



Monoculture plantations bigger threat than logging

Conversion of forest reserves for cash crop farming biggest driver of deforestation, says environmental watchdog.

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Unprofitable GLICs, GLCs to go

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says government will not hesitate to shut down consistently loss-making companies.

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Uncontrolled anger can lead to severe consequences, including road rage, violent assaults and even murder.
— ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

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Crime of rage

In extreme cases, anger can turn into violence, says criminologist.

Tiger roadkill often found mutilated for body parts

Hefty fine and long jail term for possession of or trading Malayan tiger body parts, such as fangs, whiskers, teeth, bones, skin or blood: Police

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Walkabout by King, PM around Bukit Bintang

KUALA LUMPUR: His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia spent some time with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on a walkabout around the city's vibrant Bukit Bintang area yesterday.

According to a post on Sultan Ibrahim's Facebook page, the walkabout took place right after the King granted an audience to the prime minister for their weekly meeting.

Attached with the post were several pictures of Sultan Ibrahim and Anwar walking around the streets of Bukit Bintang. The Genesis Tower and Fahrenheit 88 shopping centre can be seen in the pictures' background. – Bernama



The King and Anwar during the walkabout in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. – SULTAN IBRAHIM SULTAN
ISKANDAR FACEBOOK PIC

Only viable GLCs, GLICs to remain in operation: PM

➤ Government will not hesitate to shutter firms that consistently fail to generate profit, says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for an end to the unchecked creation and maintenance of unprofitable GLCs, declaring that such practices must cease immediately.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said his administration is intensifying the oversight of GLICs and GLCs, ensuring that only viable entities remain in operation.

"So far, only a small number of these companies have been shut down.

"But in the spirit of transparency and good governance, we have closed many companies under government agencies such as the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (Risda) and the Federal Land Development Authority (Felda) that did not fulfil their original mandates," he said in the Dewan Negara yesterday.

Anwar made it clear that the government would not hesitate to shutter firms that consistently fail to generate profit.

"There is no benefit in setting up companies, appointing boards of directors, and paying allowances if they continue to run at a loss. This practice is wasteful and it must stop."

Anwar's remarks came in response to questions from lawmakers regarding the

effectiveness of board appointments within GLICs and GLCs.

"I can guarantee that last year saw comprehensive and more rigorous monitoring.

"Company management will be held accountable for any deficiencies, and this heightened scrutiny is now being extended to all government agencies."

He also addressed concerns about government procurement by GLICs and GLCs, revealing that these firms had spent RM59 billion between 2020 and 2024 on contracts awarded to Bumiputera companies – a figure that represents 32% of their total expenditure.

"These investments are not just about procurement.

"They include job creation, training and education through vendor development programmes designed to strengthen Bumiputera businesses."

He cited UEM Group, a major GLC subsidiary, as an example, saying it employs the Malaysian Productivity Business Excellence framework to help local firms secure international certifications and compete for industry awards.

Under the Bumiputera Economic

Transformation Plan 2035, GLICs and GLCs have been assigned clear roles in investing in high-potential Bumiputera enterprises, developing vendor programmes and nurturing Bumiputera talent.

Anwar also underscored the broader role of GLCs and GLICs in supporting social welfare efforts, including disaster relief, employee benefits and urban revitalisation initiatives, Bernama reported.

On parliamentary independence, Anwar reaffirmed his administration's commitment to structural reforms, emphasising that a constitutional amendment Bill, currently before Parliament, would be a significant step towards strengthening Malaysia's democratic institutions.

"The amendment is not just about procedural changes. It will be a milestone in institutional reform, ensuring that Parliament functions as an independent and sovereign body."

Under the proposed changes, Parliament, which currently falls under the jurisdiction of the Prime Minister's Department, will be granted greater autonomy.

He said the amendment would pave the way for the Parliamentary Services Bill 2025 that seeks to restore the separation of powers among the legislative, executive and judicial branches – a principle first upheld under Malaysia's founding prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman, but later weakened when the Parliamentary Services Act was repealed in 1992.

Palace warns of fake social media accounts

KUANTAN: The public has been warned to remain vigilant against fake social media accounts set up under the names of the Sultan of Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, members of the Pahang royal family and the Pahang Sultanate.

In a post on its official Facebook page, the Pahang palace highlighted the existence of fraudulent social media accounts using the name of the Sultan of Pahang and fake accounts allegedly belonging to the Tengku Ampuan of Pahang Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah and the Tengku Mahkota of Pahang Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah.

It clarified that Tunku Azizah only has an active personal Instagram account, while Tengku Hassanal's Instagram handle is "this.7".

All official royal announcements will be made only under the name of Kesultanan Pahang, with its legitimate Facebook account.

It added that the official palace website is istanapahang.my. – Bernama

Decline seen in property overhang

■ BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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PETALING JAYA: There was a 10.3% drop in the number of overhang properties in 2024 compared with the previous year, according to the Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (Rehda).

Overhang properties are unsold properties that are completed but remain vacant.

Its president Datuk Ho Hon Sang said there had been a decline in the number of overhang properties in the country over the past several quarters.

"In 2023, the volume of unsold units stood at 25,816 while in 2024 the number decreased to 23,149 units.

"The total value of overhang properties saw a significant drop, from RM17.68 billion in 2023 to RM13.94 billion last year," he said at a media briefing yesterday.

Earlier, Ho attended a meeting along with his predecessor Datuk N.K. Tong and the association's deputy president Datuk Zaini Yusoff at Rehda's headquarters.

Ho said based on a Rehda survey, the majority of unsold completed residential units are priced between RM400,000 and RM500,000.

"End-financing loan rejections and low demand were cited as the main reasons for the property overhang. The survey also found that loan rejections were primarily due to buyers' ineligible income, inadequate financial documentation and adverse credit history."

He said most overhang Bumiputera properties are priced between RM300,000 and RM500,000, with 72% of them having been completed in the past 36 months.

In the recently published Property Market Report 2024, a total of 420,525 properties were sold last year, marking a decade-high record, with 75,784 of them being residential units. Notably, residential property prices saw a marginal increase of 3.3%, bringing the average price to RM486,678.

Ho said most developers reported a 3% to 6% rise in overall business costs during the second quarter of 2024.

He added that this increase was driven by several factors, including higher material prices, inconsistent supply and rising labour wages.

"We understand that the government is doing its best to address issues related to building materials and labour. We hope they recognise that the longer these challenges persist, the more costly they become."

Ministry to invite MPs, senators to visit dilapidated flats

KUALA LUMPUR: The Housing and Local Government Ministry is set to visit dilapidated flats that urgently require redevelopment, said its minister Nga Kor Ming.

He said the ministry would invite MPs and senators, particularly from the Opposition, to witness the situation firsthand and better understand the importance of the proposed Urban Renewal Act during the visit on April 29.

"We will invite all interested parties and take a bus from Parliament to visit four sites – two in very poor condition and two that have undergone successful redevelopment.

"So, you can see with your own eyes the before and after, then make your own assessment on why this Act is so important," he said after the Sembang Kopi programme on Wednesday.

Also present were Bernama editor-in-chief Arul Rajoo Durar, Sinar Harian group editor-in-chief Zamri Rambli and RTM current affairs news deputy director Md Shahri Saripan.

Nga said redevelopment would provide homeowners with better housing and increase property values.

For instance, he noted that a 421sq ft unit in

Razak Mansion – previously valued at RM70,000 – saw its value rise fivefold to RM418,000 after redevelopment, with the new unit measuring 820sq ft, Bernama reported.

He added that 534 sites nationwide have been identified as suitable for redevelopment, including iconic locations such as the Sultan Abdul Samad Building.

Previously, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim assured that the Bill would not alter the status of the affected land, dismissing claims that it would result in the seizure of Malay reserve land as outright misinformation.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall to facilitate temple relocation

KUALA LUMPUR: Kuala Lumpur City Hall is playing a facilitating role to ensure the relocation of the Dewi Sri Pathrakaliamman Temple from private land in busy Jalan Masjid India to a new location is carried out smoothly, said Mayor Datuk Seri Dr Maimunah Mohd Sharif.

She said as the agency entrusted by the government for this purpose, City Hall has taken proactive steps to help find the best solution for all parties involved.

"City Hall assures that every step taken, and those to be taken, is in line with the principle of freedom of religion as enshrined in the Federal Constitution," she said after visiting the temple yesterday.

Maimunah said the temple's relocation process would be carried out transparently and fairly, involving discussions with stakeholders to ensure smooth implementation.

"City Hall has identified a suitable new location for the temple where Hindu devotees can continue to carry out their religious activities comfortably and harmoniously."

Maimunah said City Hall has also taken note of the proposal to build a mosque on land owned by a private company in Jalan Masjid India, the same location where a small part of the temple is situated.

She said the project was proposed by the private company as the legal owner of the land and not by the government. — Bernama

Heavy vehicles banned on roads during Hari Raya

PETALING JAYA: Lorries and heavy goods vehicles will be banned from the roads during peak Hari Raya Aidilfitri travel days as Malaysia scrambles to prevent gridlock and reduce accident risks.

The Transport Ministry has announced a nationwide crackdown, with restrictions kicking in on March 29 and 30 when millions hit the highways to head home for celebrations.

The ban will return on April 5 and 6 as the holiday exodus reverses.

"The move aims to prevent traffic congestion and reduce the risks posed by heavy vehicles mixing with private cars on packed highways."

"The Road Transport Department will lead enforcement efforts, deploying officers nationwide as part of Op Hari Raya Aidilfitri 2025," the ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The operation will include joint crackdowns with other agencies to ensure compliance. — **by Kirtinee Ramesh**

Uncontrolled anger can have dangerous consequences

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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➤ Expert links rising aggression to social factors as well as stress, trauma and lack of coping mechanisms

PETALING JAYA: Uncontrolled anger can lead to severe consequences, including road rage, violent assaults and even murder, as recent incidents have underscored the dangers of unchecked aggression.

Last week in Kajang, a 39-year-old man allegedly assaulted a secondary school student following a road rage dispute, leaving the victim with a fractured nasal bone.

In a separate incident earlier this week, a man reportedly harassed and slapped a youth at a convenience store for eating during Ramadan.

These cases raise critical questions about why some individuals struggle to control their anger, leading to violent outbursts.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Faculty of Human Ecology senior lecturer Dr Mohamad Naquiddin Dahamat Azam said difficulties in emotional regulation and external stressors often fuel aggressive behaviour.

"Some individuals struggle to control their emotions due to psychological or neurological factors,

leading to impulsive reactions without considering the consequences," he told *theSun*.

Further, he said cognitive biases, such as hostile attribution bias — where neutral interactions are misinterpreted as threats — can unnecessarily escalate conflicts.

"A lack of effective coping mechanisms and problem-solving skills further increases the likelihood of aggression becoming the primary outlet for frustration."

"Persistent stress also keeps the brain in a heightened state, reducing impulse control and making aggressive reactions more likely."

He said anxiety amplifies emotional sensitivity, making individuals more reactive and prone to frustration, or defensive anger.

"Societal influences also play a role. Violent media and cultural

norms that normalise aggression reinforce these unhealthy responses," he added.

Naquiddin said anger issues could often stem from childhood experiences.

"Unresolved trauma from childhood can manifest in adulthood, increasing the risk of violent tendencies."

"Individuals who experience neglect or abuse may develop a tendency to misinterpret neutral situations as hostile, responding with unnecessary aggression."

"While not everyone with a traumatic past becomes violent, studies show early adversity significantly raises the risk, especially when combined with factors such as substance abuse or social exclusion," he said.

In today's hyperconnected world,

technology further complicates the issue.

"Although social media can provide an outlet for stress, it also has the potential to amplify hostility."

"The anonymity of online platforms often fosters aggressive behaviour with little accountability."

"Prolonged exposure to online aggression — such as cyberbullying, cybercrime and harassment — can desensitise individuals, making aggressive responses more frequent."

Naquiddin stressed that anger is a natural emotion but must be managed to prevent escalation into violence, emphasising that effective emotional regulation starts with a strong foundation of support from parents, schools and communities.

"For children and teenagers, schools can play a crucial role by organising parenting workshops that equip families with strategies to reinforce emotional regulation at home."

"Beyond schools, broader community involvement is essential. Therapists, youth mentors and local leaders can provide the public with additional guidance and resources to navigate emotional challenges."

