkesorn (Thailand).

Her fourth-place finish is especially significant, marking the first time a Malaysian female athlete has competed in alpine skiing at the Asian Winter Games.

OCM President Tan Sri Mohamad Norza Zakaria expressed pride in Aruwin's outstanding performance.

"On behalf of NOC Malaysia, I would like to congratulate Aruwin on her remarkable

achievement. Not only was she the first Malaysian female athlete to qualify for alpine skiing at the Olympic Winter Games, but she is now also the first to compete in the same sport at the Asian Winter Games.

"Aruwin has a bright future ahead, as she is only 21 years old. NOC Malaysia will write to the Minister of Youth and Sports to consider providing additional financial support to assist her in qualifying for the next Olympic Winter Games as well as future Asian Winter Games," he added.

Aruwin was the first athlete from Malaysia to compete at the 2022 Winter Olympics in Beijing. - Bernama



Malaysia's Aruwin Salehuddin in action during the Harbin 2025 Asian Winter Games in Alpine Skiing Slalom Stadium, Yabuli, China on Saturday. - REUTERS/PIC

Malaysia secure first win, avoid last placing

THE Malaysian men's indoor hockey team ensured they did not finish at the bottom of the 2025 World Cup standings in Porec, Croatia, after a comeback victory over Trinidad and Tobago, winning 6-4 in the 11th-12th place classification match yesterday.

In the match held at Zatika Sport Centre, Mohd Rodzhanizam Mat Radzi's squad secured their first win of the tournament after suffering defeats in all their Group B matches and previous classification games for the 9th-12th positions.

Trinidad and Tobago took the lead with a field goal from Mickell Pierre in the 7th minute, followed by another from Darren Cowie three minutes later.

However, Malaysia responded strongly,

netting three goals - two from Muhammad Ashran Hamsani and one from Abdul Khaliq Hamir in the second quarter.

In the third quarter, Trinidad and Tobago fought back, scoring two more field goals through Teague Marcano (20) and Jordan Vieira (21), making it 4-3.

The lead was short-lived as Malaysia's Muhammad Najmi Farizal Jazlan converted a penalty corner two minutes later to level the score at 4-4.

Malaysia then sealed the victory in the final quarter with goals from Abdul Khaliq and Faridzul Afiq Mohd, securing 11th place in the tournament, while Trinidad and Tobago finished 12th. - Bernama

Medal tally over colour obsession

THE decision to set the medal target for the 2025 SEA Games based on the total number of medals rather than medal colours was not made independently but guided by recommendations from experts, said Minister of Youth and Sports, Hannah Yeoh.

She explained that experts from Nippon Sports Science University (NSSU) in Japan, which has produced more than 40 Olympic gold medallists, questioned why Malaysia continues to follow the traditional practice of setting medal targets based on colour, a method that is no longer widely used by many countries.

"This is not Hannah Yeoh's recommendation. It comes from NSSU, and during our discussions, they asked why Malaysia is still setting medal

targets based on colour when other countries have moved away from this approach.

"Of course, we also listen to the athletes, but I also want to hear from the experts. NSSU has produced more than 40 Olympic gold medallists, so they certainly know what they are talking about," she told reporters after attending the opening ceremony of the new Rhythmic Excellence Academy branch in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

She emphasised that opinions of local experts were also taken into account.

"It's not that we are not listening. We do listen, but it would be pointless for us to sign an MoU, invite experts, and then tell them, 'Sorry, I don't want to hear what you have to say because I

think Malaysia knows better.'

"If this approach has proven beneficial for Japan, Australia, and other sports powerhouses, I am willing to give it a chance," she said.

On Wednesday, during the Dewan Rakyat question-and-answer session, Hannah announced the implementation of a colourless medal target system, which was first introduced at the 2023 Hangzhou Asian Games.