"At a larger scale, partnerships between governments, NGOs and corporations can help fund emotional wellness programmes, ensuring everyone has access to the necessary support for developing healthy coping skills."

He also acknowledged that systemic support plays a crucial role but stressed that individuals can also take proactive steps to manage anger effectively.

"Simple techniques such as the four-seven-eight breathing method — inhale for four seconds, hold for seven and exhale for eight — can activate the body's relaxation response and reduce stress."

He said pausing before responding, stepping away from tense situations to regain composure and engaging in physical activities such as jogging or stretching can help release pent-up stress.

Naquiddin stressed that although anger is inevitable, its impact depends on how it is managed.

"Recognising warning signs, adopting coping strategies and fostering a culture of emotional awareness can prevent impulsive actions that lead to lifelong consequences," he said.



FESTIVE DELIGHTS ... A trader arranging treats comprising a variety of traditional cookies and delicacies at a special Hari Raya bazaar in Chow Kit, Kuala Lumpur. — **AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN**

Emotion-fuelled crimes often triggered by provocation, frustration

PETALING JAYA: Anger-fuelled crimes often stem from impulsive reactions to provocation, stress or deep-seated frustration.

A recent shooting incident in February at a shopping mall in Setia Alam illustrates this reality. The suspect allegedly shot a foreign janitor after being told to move his belongings, an act that reportedly triggered his fury.

The suspect, a local man in his 30s, was later killed during a police operation on Pulau Ketam.

Criminologist Datuk Seri Dr Akhbar

Satar said anger plays a major role in crime, often shaped by a person's upbringing and environment.

"The people around us and the surroundings we grow up in influence our behaviour. If someone is constantly exposed to negativity, frustration builds over time."

"In extreme cases, it can turn into violence," he said.

He added that chronic exposure to hostility does not just affect emotions but can deteriorate mental health as well.

"If you're in a place where anger is

normal, it can warp your sense of control. That's when violent behaviour becomes more likely."

Criminologist and Universiti Malaya Faculty of Law deputy dean Dr Haezreena Begum Abdul Hamid warned that even the most law-abiding individuals can lose control under the right circumstances.

"Impulsive crimes often happen in the heat of the moment. Someone gets insulted, pushed or provoked, and they snap."

"Self-restraint varies from person to person, but certain triggers can

ignite strong emotions.

"Not every reaction is violent. Some people argue back, others walk away. But for those who can't control their emotions, aggression takes over."

She noted that road rage is a classic example of stress-fuelled aggression.

She also said a similar pattern is seen in assaults, where insults, gestures or personal grudges can push someone over the edge.

"In extreme cases, violent crimes such as overkill, where an attacker stabs someone repeatedly, point to

intense rage rather than premeditation."

She said stress, financial hardship and personal struggles are key drivers of crime, especially in urban areas.

Despite increased awareness of stress as a silent killer, Haezreena believes Malaysia still lags in offering effective ways to manage it.

She called for more community-driven programmes to teach emotional intelligence and stress management, particularly for those under chronic stress. — **by Harith Kamal**

Monoculture plantations greater deforestation threat

➤ Policies allowing large-scale conversions of natural forests for single crop cultivations drastically reduce biodiversity, permanently alter ecosystems: RimbaWatch

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: While logging is a major environmental concern in Malaysia, monoculture plantations, particularly those involving exotic species, pose an even greater threat. These plantations contribute to biodiversity loss and ecological degradation.

Contrary to public perception, RimbaWatch director Adam Farhan said the biggest misconception is that illegal logging is the primary cause of deforestation.

"In reality, the main driver is the conversion of forest reserves into monoculture plantations.

"These plantations, often consisting of rubber, acacia and oil palm, drastically reduce biodiversity and permanently alter ecosystems," he told *theSun* recently.

A monoculture plantation is a large-scale agricultural system that involves cultivating a single crop or tree species over a vast area. Widely practised in commercial farming and forestry, this method aims to enhance productivity and operational efficiency.

Despite government commitments to maintaining 50% forest cover, he said deforestation remains rampant due to policies allowing large-scale conversions of natural forests. Sarawak, Sabah, Kelantan and Pahang are among the most severely affected states.

Citing data from the organisation's State of the Malaysian Rainforest 2024 report, Adam said 2.47 million hectares of forest reserves are at risk of being cleared for monoculture plantations under government programmes, including the Licence for Planted Forests in Sarawak and the Forest Plantation Development Programme in Peninsular Malaysia.

"To put this into perspective, 2.47 million hectares is larger than the entire state of Johor and represents 7.5% of Malaysia's total land area."

His comments were made in conjunction with the annual celebration of World Forestry Day today, a global event aimed at promoting



Adam warned that without strong legal protections, Malaysia's forests will continue to shrink under the guise of 'sustainable' development. - ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

awareness of the essential role forests play in environmental sustainability.

Adam also claimed that Malaysia's National Forestry Act 1984 is designed to regulate the timber industry rather than serve as a conservation or forest protection policy.

"We have no law or national policy that outright limits deforestation. Even if 100% of our forest reserves were converted to monoculture plantations, Malaysia would still technically meet its 50% forest cover commitment because these plantations are classified as 'forest' on paper.

"This is a deeply troubling loophole," he added.

He also highlighted another major cause of deforestation - the forest reserve degazettement, in which legally protected forests are reclassified for development.

"In 2023 alone, Malaysia degazetted over 11,000ha of forest reserves, further reducing critical green cover.

"A single hectare of Malaysian rainforest may contain more than 200 tree species, but when converted to a plantation, it holds just one. We've already seen species like the Sumatran rhinoceros go extinct in the wild," he said.

Beyond environmental damage, Adam warned that deforestation disrupts the livelihoods of indigenous communities.

For these people, deforestation results in the

loss of clean water, food sources and non-timber forest products, while also violating their land rights under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

"There have been reports of indigenous graves and sacred sites being destroyed due to logging. Many plants essential for religious ceremonies have also disappeared, infringing on their right to practise their religion," he added.

Adam stressed that indigenous communities are the most effective forest guardians.

"Satellite imagery shows that in areas where indigenous communities have full control over their land, deforestation rates are exceptionally low.

"Globally, indigenous peoples protect over 80% of the world's biodiversity, and Malaysia is no exception," he said.

He urged the government to take decisive action against deforestation, beginning with the shutdown of all monoculture plantation programmes in forest reserves.

Additionally, he called for amendments to the Environmental Quality Act 1974 to prevent future deforestation projects and stronger laws to stop the degazettement of forest reserves.

"Without strong legal protections, Malaysia's forests will continue to shrink under the guise of 'sustainable' development," he warned.

RM22m to benefit 14,000 Sabah fishermen

SANDAKAN: A total of RM22 million has been allocated for the benefit of about 14,000 fishermen in Sabah this year.

Fisheries Development Authority of Malaysia chairman Muhammad Faiz Fadzil said the allocation involves fishermen's living allowances, as well as other initiatives.

"The allocation is also for the construction of a small jetty and repairing 50 fishermen's houses," he said after completing the *Madani* Ramadan friendly *Rahmah* programme with members of the Libaran Fishermen Association here on Wednesday.

Muhammad Faiz also reiterated that Sabah fishermen should not abuse the diesel fuel subsidy provided by the government, and that the raw material subsidy is only to be used for fishing.

"We are also concerned about the diesel oil leakage issue and will take strict action against anyone involved in the sale of the fuel, such as cancelling the licence or suspending the receipt of subsidies, as well as closing the jetty used for such activity," he said.

Muhammad Faiz said a total of 110 members of the Libaran Fishermen Association, as well as *asnaf* individuals received food baskets and *duit raya* of RM100 each. - Bernama

Move to promote clean public toilet awareness

KUALA LUMPUR: The Toilet of The Year Award (Totya) will be institutionalised as an annual national event to foster greater civic awareness in maintaining cleanliness of public toilets. Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming said the initiative had received the Cabinet's endorsement.

Now in its third year, the competition offers a total cash prize of RM160,000, with the top winner in each category receiving RM20,000.

"This year, Totya will feature eight categories - local authorities, rest and service areas, hotels, restaurants, shopping centres, schools, food courts and places of worship," Nga said after the "Sentuhan Kasih Ramadan Bersama Media" programme here on Wednesday. The deadline for participation is April 30.

The ministry, with the collaboration of the Education Ministry, has upgraded about 12,000 public toilets, including over 8,000 in schools.

In line with Visit Malaysia Year 2026, the ministry has allocated RM4 million to construct six-star smart toilets at Dataran Masjid Putrajaya, Dataran Flora in Putrajaya, Jalan Alor, and Jalan Petaling in the capital city. - Bernama

Public urged to utilise reusable bags at Ramadan bazaars

PUTRAJAYA: Alam Flora Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Malakoff Corporation Bhd, has called on the public to bring their own reusable bags and food containers to Ramadan bazaars to reduce waste disposal.

Its chief executive officer Shariman Yusuf Mohamed Zain said as the leader in environmental solutions, Alam Flora will continue its efforts to educate the public on reusable bags as part of its sustainability initiatives and an alternative to single-use plastic bags, which have a significant impact on the environment.

"The use of single-use plastic bags has a big

impact, including pollution and destruction of ecosystems.

"That's why we wish to cultivate the habit of bringing reusable bags as a move towards ensuring a cleaner and healthier environment.

"It is also to make it easier for the public to make positive changes in their daily practices," he said at the Alam Flora's "Kongsi Rezeki" programme with Putrajaya Corporation in conjunction with the Putrajaya Ramadan Festival here on Wednesday.

Also present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa and corporation

president Datuk Fadlun Mak Ujud.

Shariman Yusuf said as part of its continuous educational and awareness efforts, Alam Flora had distributed 350 reusable bags and 2,000 packs of *bubur lambuk* in reusable containers to visitors at the Precinct 3 Ramadan Bazaar here.

"We hope that this small gesture by Alam Flora can spark a shift towards more sustainable and environmentally positive shopping habits by reducing the use of plastic bags," he said.

Meanwhile, Fadlun said in conjunction with the Putrajaya Ramadan Festival, the corporation is continuing various sustainability

programmes and campaigns in line with the government's goal to make Putrajaya a leader in low-carbon green cities, with a target of reducing greenhouse gas emission intensity by 60% by 2030.

Themed the Putrajaya Ramadan "Go Green" Bazaar, the activities included going cashless, and campaigns such as Avoid Single-Use Plastics, Bring Your Own Bags or Containers and Use Bio-degradable Products.

The bazaar also implemented the Used Cooking Oil Collection Programme and the Organic Waste Reduction Campaign through Composting, he added. - Bernama

Tiger roadkill often mutilated for body parts

➤ Those found possessing or trading animal anatomy could face up to 15 years' prison and RM150,000 fine: Public order dept

KUALA LUMPUR: Finding endangered wildlife dead and mutilated along roadsides, with body parts cut off and stolen by passers-by, has become a recurring tragedy.

On Nov 9 last year, the carcass of a female Malayan tiger, one of the country's most endangered species, was found by the roadside on the East-West Highway in Gerik, Perak, with its fangs, claws and skin missing.

On Feb 10, a male panther suffered the same fate after it was struck by a vehicle near Kampung Orang Asli Tereng on the Tampin-Kuala Pilah road in Negeri Sembilan.

With fewer than 150 of these animals reportedly left in the jungles of Peninsular Malaysia, the Malayan tiger, scientifically known as *Panthera tigris jacksoni*, is protected under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010 and classified as critically endangered under the International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List of Threatened Species.

Natural Resources and Environmental

Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said six cases of Malayan tiger deaths caused by road collisions were reported between 2023 and 2024.

Bukit Aman Internal Security and Public Order Department deputy director (Wildlife Crime Bureau/Special Investigations Intelligence) SAC Muhamad Azlin Sadari said when roadkill incidents occur, some individuals take advantage of the situation by stealing parts of the animal's body.

He said under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010, anyone found in possession of or trading Malayan tiger body parts could face up to 15 years' prison and a maximum fine of RM150,000 for each body part upon conviction.

He said despite the Malayan tiger population being relatively small compared with other tiger species worldwide, their quality of life is higher due to the vast forest reserves in Peninsular Malaysia that provide ample space for their natural movement.

"Our tigers remain truly wild. They can hunt, live within a natural ecosystem and develop strong genetic traits through interactions with other tigers in the forest.

"This is why every part of the tiger, from its skin to the smallest whisker or fang, is considered invaluable. Unfortunately, this fuels poaching, with body parts smuggled abroad for various purposes."

He said his team collaborates with relevant agencies, including the forestry departments

of each state, in joint operations and intelligence sharing related to wildlife.

Through their multi-agency cooperation, they cracked down on 147 wildlife-related cases last year, resulting in 184 arrests and seizures valued at RM16,063,320.

His department also revoked 6,683 firearm licences issued for hunting purposes between 2020 and February in efforts to preserve the populations of the Malayan tiger and other endangered wildlife.

Wildlife and National Parks Department Enforcement Division director Noor Alif Wira Osman said through its "flying squad" or Wildlife Crime Unit, the department has strengthened intelligence and enforcement operations on wildlife smuggling.

He added that between 2023 and 2024, 56 tiger body parts were seized by the department, including 32 claws, one fang, a pair of whiskers, one penis, four molar teeth and 17 portions of meat.

During the same period, 276 parts of black panthers were confiscated, including 218 claws, 39 fangs, five molar teeth and 14 portions of meat, Bernama reported.

"As for clouded leopards, 20 parts were seized, comprising 18 claws and two fangs, thanks to collaboration among various agencies."

Those with information on wildlife-related crimes can call the department hotline at 1800-88-5151 or submit an e-complaint at www.wildlife.gov.my.

Politician slams light sentencing of sex offender

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH

PETALING JAYA: A politician has criticised the Muar Sessions Court's decision to impose a mere RM6,000 fine on a man convicted of recording and possessing explicit videos and photographs of his 15-year-old stepdaughter.

Sabah MCA women's wing chairperson Datuk Dr Pamela Yong expressed concern at the court's judgment.

"How does this judgment restrain him from repeating his actions, especially when he still has access to the child?"

"Worse, what is stopping him from exploiting her further? Especially as a means to recover the money that he has lost to the fine, as retribution against her?"

Yong criticised the sentence, arguing that it fails to reflect the severity of the crime, lacks deterrence and provides no real protection for the victim.

"We are outraged and concerned by this judgment. It is nothing short of a travesty of justice, if not an outright joke."

She was referring to the case of a 56-year-old cleaner who was fined on March 19 for recording and possessing explicit videos and photographs of his stepdaughter in the shower.

The minor reported the incident to police on March 14 after discovering that her stepfather had degrading images and videos of her.

Investigations revealed that he had secretly filmed her multiple times after her bath, without her biological mother's knowledge.

She had stumbled upon the recordings while clearing her stepfather's email storage.

Following her report, police arrested the man and seized his phone, which contained 18 explicit videos and degrading images.

Yong emphasised that laws exist to protect the vulnerable, particularly minors, from predators but when punishments amount to nothing more than a slap on the wrist, they embolden offenders while failing victims.

"A crime of this nature demands a sentence that ensures accountability and sends a strong warning to others."

Yong highlighted the need for stricter sentencing guidelines and stronger enforcement to safeguard minors from sexual exploitation.

"Justice must be more than just a token gesture. It must protect, punish and prevent."

She urged authorities to review the case and consider harsher penalties, including imprisonment and mandatory registration on the sex offender registry.

"The offender's actions constitute a severe violation of the law and a betrayal of trust. He must be held accountable in a way that reflects the gravity of his crime."

She called for immediate measures to protect the victim, including restricting the perpetrator's access to her and providing necessary support and counselling to help her heal from the trauma.

"This case underscores the need for reforms. We must send a clear message that such heinous acts will not be tolerated. The safety and dignity of our children are non-negotiable."



Nik Nazmi said six cases of Malayan tiger deaths caused by road collisions were reported between 2023 and 2024. —SUNPIC

Syed Saddiq acted with intent in Armada funds case: Prosecution

KUALA LUMPUR: The prosecution in Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman's trial submitted in the Court of Appeal that he acted with malicious intent by withdrawing RM1 million from the Angkatan Bersatu Anak Muda (Armada) account under the pretext of political concerns.

DPP Datuk Wan Shaharuddin Wan Ladin said Syed Saddiq instructed prosecution witness 13 (PW13) Rafiq Hakim Razali to withdraw the funds, citing internal party

turmoil and personal entitlement.

Testimonies from prosecution witness 11 (PW11) Ahmad Redzuan Mohamed Shafi and PW13 indicated that Syed Saddiq was worried about leadership changes within Bersatu and Armada before the withdrawal.

"His claim of 'political mileage' as justification reveals his malicious intent," said Wan Shaharuddin on the second day of Syed Saddiq's appeal hearing against his conviction and sentence on four charges of

criminal breach of trust and money laundering related to Armada funds.

"The appellant treated the funds in Armada's account as if they were his personal assets. He also failed to inform PW13 whether he had obtained approval for the withdrawal.

"The appellant has a duty under Section 9 of the Evidence Act 1950 to explain why he cited internal leadership changes in Bersatu or Armada as justification."

On November 9, 2023, the Kuala Lumpur

High Court sentenced Syed Saddiq, 32, to seven years in prison, two strokes of the cane, and a RM10 million fine after finding him guilty of four charges, including criminal breach of trust, misuse of property and money laundering involving Armada's funds.

He was convicted of abetting former Armada assistant treasurer Rafiq Hakim Razali in misappropriating RM1 million from party funds at CIMB Bank Berhad in KL Sentral on March 6, 2020. — Bernama



Shawls make **stylish comeback** for **Aidilfitri**

➤ 'They are the perfect accessory and enhance modern, traditional ensembles'

KUALA LUMPUR: Draping a shawl or long scarf over the shoulder, once a hallmark of high-society women, is making a comeback and gaining popularity across generations. The fashion accessory is now emerging as a trendy choice for celebrations.

Fashion designers and clothing brands are now incorporating shawls into their *Aidilfitri* collections, enhancing both modern and traditional ensembles.

Historically, shawls were considered exclusive due to the expensive fabrics. However, advancements in textile technology

have made them widely accessible, with various materials and price points available today, Bernama reported.

Fashion designer Zachrin Jaafars said the availability of imported fabrics has contributed to the practicality and comfort of shawls, making them a wardrobe staple for all occasions.

"If we look back at the 90s and early 2000s, fabric choices were quite limited, mainly *shantung* (a type of plain weave silk fabric) Thai silk and chiffon silk. Back then, shawls were custom-made by designers or tailors

for women visiting the palace or the wealthy," he said, adding that now shawls have become a norm in fashion, with designers creating complete outfits that incorporate them as a key accessory.

Zachrin, who specialises in designing traditional attire, said originally shawls were not just a fashion accessory draped over the shoulder or on the head.

"Shawls were used as head coverings then since fewer women wore the *tudung* (*hijab*). They also offered protection against the weather and were even used to carry items. Today, they have evolved into a symbol of style and modesty."

He said fabrics used for shawls now have become more varied. He added that while shawls were traditionally made from *songket* or

kain pelekat, modern preferences lean towards lightweight fabrics like chiffon and organza for ease of styling.

"Back then, shawls were adorned with gold embroidery and dangling beads. Today's designs are more minimalistic and practical for daily wear."

Fashion stylist Farah Dinana shared her advice for incorporating shawls into outfits to elevate one's appearance.

"Choose lightweight materials and avoid fabrics that are too shiny or slippery, as they can interfere with daily activities. Thick fabrics are also unsuitable as they may feel uncomfortable and restrict movement."

With her extensive experience in styling for brands and celebrities,

Farah recommends matching the shawl with the colour of the *hijab* or outfit.

"For those opting for a contrasting colour blocking style, she recommends limiting the combination to no more than three colours to maintain visual balance.

"This prevents an overly 'busy' look," she said, adding that brooches can enhance elegance, while accessories like belts can create the illusion of a slimmer figure.

To keep the shoulder shawl in place throughout the day, she suggested using dressmaker or safety pins.

"If you have a baby or need to move actively throughout the day, safety pins are the best choice as they are more secure and less likely to come undone."

Ketupat palas, taste of tradition and family legacy

KOTA BHARU: The fragrant aroma of glutinous rice and *palas* leaves fills the air, evoking memories of traditions deeply rooted in heritage. Each fold of the *ketupat* is not merely a culinary creation, but a symbol of history and culture woven into every strand.

In her kitchen, Zainun Ibrahim, 45, skilfully folds, fills and ties the *ketupat palas*. This Ramadan, she has been overwhelmed with orders and is no longer accepting new ones.

"More than 3,000 have been ordered since the start of Ramadan. If I take on more orders, I won't have time to complete them."

Zainun said each *palas* leaf wrapped around the glutinous rice carries not just food but stories from the past, a tradition handed down by her mother, Salmah Ismail, 62.

"I, my eldest daughter Nur Salmi Atirah Zulmuni, 25, and my mother work hand in hand to fulfil these orders. We are a united team continuing the family legacy.

"Every Ramadan, orders keep pouring in. Some customers book early because they are worried we'll

run out. For them, the *palas* rice dumpling is the essence of *Aidilfitri* joy."

Zainun's *ketupat palas* does not just delight locals – its reputation has crossed borders, reaching customers outside Kelantan, Bernama reported.

While some customers prefer the rich coconut milk *ketupat*, others are drawn to the sweet variety.

Additional options include peanut-filled *ketupat* and the aromatic spicy *serunding ketupat*.

"We can prepare around 4kg of *ketupat palas* in four hours. It may look simple, but if the folds aren't done neatly, they can unravel while boiling.

"*Ketupat palas* are not just morning Raya dishes. They represent love, hope and stories that must not fade away.

"I hope my child continues this tradition so that every fold of the *palas* leaf keeps our story alive and remains an integral part of *Aidilfitri*," she said, adding that they are priced between RM1.40 and RM1.60 each.



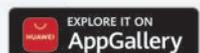
Zainun says every fold of the *ketupat palas* is an integral part of *Aidilfitri* and represents love, hope and stories that must not fade away. – **BERNAMAPIC**

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Indonesia allows military in more govt roles

➤ Civil society groups criticise amendments

JAKARTA: Indonesia's parliament yesterday passed contentious revisions to the country's military law to allocate more civilian posts for military officers.

Military officers could serve in 10 government agencies, including the Defence Ministry, under the previous version of the law whereas now they may serve in 14 state institutions, including the attorney-general's office and disaster mitigation agency.

The revisions have been criticised by civil society groups that say it could take the world's third-biggest democracy back to the draconian "New Order" era of former strongman president Suharto, when military officers dominated civilian affairs.

Speaker Puan Maharani led the unanimous vote in a plenary council and officially passed the law, saying it was in accordance with the principle of democracy and human rights.

President Prabowo Subianto, who took office in October last year and was a special forces commander under Suharto, has been expanding the armed forces' role into what were considered civilian areas, including his flagship programme of free meals for children.

Rights groups have criticised the increased military involvement because they fear it may lead to abuses of power, human rights violations and freedom from consequences for military officers.

"Prabowo appears intent on restoring the Indonesian military's role in civilian affairs, which were long characterised by widespread abuses and impunity," Human Rights Watch senior Indonesia researcher Andreas Harsono said in a statement.

"The government's rush to adopt these amendments undercuts its expressed



A police officer directs students during their protest in front of the House of Representatives building in Jakarta yesterday. – AFP/IC

commitment to human rights and accountability."

The Indonesian government said the Bill requires officers to resign from the military before assuming civilian posts at departments such as the attorney-general's office.

A lawmaker said officers cannot join state-owned companies, to counter concerns that the military would be involved in business.

Protesters from several democracy groups and students said they would stage rallies in front of the parliamentary building in Jakarta.

Some students have camped at the back gate of the parliamentary building since Wednesday, protesting the law and demanding the government pull out all military personnel from civilian jobs.

Police officers tried to force them to leave but they refused, said a protester who declined to be named.

There were a few dozen protesters at the time the Bill was passed. Military personnel were called in for security in the parliamentary building to assist police.

"Geopolitical changes and global military technology require the military to transform to face conventional and non conventional conflicts," Defence Minister Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin told parliament while defending the revised law.