Traditionally, Malaysia has always set specific gold medal targets. The only prior exception before Hangzhou was at the 2015 SEA Games under then-Minister of Youth and Sports Khairy Jamaluddin, who set medal targets based on a percentage of events contested (56%). - Bernama

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Jackpot 2 **RM100,000.00**
 Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

GROUP 1	3 0 5 9 9 5
GROUP 2	30599 OR 05995
GROUP 3	3059 OR 5995
GROUP 4	305 OR 995
GROUP 5	30 OR 95
	OR 59
GOLDEN NUMBER	07

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SCAN ME

Blues exit a 'big shame'

Maresca dreams of 1-0 victories after Chelsea bow out of FA Cup at Brighton

CHELSEA BOSS Enzo Maresca said "big clubs" are able to win games 1-0 as he branded his side's FA Cup exit at Brighton a "big shame".

The Blues were gifted a fifth-minute advantage in the fourth-round tie at the Amex Stadium by a calamitous own goal from Seagulls goalkeeper Bart Verbruggen.

But Maresca's men were unable to capitalise on the fortunate early breakthrough as finishes from Georginio Rutter and Kaoru Mitoma earned Albion a 2-1 comeback victory.

Chelsea's only 1-0 success since the appointment of their Italian coach last summer came at Bournemouth in September.

"I said to the players already weeks ago and I said it again tonight, we need to learn how to win sometimes a game 1-0," said Maresca. "Big clubs, they do that."

Speaking about elimination from the competition, Maresca continued: "For sure, it's a big shame for us. But if there is something positive it's that now we can be focused on the Premier League and the (Europa) Conference League."

"Especially in the Premier League, hopefully we can continue our journey there; that has been very, very good until now and hopefully we can finish well."

Verbruggen inexplicably spilled Cole Palmer's tame effort into his own net before Rutter quickly headed Albion level, prior to Mitoma's fine, 57th-minute finish settling the all Premier League tie.

Without injured strikers Nicolas Jackson and Marc Guiu, eight-time cup winners Chelsea rarely threatened to force extra-time.



Brighton's Lewis Dunk (left) in action with Chelsea's Christopher Nkunku during their FA Cup 4th round match yesterday. - REUTERS/SPIC

Asked about the absence of nine-goal forward Jackson, who, like Guiu, was injured in last week's 2-1 top-flight win over West Ham, Maresca said: "Sometimes you need to play games without players to realise how important they are."

"We said many times about Nico, (he's) important on the ball and off the ball. But overall, even without Nico, the game was a little bit... for both (teams)."

"We started very good. First half, probably the only shot on goal they have has been the goal."

"We controlled, we create some chances, and the second half more or less happened the same. After the second goal, we had a few chances to

draw and we missed."

Maresca insisted Chelsea do not miss Joao Felix in a parting shot to the forward following his loan move to AC Milan, despite yesterday's defeat.

Felix rejoined the Blues last summer from Atletico Madrid for £46 million (RM253m) following a brief loan stint in 2023.

The Portugal international mostly played in the Conference and started just three Premier League matches, with seven goals in 20 appearances across all competitions.

Felix joined Milan on loan for the remainder of the season on deadline day of the January transfer window and scored on his debut as the Italian giants beat Roma 3-1 in the Italian

Cup. He also started in yesterday's win over Empoli.

Despite the Blues early exit in the competition, Maresca insisted it was the right decision to let Felix depart.

"I don't think we miss Joao... He is happy there and we are happy Joao is happy there."

Brighton bounced back from the previous weekend's 7-0 Premier League drubbing at Nottingham Forest with a deserved victory.

Albion head coach Fabian Hurzeler said: "I learnt a sentence: just what the doctor ordered."

"In general, it was a great reaction. We bounced back after a tough week."

"The guys showed a lot of character, especially also after the tough start

today. It's not easy to come back like this and to play with this intensity, to play in possession with that courage, and I think it was well deserved."

Hurzeler, whose team host Chelsea in the Premier League on Saturday (4am Malaysian time), backed Netherlands international Verbruggen to swiftly set aside his error.

"I won't talk too much about this mistake because mistakes happen," said the German head coach. "If the goalkeeper does a mistake then normally it's a goal."

"But he's a great lad, he showed some impressive performances for us. He is very stable, he will be stable in his mind and he will bounce back." - The Independent

Alcaraz battles into Rotterdam final

Story on page 28

City survive 'Leyton' scare

Story on page 29

Aruwin makes history

Story on page 31