"We will never disappoint Indonesians in keeping our sovereignty," he added, but did not specify what geopolitical challenges he was referring to. – Reuters

Thai ministers to visit deported Uyghurs

BANGKOK: Two senior Thai government ministers travelled to China's northwestern Xinjiang region on Wednesday to assess the conditions of dozens of Uyghurs deported from the kingdom last month.

Thailand last month sent at least 40 Uyghurs back after they had spent years in Thai detention facilities after fleeing China more than a decade ago.

The move sparked international condemnation, with the United States announcing visa bans last week for Thai officials involved in the deportations.

Thailand defended its decision, saying it had "received assurances" from China that the Uyghurs would be treated well.

Deputy Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai, who also serves as defence minister, and Justice Minister Taweewee Sodsong arrived in Kashgar on Wednesday for an official visit.

The ministers were met by Vice-Minister for Public Security Qi Yanjun, who briefed them on the Uyghurs' treatment since their return, the Thai Defence Ministry said in a statement to journalists.

Qi told them that most of the Uyghurs had returned to their homes, but some were being treated in hospital, the statement said.

The Thai delegation is to visit some of the Uyghurs at their homes on trips arranged by the Chinese authorities.

"We will see what they allow us to access, given the time constraints," Phumtham told reporters late Tuesday evening at a military airport in Bangkok before his departure.

He added that he is scheduled to meet doctors to inquire about the deportees.

"We will try our best, but their homes are far apart, and Xinjiang is three times larger than Thailand," he said, adding that those who cannot be visited in person will be contacted by video call.

Rights groups and Uyghurs overseas allege that China has detained more than a million Muslims, mostly Uyghurs, in a network of facilities in Xinjiang that are rife with violence, torture, forced labour, political indoctrination and other abuses.

Beijing vehemently denies the accusations, saying its policies in Xinjiang have eradicated extremism and boosted development, and that the facilities were voluntary training centres that closed years ago after attendees "graduated".

Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Mao Ning, asked about the Thai visit, said the repatriations were entirely legal.

"This was normal law enforcement cooperation between China and Thailand in accordance with the laws of both countries, international law and international convention," she said at a regular briefing.

"The relevant personnel have had their legal rights fully guaranteed."

Human Rights Watch has urged the Thai officials to use their trip to demand "unfettered" access and to publicly press China about "their abuses against Uyghurs". – AFP

Squad group plans to rope in India and South Korea

NEW DELHI: The Philippines and its allies are trying to expand the Squad grouping of nations to include India and South Korea to counter China in the Indo-Pacific region, the Philippines' Armed Forces chief General Romeo S. Brawner said on Wednesday.

The Squad is an informal grouping made up of Australia, Japan, the Philippines and the United States, whose defence forces have conducted joint maritime activities in the Philippines' exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea since last year.

Brawner's remarks at the Raisina Dialogue

security forum in New Delhi come at a time when Manila and Beijing have had a series of escalating confrontations in the disputed waters of the South China Sea.

China claims almost all of the strategic waterway disregarding sovereignty claims by the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam. A 2016 arbitration ruling invalidated China's expansive claim.

"We find commonality with India. So, it's important that we collaborate, maybe exchange intelligence," Brawner later told reporters, adding that his country already had a partnership with

the Indian military and defence industry.

He said that he will "open up" the potential for India's Squad membership in a meeting with India's Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan.

A senior Indian defence officer said the meeting had happened, but it was not immediately clear if the matter was discussed.

At a press conference on March 7, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said the Philippines' actions in the South China Sea were not independent but part of a "screenplay written by external forces", to smear China. – Reuters

Duterte handed over at Interpol's request, Senate inquiry told

MANILA: Philippine officials yesterday defended before the country's Senate the arrest and transfer to the International Criminal Court of former president Rodrigo Duterte, as they faced allegations he was illegally abducted at the behest of a foreign institution.

Duterte is set to be the first Asian former head of state to go on trial at the ICC after he was arrested last week and sent to The Hague, where he faces accusations of murder as a crime against humanity over a "war on drugs" that killed thousands of people and defined his 2016-2022 presidency.

The government's decision to hand Duterte over triggered a backlash among his supporters, family and allies, who have petitioned the Supreme Court arguing the arrest was illegal and

the ICC no longer has jurisdiction in the Philippines.

Duterte appeared before the ICC's pre-trial chamber on March 14 and remains in ICC custody, with his next appearance scheduled for September.

"Justice rendered by a foreign country is not justice. It's slavery," said Senator Imee Marcos, who presided over yesterday's televised hearing.

Marcos is the sister of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr but has close ties with the Duterte family. She said his transfer was tantamount to an admission that the Philippines was incapable of putting him on trial.

Duterte's arrest followed years of him taunting the ICC in profanity-laden speeches since he withdrew the Philippines from the

court's founding treaty as it started looking into allegations of systematic extrajudicial killings of drug dealers and users on his watch.

Duterte has assumed full responsibility for the killings but denies he led a campaign of systematic murder and says he instructed police to kill only in self-defence.

Philippine officials yesterday told the inquiry the handover of Duterte was above board as it was at the request of Interpol and not in cooperation with the ICC.

"The ICC tries people for individual crimes, not states. So the Philippines as a state cannot be called upon by the ICC to do something for them," said Justice Secretary Juanito Remulla.

He cited "international humanitarian law" as the basis of the arrest, adding the ICC has no

authority over the Philippines.

Duterte's arrest came after an acrimonious breakdown in an alliance between President Marcos and the Duterte family, who joined forces to sweep a 2022 election that saw Sara Duterte, the former president's daughter, become vice-president. She has since been impeached by the lower house.

Sara Duterte joined yesterday's Senate hearing virtually and said the apprehension of her father was "patently an illegal arrest" that was orchestrated by the administration to "demolish political opponents".

"This is all about politics," she said.

The ICC says it has jurisdiction to prosecute alleged crimes that took place before a member's withdrawal. – Reuters



India detains hundreds of farmers, clears camps

➤ Refer grievances to federal govt, protesters told

NEW DELHI: Police in India's northern state of Punjab detained hundreds of farmers and used bulldozers to tear down their temporary camps in a border area where they had protested for more than a year to demand better crop prices.

The farmers had camped on the border with Haryana since last February, when security forces halted their march toward the capital, New Delhi, to press for legally-backed guarantees of more state support for crops.

"We did not need to use any force because there was no resistance," Nanak Singh, a senior police officer, told the ANI news agency about Wednesday night's clearance action.

"The farmers cooperated well and they sat in buses themselves."

The farmers had been given prior notice, he said.

Television images showed police using bulldozers to demolish tents and stages, while escorting farmers carrying personal items to vehicles.

Media said among the hundreds detained were farmers' leaders Sarwan Singh Pandher and Jagjit Singh Dallewal, the latter carried away in an ambulance as he had been on an indefinite protest fast for months.

"On one hand the government is negotiating with the farmer organisations and on the other hand it is arresting them," said Rakesh Tikait, a spokesperson for farmer group Bhartiya Kisan Union.

Punjab's ruling Aam Aadmi Party, which authorised the eviction, said it stood by the farmers in their demands, but asked them to

take up their grievances with the federal government.

"Let's work together to safeguard Punjab's interests," said the party's vice-president in the state, Tarunpreet Singh Sond, adding that the blockage of key roads had hurt the state's economy. "Closing highways is not the solution."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government was forced to repeal some farm laws in 2021 after a year-long protest by farmers when they camped outside Delhi for months.

Federal government officials met the farmers' leaders on Wednesday, said Fatehjung Singh Bajwa, the vice-president of Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Punjab.

"It is clear that this arrest is a deliberate attempt to disrupt the dialogue between farmers and BJP leadership," he said in a post on X. — Reuters

'Brain-dead' youth footballer dies

BEIJING: A promising Chinese youth footballer has died after suffering a serious head injury during training in Spain, his club said yesterday.

Guo Jiaxuan fell into a coma last month after an accident during a training match between Beijing men's U-20 team and Spanish side RC Alcobendas in Madrid.

He was declared "brain dead" by a Spanish hospital before being transferred to China, where he was receiving further care at Beijing Tiantan Hospital.

Guo, who played for the U-19 team of top-tier Beijing Guoan, passed away on Wednesday evening, the club wrote in a social media post.

"We've lost a child who loves football. May Jiaxuan rest in peace!" the club said.

"The club will provide all necessary help and support to Guo Jiaxuan's family," it said.

Guo, who was selected for China's U-17 team in 2023 and was once part of the FC Bayern World Squad project run by Germany's largest club, died a day short of his 19th birthday.

Guo's brother posted a photo of the young defender with the caption: "He'll forever be frozen on the last day of his 18th year."

Last month, he wrote that Guo's condition showed "no improvement" and the family was "gradually accepting reality".

The specific circumstances that led to Guo's injury remain unclear and his family have accused the Beijing Football Association of withholding information about the incident and failing to communicate with them.

They have demanded video footage of the match, details of Guo's medical treatment before he reached hospital and his insurance.

Guo's brother wrote on social media that the family "just want the truth and justice".

The Beijing FA said it had refrained from "continuously disclosing information" since the incident to "avoid irrelevant personnel interfering with medical work, and taking into account the feelings of family members".

It said it had obtained video footage of the match and experts are analysing it.

"We have made every effort to coordinate medical resources for treatment and meet the needs of his family as much as possible," the Beijing FA said. — AFP

'Muskie's' hold clue to hopping mystery

SYDNEY: Scientists stalking a small marsupial through a remote Australian rainforest say they may have found a clue to the mystery of why its bigger kangaroo cousins hop instead of walk.

Kangaroos and wallabies are the only large animals to hop upright on two legs, researchers from Flinders University said yesterday, but why remains a mystery.

They believe the answer may lie with the small musky rat-kangaroo.

Researcher Amy Tschirn said musky rat-kangaroos, named for their pungent scent, were the only member of the "macropodoid" family that did not hop.

"As the only living macropodoid that doesn't hop, the musky rat-kangaroo provides a crucial insight into how and when the iconic hopping form of locomotion evolved in Australia."

Scientists tracked the creatures, also known as "muskie's" through Queensland rainforests.

They observed the creatures moving in a "bounding" motion — hopping with their back legs while their front paws remained on the ground.

It suggested a kind of mid-point in the evolutionary journey from walking on all fours to hopping on two, the researchers said.

"These results signal a potential pathway to how bipedal hopping evolved in kangaroos," said Harvard University biologist Peter Bishop, who was involved in the work.

Research findings were published yesterday in *Australian Mammalogy*. — AFP



Takahashi, who lost her husband, prays at Kasumigaseki Station in Tokyo. — AFP/IC

Japan marks 30 years since cult attack

TOKYO: Japan yesterday marked the 30th anniversary of the sarin gas attack on Tokyo's subway that killed more than a dozen people and injured more than 5,800.

A small group of Tokyo subway workers observed a moment of silence during an annual ceremony at the Kasumigaseki station in the heart of the capital's government district, one of several areas targeted in the attack.

Victims and experts warned that the cult behind the coordinated attack remains active and is recruiting young people.

Shizue Takahashi, 78, whose then 50-year-old husband was among those killed, offered flowers at the Kasumigaseki station where he worked.

"When I come here, I clearly recall that day and I am filled with sadness," said Takahashi, who has become a tireless campaigner against the Aum Shinrikyo cult that carried out the attack.

"My life really was not like this. It is

frustrating to think that."

On March 20, 1995, five members of the cult dropped bags of Nazi-developed sarin nerve agent inside morning commuter trains, piercing the pouches with sharpened umbrella tips before fleeing.

The trains moved on, trapping passengers inside with the deadly fumes.

Passengers streamed out of the carriages once the trains stopped, vomiting and struggling to breathe, with emergency workers providing care by the side of the road.

The attack killed 13 people and a 14th victim died in 2020 after suffering severe brain damage in the attack.

Many who were injured are still suffering from vision problems, fatigue and psychological trauma.

Cult leader Shoko Asahara was executed in 2018 along with 12 disciples for the attack and other violent crimes.

Asahara, whose real name was Chizuo Matsumoto, preached that the apocalypse was

coming and how the murders could elevate souls to a higher realm.

Yuji Nakamura, a lawyer who has helped the cult's victims, said many survivors still suffer from health problems and called on the government to offer more assistance.

"I hope the government would become more proactive in offering medical support."

The cult has been disbanded but its deceased leader is still worshipped by an estimated 1,600 members of successor groups.

Experts warned that the groups are reaching out to young recruits in secret, both in person and through social media and messaging apps on which they are also spreading posts saying that the attacks were misportrayed.

Kenji Utsunomiya, a lawyer who has also helped the victims, said the government must take away the cult's assets and shut it down.

"The fact that a group like this is allowed to continue operating is dangerous to Japanese society." — AFP

Former F1 team owner Eddie Jordan dies aged 76

LONDON: Flamboyant former Formula One team owner Eddie Jordan (pic) died yesterday aged 76.

The Irishman revealed in December he was suffering from bladder and prostate cancer, which had spread to his spine and pelvis.

"It is with profound sadness that we announce the passing of Eddie Jordan OBE, the ex-Formula 1 team owner, TV pundit and entrepreneur," his family said in a statement.

"He passed away peacefully with family by his side in Cape Town in the



early hours of March 20 at the age of 76, after battling with an aggressive form of prostate cancer for 12 months.

"EJ brought an abundance of charisma, energy and Irish charm everywhere he went. He will be missed by many people, but he leaves us with tonnes of great memories to keep us smiling through our sorrow."

Jordan's team, which he named after himself, entered 250 races between 1991 and 2005.

They won four times, with Damon

Hill leading home Jordan's best-ever result: a one-two finish at the 1998 Belgian Grand Prix.

Jordan also handed Michael Schumacher his F1 debut at the 1991 Belgian Grand Prix, with the German going on to win a record-breaking seven world championships – an accomplishment only matched by Lewis Hamilton in 2020.

Jordan sold his F1 team in 2005 and subsequently became a TV pundit for British television.

F1 chief executive Stefano Domenicali said in Shanghai: "We are deeply saddened to hear about the sudden loss of Eddie Jordan."

"With his inexhaustible energy he always knew how to make people smile, remaining genuine and brilliant at all times."

Jordan recently helped seal F1 design guru Adrian Newey's switch from Red Bull to Aston Martin.

Aston Martin said in a statement: "We're deeply saddened to hear of the passing of Eddie Jordan. His impact will be felt across the motorsport community for generations to come."

Aston Martin F1 team principal Andy Cowell described Jordan as a "one-off".

"His vision laid the foundations for us and he leaves a lasting legacy for

the entire motorsport community," he said.

Presenter Jake Humphrey, who worked alongside Jordan at the BBC, tweeted: "Utterly devastated. EJ has left us. Formula One won't see the likes of Eddie ever again where a guy with a love for racing can hustle his way into the sport and end up winning races."

"More important than race wins though, he won hearts. I will never forget how his face would always light up whenever he saw a Jordan GP jacket, flag or cap, as we travelled the world together years after the team had been sold." – AFP

Israel restarts ground attacks, issues 'last warning'

➤ Civilians urged to leave 'combat zones'

GAZA CITY: Israel bombarded Gaza and pressed its ground operations yesterday after issuing what it called a "last warning" for Palestinians to return hostages and remove Hamas from power.

The renewed offensive shattered a relative calm that had pervaded since truce took hold mid-January.

Heavy airstrikes began strafing Gaza on Tuesday, killing more than 400 people, according to the Health Ministry.

Gaza rescuers said at least 10 more people were killed in pre-dawn bombing near Khan Younis yesterday.

On Wednesday, the Israeli military announced it had resumed ground operations "in the central and southern Gaza Strip to expand the security perimeter and create a buffer."

As Israel defied calls from foreign governments to preserve the ceasefire, Gazans were left to once again comb through rubble to find the bodies of their loved ones.

After Israel urged civilians to leave areas it described as "combat zones", families with young children filled the roads leading out of northern Gaza.

Fred Oola, senior medical officer at the Red Cross field hospital in Rafah, said the renewed strikes shattered the relative calm of the past two months.

"Now, we can feel the panic in the air ... and we can see the pain and devastation in the faces of those we are helping," he said.

Addressing the "residents of Gaza", Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said in a video: "This is the last warning."

"Take the advice of the president of the United States. Return the hostages and remove Hamas, and other options will open up for you, including the possibility of leaving for other places in the world for those who want to."

He was referring to a warning earlier this month by US President Donald Trump.

Of the 251 hostages seized on Oct 7, 2023, 58 are still held by gunmen, including 34 the Israeli military says are dead.

Hamas says it is willing to negotiate and has called on the international community to act to bring the war to an end.

A Hamas official, however, rejected Israeli demands to renegotiate the three-stage deal agreed with Egyptian, Qatari and US mediators.

"Hamas has not closed the door on negotiations but we insist there is no need for new agreements," Taher al-Nunu said.

Talks have stalled over how to proceed with the ceasefire, after the first phase expired in early March.



Palestinians leaving their homes in Beit Hanoun on Wednesday after the Israeli army issued evacuation orders. – REUTERS/SPIC

Israel and the United States have sought to change the terms of the deal by extending phase one.

Hamas wants negotiations for phase two, meant to establish a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza while the remaining hostages are exchanged for Palestinian prisoners.

"Moving to the second phase seems to be a non-option for Israel," said Ghassan Khatib, a political analyst and former Palestinian Authority minister.

"They don't like the second phase because it involves ending the war without achieving their objective of ending Hamas."

Israel and Washington have portrayed Hamas' rejection of a phase one extension as a refusal to release more hostages.

The renewed bombardment sent a stream of new casualties to hospitals still functioning in Gaza.

A UN Office for Project Services employee was killed and at least five other people wounded when a UN building in the central city of Deir el-Balah was hit by "explosive ordnance", the agency said.

"This was not an accident," UNOPS chief Jorge Moreira da Silva said, adding that "attacks against humanitarian premises are a breach of international law." – AFP

Istanbul mayor remains under arrest

ISTANBUL: The city's powerful mayor, Ekrem Imamoglu, remained in police custody yesterday over graft and terror allegations after his arrest the day before, as his party called for more protests in Turkey's largest city.

Imamoglu of the main opposition CHP is President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's main political rival and his detention came just days before the party was expected to name him as its candidate for the 2028 presidential election.

Financial markets in Turkey fell shortly afterwards in what analysts said indicates investors' serious concerns that the arrest was politically motivated.

The governor has banned all protests in Istanbul for four days.

Hundreds of police joined the pre-dawn raid on Imamoglu's home in Istanbul on Wednesday, he posted on X before being taken away, with the authorities then blocking access to social networks.

Access to the internet and social media were still slow early yesterday.

Thousands of angry protesters gathered outside City Hall late on Wednesday, chanting slogans including "Erdogan, dictator!" and "Government, resign!"

Already facing an array of legal battles, the two-time Istanbul mayor is now under investigation for "aiding and abetting a terrorist organisation", namely the banned Kurdish group PKK.

He is also being investigated for "bribery, extortion, corruption, aggravated fraud, and illegally obtaining personal data for profit as part of a criminal organisation" along with around 100 other suspects.

Ozel, the party leader who travelled from Ankara to Istanbul immediately after the arrest, branded it a "coup" as he attended Wednesday's protest. – AFP

US seeks to deport Indian scholar

WASHINGTON: US Department of Homeland Security detained an Indian man studying at Washington's Georgetown University and is seeking to deport him after deeming him a harm to US foreign policy, the student's lawyer said on Wednesday.

The department accused Badar Khan Suri of ties to Hamas and said he had spread propaganda on social media.

The department did not give evidence. It said Secretary of State Marco Rubio determined that Suri's activities "rendered him deportable".

Suri – who is living in the US on a

student visa and is married to an American citizen – has been detained in Alexandria, Louisiana, and is awaiting a court date in immigration court, his lawyer said.

Federal agents arrested him outside his home in Rosslyn, Virginia, on Monday.

The case comes as Trump seeks to deport foreigners who took part in protests against Israel. Trump's measures have sparked outcry from civil rights and immigrant advocacy groups who accuse his administration of unfairly targeting political critics.

Suri is a postdoctoral fellow at

Georgetown's Alwaleed Bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, which is part of the university's School of Foreign Service. His arrest was first reported by *Politico*.

"If a scholar who focuses on conflict resolution is whom the government decides is bad for foreign policy, then perhaps the problem is with the government, not the scholar," Suri's lawyer said in an email.

A Georgetown University spokesperson said the university had not received a reason for Suri's detention and it was not aware of Suri engaging in any illegal activity.

Suri's wife, Mapheze Saleh, is a US citizen, said his lawyer. Saleh is from Gaza, according to the Georgetown University website, which said she has written for Al Jazeera and Palestinian media outlets and worked with the Foreign Ministry in Gaza. Saleh has not been arrested.

Suri himself has been teaching a class this semester on "Majoritarianism and Minority Rights in South Asia" and has a PhD in peace and conflict studies from a university in India, according to the website.

Earlier this month the Trump administration arrested and sought to

deport Columbia University student Mahmood Khalil over his participation in protests. Khalil is challenging his detention in court.

Trump, without evidence, has accused Khalil of supporting Hamas. Khalil's legal team says he has no links to the group that the US designates as a "foreign terrorist organisation".

Trump has alleged pro-Palestinian protesters are antisemitic. Pro-Palestinian advocates, including some Jewish groups, say criticism of Israel's assault on Gaza and support for Palestinian rights is wrongly conflated with antisemitism by critics. – Reuters



How low can the Dow go?

AFTER a tumultuous week in which the Dow Jones (DJ) index entered correction territory – a 10% drop from its previous high – those heavily invested, especially US President Donald Trump's supporters, are hoping that the fall is temporary.



ANOTHER TAKE
BY LIM TECK GHEE

Their dreaming has been buoyed by last Friday's rally, with stocks clawing back some of their steep losses as tariff-related headlines took second place to the Ukraine truce-agreement-dominated news.

Was this a dead cat bounce or a signal that the worst is over and the US market can resume its bull run and trajectory of growth ongoing since 2023?

"We will begin a new era of soaring incomes," Trump said at a rally in October.

"Skyrocketing wealth. Millions of new jobs and a booming middle class. We are going to boom like we've never boomed before."

Making a comeback or worst yet to come?

Market bears do not think that Trump is right or that any relief is sustainable. Many fear the worst is yet to come.

Firstly, there is little or no disagreement that the market turbulence and fall is a result of uncertainty about how much pain Trump will let the US economy endure through tariffs and other economic policies in his attempt to reshape the country and world as he wants.

Secondly, Trump has not given any indication that he will back down from the tariff war that he has launched. He has also not ruled out the possibility of a recession arising from the tariff war.

When asked in an interview with

Fox News Channel's *Sunday Morning Futures*, Trump defended imposing 25% tariffs on imports from Mexico and Canada that had sent markets tumbling over concerns of a trade war.

When questioned whether he was expecting a recession in 2025, Trump responded: "I hate to predict things like that. There is a period of transition because what we're doing is big. We're bringing wealth back to America. That's a big thing." He then added: "It takes a little time."

Trump has also brushed aside concerns from businesses seeking stability as they make investment decisions.

He said: "For years the globalists, the big globalists have been ripping off the United States." And now, "all we're doing is getting some of it back, and we're going to treat our country fairly."

Beneath Trump's media rhetoric on his tariff bazooka are larger political and strategic considerations that indicate that tariffs and trade relations may just be the first bazooka that he will fire at the rest of the world, including at his allies, to bring wealth back to America.

Trump's tariff and trade policy
The key political reason behind Trump's tariff war policy relates to his campaign promise of making America great again through an "America first" policy.

This populist and nationalist agenda not only panders to his domestic political base. It has also attracted support from Democrat voters who have felt marginalised by globalisation and former president Joe Biden's policies that have failed to protect their jobs.

The fact that Trump's economic messaging has been successful is

attested by his election win in all seven battleground swing states, including farming and industrial states.

In the tariff war with China during his first administration, Trump was able to counter the backlash of retaliatory tariffs on US soybeans that hurt farmers by increasing agricultural subsidies.

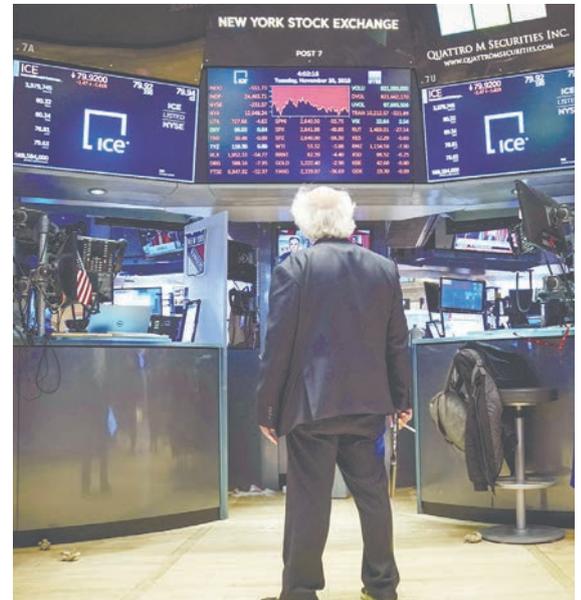
Expect this to be part of the defensive weaponry that Trump will deploy in the coming days. The strategic reasoning behind the tariff war policy is a longer-term offensive plan aimed at reducing America's chronic trade deficit with other countries.

According to reports, the 2024 US trade deficit was a record US\$1.2 trillion (RM5.32 trillion), marking the fourth consecutive trade deficit above US\$1 trillion and the sixth increase in the last eight years.

At the end of January 2025, the US was in the red on trade (in billions of dollars), with the top countries being China (US\$295.4), the European Union (US\$235.6), Mexico (US\$171.8), Vietnam (US\$123.5), Ireland (US\$86.7), Germany (US\$84.8), Taiwan (US\$73.9), Japan (US\$68.5), South Korea (US\$66.0), Canada (US\$63.3), India (US\$45.7), Thailand (US\$45.6), Italy (US\$44.0), Switzerland (US\$38.5) and Malaysia (US\$24.8).

All these countries, including those such as Australia, that have a trade deficit in favour of the US will soon see a renegotiation of tariff and trade relationships aimed at extracting or extorting (as many are seeing it) gains for the US in one way or another.

The impact of Trump's new international economic order – centred on *Maga* (Make America Great Again), unilateral action over multilateral cooperation, rejection of global frameworks like the World Trade Organisation dispute



Past experience indicates that a severe, unresolved tariff war combined with recessionary forces could push the Dow down 30% to 50% from peak levels.

– AFP/PPIC

settlement and a confrontational, bilateral approach to asserting US interests – is still too early to tell.

Recessionary riptide

However, if worse-case expectations of a global recession come about – a possibility which Trump has demurred on and has not rejected – we can expect the Dow to fall much more from its current level of 41,488, reached on March 14.

Past experience indicates that a severe, unresolved tariff war combined with recessionary forces could push the Dow down

30% to 50% from peak levels.

Proactive monetary/fiscal intervention, corporate adaptability and a partial Trump retreat may cap losses closer to 20% to 30%. This will place the index at the 32,000 level.

Investors should closely monitor the coming trade negotiations for signals on how far south the US and global markets will go.

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

Under One Roof

Navigating death with young children

Q: My grandmother is in the final stages of cancer and her illness has dramatically altered her physical appearance. She has expressed a desire to see my two young children. Should I allow the children to visit her? Would they find the experience too upsetting?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: This is a difficult decision. You are anxious to protect your children from fear and pain. At the same time, you want to honour your grandmother's wishes.

Overall, we believe that death is a natural part of life. With proper preparation, it may be a good idea to allow your children to say goodbye to their great-grandmother, especially if they have had a meaningful relationship with her in the past.

Be honest with the children about what is happening, using age-

appropriate language. Let them know that great-grandma is very sick and, that sometimes, when people are very sick, their bodies stop working the way they used to. Explain that this can make her look different than she did before.

If your grandmother's illness has caused her to lose her hair or significant weight, it is a good idea to discuss this with your children in advance. Make sure to explain it calmly and reassuringly. If you seem anxious or fearful, your children will likely sense this and may become frightened themselves.

While most young children may not fully grasp abstract concepts like death and eternity, this is an opportunity to lay the groundwork for future discussions on these topics as they grow. For now, keep the conversation simple, focusing on your children's needs and their level of understanding.

Q: Our young son is defiant and talks back. He refuses to do his homework and clean his room. When we try to discuss these issues with him calmly and in a mature way, we usually end up getting angry and yelling at him. What are we doing wrong?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: First, we recommend taking about 10 minutes to complete the "Seven Traits of Effective Parenting" assessment.

Next, you need to determine whether this is a skill deficit, for example, poor organisation, or a true case of defiance. Either way, it is important to focus on building connection, respect, understanding and communication. If it is a skill deficit, help him develop the skills needed to complete tasks. If it is a defiance issue, ensure that consequences are age-appropriate,

consistent and clearly understood.

Consequences can be both positive and negative. Your child may have learned that you eventually get angry, yell and then give up – so it is important to follow through.

You can use positive consequences to reinforce good behaviour and negative consequences to discourage undesirable behaviour.

Set clear goals with rewards to celebrate progress and implement meaningful consequences to address setbacks.

For example, you may say to your son: "If you finish your homework by 5pm, you'll get an extra half hour of playtime tonight." This is a simple positive consequence that does not cost you anything.

However, if 6pm arrives and he has not started his homework, the

negative consequence would be losing all playtime for the night. Be sure to clearly communicate these expectations in advance.

You will need to come up with consequences, both positive and negative, that truly resonate with him. It could be something like television privileges or a weekend ice cream outing with dad.

The effectiveness of specific consequences will evolve as your child grows older.

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



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Invigorating recipes for pre-dawn meals - P12

INSIDE **p21** Best *chapati* joints in town

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Quick bites

➤ Easy, delicious *sahur* recipes for nourishing start

BY THASHINE SELVAKUMARAN

THE pre-dawn meal during Ramadan, *sahur*, is essential for sustaining energy throughout the day. A well-balanced *sahur* should be nutritious, easy to prepare and satisfying. Here are seven quick and easy recipes that will keep you feeling full and energised for the day ahead.

Chicken and egg congee

A warm, comforting bowl of congee is an excellent way to start the day. It is easy to digest, packed with protein and keeps you full for hours.

Ingredients

½ cup of jasmine rice
4 cups of water or chicken broth
100g of boneless chicken breast, shredded
1 egg
1 tablespoon of soy sauce
½ teaspoon of white pepper
Spring onions & fried shallots (for garnish)

Instructions

1. Rinse the rice and cook it with water/broth over medium heat until soft.
2. Add the shredded chicken and let it simmer.
3. Crack an egg into the congee and stir gently.
4. Season with soy sauce and white pepper.
5. Serve hot, garnished with spring onions and fried shallots.

Stir-fried tofu and vegetables

This high-protein, fibre-rich dish is for a quick and healthy *sahur*.

Ingredients

1 block firm tofu, cubed
1 tablespoon of sesame oil
1 clove garlic, minced
½ cup of bell peppers, sliced
½ cup of baby spinach
1 tablespoon of soy sauce
½ teaspoon of chilli flakes (optional)

Instructions

1. Heat sesame oil in a pan and saute garlic until fragrant.

2. Add tofu cubes and cook until golden brown.
3. Toss in the bell peppers and baby spinach.
4. Season with soy sauce and chilli flakes.
5. Serve warm with rice or on its own.

Roti telur wrap

A quick and filling twist on a Malaysian favourite, this dish is a good way to enjoy bread.

Ingredients

1 whole wheat flatbread
2 eggs, beaten
½ onion, chopped
½ tomato, diced
½ teaspoon of curry powder
1 teaspoon of butter

Instructions

1. Heat butter in a pan and saute onions until soft.
2. Add tomatoes and curry powder, then pour in the beaten eggs.
3. Cook until scrambled, then place on the bread.
4. Cut it up into a sandwich and serve warm.

Peanut butter and banana overnight oats

A no-cook, grab-and-go meal that is packed with fibre and protein.

Ingredients

½ cup of rolled oats
½ cup of milk (or dairy-free alternative)
1 tablespoon of peanut butter
½ banana, sliced
½ teaspoon of cinnamon
1 teaspoon of honey

Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients in a jar.
2. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
3. Stir well before eating.

Scrambled eggs and avocado toast

A protein-packed classic that is quick and satisfying.

Ingredients

2 eggs
½ avocado, mashed
1 slice of whole grain bread



Warm, comforting and easy to digest congee keeps you full for hours. – PIC FROM YOUTUBE @OMNIVORES COOKBOOK



Fuss-free, Malaysian-style egg wrap for a satisfying *sahur*. – PIC FROM YOUTUBE @DAPURBIRU

1 tablespoon of butter
Salt & black pepper to taste
Chilli flakes (optional)

Instructions

1. Heat butter in a pan and scramble the eggs over low heat.
2. Spread mashed avocado on toast and top with scrambled eggs.
3. Season with salt, pepper and chilli flakes.

Thai basil chicken with rice

A quick dish that is protein-packed and full of aromatic spices.

Ingredients

200g of minced chicken
1 tablespoon of oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 red chilli, sliced (optional)
1 tablespoon of oyster sauce

1 teaspoon of soy sauce
1 teaspoon of fish sauce
½ teaspoon of sugar
½ cup of fresh Thai basil leaves
1 cup of cooked rice
1 fried egg (optional)

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a pan and saute garlic and chilli until fragrant.
2. Add the minced chicken and stir-fry until cooked.
3. Mix in oyster sauce, soy sauce, fish sauce and sugar.
4. Toss in Thai basil leaves and cook for 30 seconds.
5. Serve with hot rice and a fried egg on top.

Fried mee hoon

A simple and filling dish for a quick *sahur*.

Ingredients

150g of rice vermicelli (*mee hoon*), soaked and drained
1 tablespoon of oil
2 cloves garlic, minced
½ onion, sliced
1 egg, beaten
100g of chicken or prawns (optional)
½ cup of shredded cabbage
1 tablespoon of soy sauce
1 teaspoon of oyster sauce
½ teaspoon of white pepper
1 red chilli, sliced (optional)
Spring onions & fried shallots for garnish

Instructions

1. Heat oil in a wok and saute garlic and onions until fragrant.
2. Add chicken or prawns (if using) and cook until done.
3. Push ingredients to the side and pour in the beaten egg. Scramble it, then mix everything together.
4. Add *mee hoon*, soy sauce, oyster sauce and white pepper. Stir-fry until evenly coated.
5. Toss in cabbage and sliced chilli, cooking for another minute.
6. Garnish with spring onions and fried shallots before serving hot.

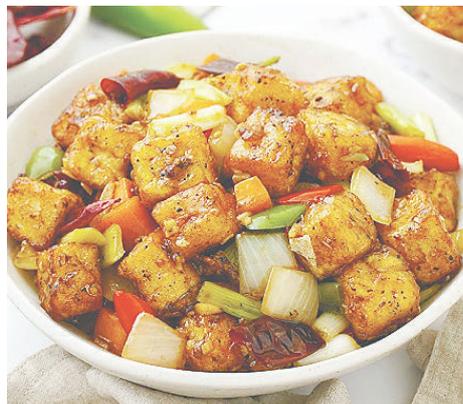
Sahur does not have to be complicated.

These quick and nutritious recipes offer a mix of comforting Asian flavours and simple Western classics.

These meals will keep you fuelled for the day ahead. Happy fasting!



The scrambled eggs and avocado toast is creamy and packed with protein. – PIC FROM YOUTUBE @NO FRILLS MEALS



Stir-fried tofu and vegetables is a quick, protein-packed dish. – PIC FROM YOUTUBE @KHINS KITCHEN



The Thai basil chicken with rice is a spicy stir-fry. – PIC FROM YOUTUBE @FOOD WISHES



Private equity and venture capital funds hit RM24.7b at end of last year

KUALA LUMPUR: Total committed funds under management in the Malaysian private equity (PE) and venture capital (VC) industry amounted to RM24.7 billion as at the end of 2024.

PE accounted for RM18.01 billion while VC committed funds totalled RM6.7 billion, the Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) said in its Annual Report 2024.

For PE, the commitments were sourced largely from corporate investors (40.91%), individuals and family offices (16.77%) and financial institutions (13.27%).

For VC, the top three sources of funding were government agencies and investment companies (35.99%), sovereign wealth funds (20.15%) and individuals and family offices (19.55%).

According to the report, the top three registered corporations by amount of investor commitments as at end-2024 were Creador, Gaia Investment Partners and Xeraya Capital.

VC investments last year concentrated on growth stage (44.6%), followed by early stage (35.98%) and startup stage (13.44%) opportunities, the SC said.

Meanwhile, PE investments were primarily channelled into growth stage (83.82%), with some investments made in early-stage opportunities (16.18%).

In total, 90 VC and PE deals were recorded in 2024, it said.

In terms of target industries, the SC said wholesale and retail trade saw the highest share (13.65%) of VC investment in 2024, followed by other service activities (11.92%), and professional, scientific and technical activities (10.94%).

As for PE, it said investments were largely channelled to technology services (19.6%) in 2024, followed by manu-facturing (15.18%) and financial and insurance/takaful activities (7.11%).

On equity crowdfunding (ECF), the SC said total funds raised in 2024 fell by 23% to RM97.57 million compared to RM126.28 million in 2023.

On peer-to-peer financing, the SC said total funds raised grew by 20% to RM2.51 billion last year from RM2.09 billion in 2023. — Bernama

Malaysian capital market reaches RM4.2 tril in 2024

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian capital market outperformed most of its regional counterparts in 2024, despite experiencing net foreign equity outflows.

This resilience was driven by strong buying interest from several local institutional investors, stable political and macroeconomic conditions and the recovery of the ringgit against major currencies.

According to the Securities Commission Annual Report 2024, the total capital market size expanded by 9.7% year-on-year to RM4.2 trillion in 2024, driven by growth in both equity market capitalisation and total bonds and sukuk outstanding.

The domestic capital market has grown at an average annual rate of 5.5% since 2020, with bonds and sukuk outstanding increasing by 7.1% per annum, while equity market capitalisation rose by 4% per annum.

In parallel, the Islamic capital market (ICM) recorded an 8.5% growth, reaching RM2.6 trillion in 2024.

Expansion underpinned by growth in both equity market capitalisation and total bonds and sukuk outstanding

The SC noted that since 2020, the total ICM has grown at an average annual rate of 5.3%, driven by a 7.1% increase in sukuk outstanding and a 3.6% rise in syariah-compliant equities.

Total fundraising in the equity and bond markets grew by 8.7% from 2023, amounting to RM138.9 billion, compared to RM127.7 billion raised in the previous year. This was primarily driven by a significant increase in primary fundraising activities, including a record-breaking 55 initial public offerings, alongside sustained momentum in bond and sukuk issuances.

Alternative financing avenues continued to support micro, small, and medium enterprises as well as

mid-tier companies, raising RM4.1 billion in 2024. This growth was largely attributed to the strong performance of peer-to-peer financing, as ongoing measures were implemented to enhance access to capital for businesses of all sizes.

Meanwhile, the fund management industry's assets under management surpassed RM1 trillion, recording a 9.6% growth to RM1.07 trillion. This expansion was primarily driven by strong performance in the global equity markets.

On the enforcement side, the SC received 8,501 cases in 2024, comprising 3,910 complaints and 4,591 inquiries, representing a 60% increase from 2023 of 5,318 cases.

The market regulator said the

increase was mainly driven by unlicensed activities and scams, which accounted for 51.4% and 62.2%, respectively, of the total complaints and inquiries received. "Complaints and inquiries on scams and unlicensed activities have been consistently rising, with a 337% increase from 2019 to 2024," it said.

While the overall rise appears alarming, the SC noted that it is encouraging that more people are reporting scams and unlicensed activities without falling victim before approaching the commission.

The SC said through complaints and inquiries received, it gained insights into the prevailing trends and emerging modus operandi. This, in turn, allowed it to take the necessary interventions swiftly to curb illegal activity and prevent more people from falling victim.

Meanwhile, as of Dec 31, 2024, there were a total of 62 active investigation cases.

The SC Annual Report 2024 noted that investigating officers recorded statements from 373 individuals, with over half obtained from investors/account holders, professionals such as investment bankers, auditors, and lawyers, as well as employees, directors, and senior management of public-listed companies.

"This reflects the SC's active investigations targeting securities fraud and corporate misconduct offences," it added.

Additionally, the SC conducted a series of raids across 14 locations nationwide to gather documentary evidence for ongoing investigations. According to the SC, these operations were met with substantial co-operation from the individuals and companies involved.



The Securities Commission annual report says the domestic capital market has grown at an average annual rate of 5.5% since 2020. — BERNAMAPIC

Commission to foster collaboration and resilience as chair of ACMF

PETALING JAYA: The Securities Commission (SC) is spearheading numerous national-level and regional initiatives on the capital market front in conjunction with Malaysia's chairmanship of Asean this year, apart from the routine regulatory and developmental activities.

SC chairman Datuk Mohammad Faiz Azmi said the SC has assumed the chair of the Asean Capital Markets Forum (ACMF), which is a regional grouping of securities and capital market regulators.

"Our chairmanship of ACMF represents an opportunity to advance regional collaboration and build better connected and resilient capital markets within Asean. With these objectives in mind, the ACMF will also focus on finalising the five-year ACMF Action Plan 2026-2030.

"I am also eager to ensure our home-

grown multinationals and companies can lead the region in championing the sustainability agenda.

"In 2025, we will have the first batch of public-listed companies with market capitalisation of more than RM2 billion issuing sustainability reports," he said in the SC Annual Report 2024 launched yesterday.

Mohammad Faiz said the National Sustainability Reporting Framework, launched in September 2024 to establish a robust framework for corporate sustainability disclosures, will continue, with the focus turning to proposing legislative amendments to the Financial Reporting Act and the issuance of Sustainability Reporting Standards by the Malaysian Accounting Standards Board.

"In terms of social finance, we are on track to establish Malaysia's first Social Exchange, which was an-

nounced by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in May 2024.

"The Social Exchange Pilot Programme, or SEPP25, initiated in early 2025, is a major step towards providing market-based fundraising for social projects and bringing Malaysia closer to meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

"SEPP25 will identify the necessary requirements and ecosystem needed for the Social Exchange, which is scheduled to be fully operational in 2026," Mohammad Faiz said.

The Social Exchange also exemplifies the utility and applicability of the Maqasid Al-Shariah Guidance Islamic Capital Market Malaysia, which was released in 2023, he added.

"I believe the capital market requires more such use cases and applications to provide additional guidance to intermediaries and stake-

holders in adopting these principles," Mohammad Faiz said.

"To this end, we are working towards developing specific indicators for each Maqasid al-Shariah principle, starting with the equity market in 2025.

"The release of specific guidance and indicators related to Islamic values will hopefully encourage greater Islamic product innovation and subsequently reinforce Malaysia's leadership in Islamic finance."

Mohammad Faiz said the SC will also be operationalising the Single Family Office (SFO) Incentive Scheme announced by the government with a view to provide a clear, flexible and facilitative structure to enable fami-lies to establish their presence efficiently.

Once the tax order is gazetted, the aim is to pre-register at least two SFOs in 2025.

Alongside this, the SC chairman said, Malaysia will undergo two key assessments in 2025.

These are the Financial Action Task Force Mutual Evaluation, which is conducted every seven to 10 years, and the biennial Corporate Governance Watch (CG Watch) for the Asia-Pacific region.

He said the Financial Action Task Force assessment of Malaysia will be crucial for Malaysia's global reputation and investment attractiveness.

"This is Malaysia's fourth mutual evaluation since 2001, and the stakes are high. A less favourable report may lead to global financial institutions reducing, or worse, halting transactions with local financial intermediaries."

Equally important would be to maintain or improve upon Malaysia's previous rankings in CG Watch, Mohammad Faiz said.



Tap energy transition expertise, OGSE firms told

➤ Rafizi tells industry players to make use of opportunities to reach consumer markets

KUALA LUMPUR: Local oil and gas services and equipment (OGSE) players must leverage energy transition expertise to reach downstream consumer markets, said Economy Minister Datuk Seri Rafizi Ramli.

He noted that local players possess the technological edge to pivot towards solar panels and sustainable aviation fuel.

"Since the launch of the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR), I have personally seen the surge of foreign interest into our OGSE, particularly from Japanese companies, in our renewable energy.

"Unfortunately, there is a mismatch in our supply, (as) we do not have enough local players positioned to capture these opportunities," he said in his speech in conjunction with the launch of the National OGSE Industry Blueprint 2021-2030 Mid-Term Review (MTR) yesterday.

Under the MTR, he said, the ministry will aggressively bridge this gap through the "growth beyond OGSE" flagship.

"By 2030, we aim to have 10 OGSE companies that have successfully expanded into the renewable energy space. We want to show how innovative projects, like plastic to fuel, can be integrated and diversify revenue streams."

Besides that, he said, the second vision is scaling local OGSE players to becoming regional champions as 80% of the OGSE companies are small and medium enterprises.

He said participants in the "regional champions programme" have to be mid-tier size, with over RM50 million in revenue and they must have a positive profit-before-tax over five years with no legal issues.

"The idea is to play an identification and matchmaking role of opportunities. We support the dealmaking process by enabling access to financing and marketing.

Launch of National OGSE Industry Blueprint 2021-2030 Mid-Term Review



Rafizi launching the National OGSE Industry Blueprint 2021-2030 Mid-Term Review yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

"This can be in the form of mergers and acquisitions, management buyouts, or joint ventures. The point is to increase commercial activity and boost export revenues to at least 50%," he said.

Rafizi opined that the Covid-19 pandemic exposed many of the financial vulnerabilities within the OGSE industry, with players finding themselves trapped in overspecialised business models, burdened by excessive debt, and watching their profit margins vanish.

Geopolitical shocks from wars have triggered significant oil price fluctuations, creating an uncertain landscape that has compromised the security of supply chains.

"If we look at pre-pandemic levels, the industry was able to attract approved investments amounting to RM3.3 billion in 2019. In 2022, investments dropped to RM363 million, that is approximately an 89% decrease," he said.

Against this backdrop, Rafizi said, the MTR

comes at a critical juncture in OGSE's history.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Petroleum Resources Corporation (MPRC) said in a separate statement in conjunction with the launch that the OGSE Blueprint MTR builds on the OGSE Blueprint, originally launched in April 2021 by the Ministry of Economy, with MPRC as its custodian.

It features a refreshed vision to develop a robust, resilient and globally competitive OGSE industry in Malaysia, contributing to national energy security, sustainability and the energy transition agenda by 2030.

Initiatives of the OGSE Blueprint MTR have been streamlined to 26, including seven flagship initiatives, encompassing areas in industry development, finance, technology, talent, export and the national agenda. One component of the seven flagship initiatives includes the regional champions programme, involving the scaling up of SMEs to compete overseas. – Bernama

Local retail industry posts 3.5% sales growth in Q4, misses forecast: Survey

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's retail industry recorded a less-than-expected growth rate of 3.5% in sales for the fourth quarter of 2024 compared to the same period in 2023.

According to a survey compiled by Retail Group Malaysia (RGM) and conducted with members of the Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA) and the Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA), the latest quarterly results did not meet market expectations.

MRA and MRCA members projected a fourth quarter growth rate of 4.4% in November 2024.

The survey also showed that retail prices of many goods and services continued to rise during the last quarter of 2024, with the higher cost of living having reduced the purchasing power of Malaysian consumers.

Shopping traffic in the last three months of the year was similar to 2023 levels, as the survey showed Malaysian consumers were still spending. However, holiday sales were not the same as pre-Covid levels due to the shortened school break.

MRA and MRCA noted that in 2024, the year-end school holiday was only nine days. Further, the Malaysia Year End Sale 2024 began on Nov 15 and ended on Jan 1, 2025. However, it did not stimulate more spending among Malaysians due to a lack of awareness, the MRA and MRCA survey noted.

Higher tourist arrivals during the last two months of the year benefited retail businesses located in major cities, as well as tourist-oriented towns and islands.

For 2024, the survey showed that the Malaysian retail industry reported a positive growth rate of 3.8%. This final annual growth figure was slightly below market expectations. In November last year, the estimate by Retail Group Malaysia (RGM) was 3.9%.

RGM revised its annual growth rate in retail sales for 2025 to 4.3%, an upward adjustment of 0.3% from the projection made in November last year.

Similar to last year, the biggest challenge for the Malaysian retail industry in the current year is the rising cost of living as Malaysians continue to face higher retail prices on goods and services since the beginning of this year.

Higher prices were observed from groceries bought from supermarket to services such as car park charges, transport and logistics services, repair services, health care related services, media subscription services, etc.

There will be an electricity tariff hike from the second half of this year. While 85% of Malaysian households will continue to enjoy government subsidies on electricity usage, MRCA noted that businesses will incur higher operation costs due to this increment. Retail businesses are likely to pass this cost to end consumers.

For the first quarter of 2025, the Malaysian retail industry is expected to enjoy encouraging growth of 5.9% due to the Chinese New Year festival as well as the month-long school holiday from January to February.

MRA and MRCA noted that the attractive Malaysian currency as well as the visa-free entry for visitors from China brought in large number of foreign tourists to the country during the Chinese New Year festive period.

The Malaysian retail industry is projected to grow by 4.8% in the second quarter, with contribution mainly from Hari Raya festival. Hari Raya Aidilfitri this year will be celebrated from the first week of April.

The retail sector in the country is anticipated to expand moderately by 2.8% during the third quarter of 2025. For the last quarter of 2025, the Malaysian retail industry is hopeful of a 3.5% growth rate compared to the same period a year ago, the MRA and MRCA survey showed.

Top Glove turns around with RM30.28m Q2 net profit

PETALING JAYA: Top Glove Corporation Bhd returned to the black in the second quarter ended Feb 28, 2025 (Q2'25) with a net profit of RM30.28 million, compared to a net loss of RM51.19 million posted in the corresponding quarter last year, driven by improved margins.

The group recorded revenue of RM883.65 million, an increase of 61% from RM550.33 million posted in Q2'24, boosted by higher orders stemming from frontloading as US-based customers stocked up ahead of higher tariffs on China-made gloves.

Driving the group's improved performance was a sustained uptrend in glove orders on the back of

recovering global demand, as well as trade diversions resulting from US tariffs on Chinese glove exports, which spurred continued growth in sales revenue.

In addition, improved utilisation rates from increased orders over the past quarters enhanced cost optimisation. This, supported by ongoing quality enhancements, resulted in better production efficiency, contributing to strengthened profitability.

Raw material prices, which declined against Q1'25, also accounted for the enhanced performance in Q2'25, with natural rubber latex concentrate prices down 1% to an average of RM6.80/kg, while nitrile latex prices dropped 8% to US\$0.86/kg (RM3.80/kg).

Top Glove managing director Lim Cheong Guan (pic) said the company's increasingly robust results reflect the success of its ongoing quality and cost efficiency initiatives, reinforced competitiveness, and position to benefit from recovering glove demand and trade shifts in the market.

"This is testament to the commitment and relentless efforts of our team, which have been instrumental in turning the business around. We will continue to build on this momentum as we drive sustainable growth for the future," he said in a statement.

Top Glove remains optimistic on prospects, as continually improving market conditions drive sustained demand growth. With this, continued build-up in its order book is anticipated, fuelled by strong order inflows.

Moreover, trade rerouting stemming from

US tariffs is expected to lead to higher utilisation rates and stronger average selling prices, with US orders projected to resume in the coming months when frontloaded stocks deplete.

At the same time, Top Glove remains vigilant in addressing competitive pressures, particularly in non-US markets such as Europe, where Chinese manufacturers' aggressive nitrile glove pricing strategies may pose challenges.

However, this will be mitigated by the group's diversified product portfolio, and its ability to switch between natural rubber and nitrile glove production lines, where required, Top Glove said.

With a product footprint in 195 countries worldwide, Top Glove's risk is spread across different regions, particularly to the US, where margins are higher.

Lim said the improving glove industry dynamics present significant opportunities for Top Glove, and the company is well placed to benefit from them.

"We are mindful there may be challenges ahead and will continue to pursue quality and cost efficiency initiatives, towards ensuring we stay competitive," he added.



Lee said Game On is also exploring opportunities for regional and international expansion.

Game On now in seven locations across Malaysia

► Company's new 80,000 sq ft mega parks at The Mines offer interactive games and physical challenges

BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Game On Holding Sdn Bhd, the rapidly expanding family entertainment brand, has grown to seven locations across Malaysia, bringing immersive and interactive experiences to visitors of all ages.

Co-founder Leroy Lee said the theme park chain aims to revitalise shopping malls and boost local economies.

"With our latest outlet opening in Quill City Mall, Game On continues its mission to provide affordable and engaging entertainment," he told SunBiz.

He said that the company's expansion has not only enhanced Malaysia's entertainment landscape but also created job opportunities.

"Each new outlet requires at least

100 staff members, from operational crew to the maintenance teams.

"Currently, Game On employs over 300 people, and with further growth planned, the number is expected to surpass 600 by the end of 2025," he disclosed.

Lee noted that the company's latest developments include mega parks spanning over 80,000 sq ft in The Mines mall, offers an extensive range of activities from interactive games to physical challenges.

Beyond job creation, he said Game On has also played a role in revitalising shopping malls by driving significant foot traffic.

"The entertainment centers attract approximately 200,000 visitors per location annually, making them key crowd-pullers," he said, adding that after the opening of Game On's outlet in Melawati Mall, the mall recorded its highest-ever visitor numbers.

He disclosed that the company is targeting over 1 million visitors across all of their theme parks in 2025.

To maintain its momentum, Lee said Game On is focused on three key strategies, which are continuous innovation, nationwide expansion, and an affordable pricing model.

"The company regularly updates 10-20% of

its attractions every few months, incorporating AI and AR-based games to stay ahead of trends.

"In addition to its existing seven locations, three to five new parks are planned for 2025, with Malacca being one of the confirmed upcoming sites for new parks," he explained.

He said Game On's pricing strategy is designed to make entertainment accessible to more families.

"With day passes starting as low as RM28 for children and RM38 for adults, the brand offers a cost-effective alternative to traditional theme parks, which often charge over RM100 per entry. Discounted rates for 'night-owl' visits further add to its affordability," he noted.

Beyond financial success, Lee said that he finds fulfillment in seeing families enjoy their time together at Game On parks.

"Building something that makes people happy is our mission," he said, emphasising that the true reward lies in the smiles and laughter of visitors.

Looking ahead, he said Game On is also exploring opportunities for regional and international expansion.

"While Malaysia is our main focus, we're also keen on collaborations that can expand the brand internationally.

"As the company continues to grow, its influence extends beyond entertainment, revitalising malls, creating jobs, and shaping the future of immersive leisure experiences in Southeast Asia," Lee said.

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Asia's sour crude demand set to rebound in late Q2

Exxon Mobil to use more heavy oil after Singapore refinery upgrade

SINGAPORE: Asia's sour crude demand is set to rebound from late in the second quarter as refiners return from maintenance and Exxon Mobil completes a Singapore refinery upgrade that is poised to increase its heavy oil use, traders and analysts said.

The rise in demand from some of the world's top oil importers led by China will support Middle East benchmarks Dubai and Oman despite the prospect of more supply from OPEC+ after the group agreed to increase production from April.

"After weaker-than-expected imports from China for the beginning of the year, we expect Chinese crude demand to resume as refinery throughputs rise, along with those of other Asian refiners," said Harry

Tchilligurian, head of research at Onyx Capital Group.

"This will continue to support Dubai." Several major Chinese refineries, mostly operated by Asia's largest refiner Sinopec, have shut for maintenance since end-February, curbing crude demand.

About 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd) of crude processing capacity will be offline in April, with the volume dropping to about 1.2 million bpd in May, according to Reuters calculations.

Adding to demand, Exxon Mobil said in a statement on Wednesday it is on track to complete an upgrade at its Singapore refinery and petrochemical complex this year after the pandemic delayed the project.

The multi-billion-dollar Singapore residue upgrade project at its Jurong complex will raise production of low-sulphur diesel by 48,000 bpd and its capacity of base oils, a raw material for lubricants, by 20,000 bpd.

The project is expected to start operations in the third quarter, three sources familiar with the matter said.

While the plant's crude processing capacity remains unchanged at 592,000 bpd, traders expect the refinery to use more heavy, high-sulphur crude from the Middle East, reducing its intake of US light sweet crude.

More than half of the refinery's crude imports are currently light sweet oil from the US, Kpler data showed.

Middle East benchmark Dubai became more expensive than Brent crude on Wednesday, creating arbitrage opportunities for Atlantic Basin oil to head to Asia.

"The strength in the medium sour crude is thus probably the centre of the strength in the global crude oil market at the moment," SEB's chief commodities analyst Bjarne Schieldrop said in a research note, adding that the first and third month price spread for Dubai is markedly stronger than comparable spreads for Brent and West Texas Intermediate.

However, Tchilligurian said further weakening of the Brent-Dubai spread may be limited going forward as Brent will draw some support from the exit of scheduled maintenance by European refiners. – Reuters

South Korea to offer visa-free entry to Chinese visitors to boost tourism

SEOUL: South Korea said yesterday it would offer a visa exemption to Chinese visitors in the third quarter of the year to boost tourism amid sluggish domestic demand and ahead of an Asia-Pacific summit later this year.

The move comes after China's decision last November to extend visa-free entry to nationals from South Korea and other Asian and European countries travelling for business, tourism and family visits until the end of this year.

"We will introduce in the third quarter a temporary visa waiver for group tourists from China to speed up the recovery in the number of Chinese visitors," said Choi Sang-mok, the country's acting president.

South Korea is scheduled to host a summit of leaders from 21 economies for the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in the fourth quarter of this year in the southeastern city of Gyeongju, known for heritage tourism.

Last year, 16.4 million travellers visited South Korea, up 48% from a year earlier and compared with 17.5 million in 2019 before the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chinese nationals made up the biggest share, accounting for 28%, according to government data.

Out of this total, nearly a third were women in their 20s and 30s.

South Korean popular culture ranging from K-pop music to fashion has gained global recognition in the last few decades, and authorities plan to try and leverage this further.

The government will also prepare additional measures aimed at attracting more tourists, such as tailored tour packages for Korean food and beauty products in a bid to attract 18.5 million visitors this year.

South Korea's economic growth is expected to slow this year, with consumer spending remaining weak amid persistent political uncertainty triggered by the brief and unexpected imposition of martial law last December, which also had an impact on foreign tourism. – Reuters

China urged to ramp up support for services consumption

BEIJING: China should step up support for its burgeoning services sector to boost consumption, which top leaders made a priority this year to spur growth amid US tariff disputes, economists from Peking University and a former central bank adviser said.

As China's policy tone has tilted toward boosting household consumption, authorities have doubled the fiscal stimulus to 300 billion yuan (RM183 billion) on an expanded consumer goods subsidy scheme for electric vehicles, appliances and other goods.

"I have a specific suggestion that the scheme could expand to the services sector. This can be done right away," Yan Se, associate professor and deputy director of the Institute of Economic Policy at Peking University, told a meeting on Wednesday.

"You may not buy another television this year after you bought one last year, but the services industry is different.

"It has stickiness and it's not one-off," Yan said. Official data on Monday showed home appliance and audio-visual device sales grew 10.9% in January-February from the same period a year earlier, slowing from December's 39.3% jump and 22.2% growth in November.

In 2024, China's household services consumption expenditure was 13,016 yuan per capita, up 7.4% year-on-year and accounting for 46.1% of total household consumption expenditure, official data showed.

Liu Qiao, dean of Guanghua School of Management at Peking University, said China's household services spending was low relative to annual economic output.

He said that it would be crucial for China to raise the household spending component of annual economic output to nearly 60% by 2035 from less than 40% currently, and predicted that services consumption to account for about 60% of total household spending by then.

"The service industry will be a main force of employment in the future," said Chen Yuyu, director of the Institute of Economic Policy Research at Peking University.

"Even if we have achieved good results in the manufacturing sector today, we should be aware that what China needs is a strong and innovative manufacturing industry, not a manufacturing industry that accounts for a large share of the GDP," Chen said.

Separately, Liu Shijin, a former adviser to China's central bank, told a forum last week that China should focus on boosting services consumption and speed up urbanisation to boost the incomes of rural migrants.

"When we talk about insufficient consumption, the key issue is the lack of services consumption.

"Goods consumption is more or less stable, but services consumption is directly related to the level of urbanisation," Liu said. – Reuters

Vietnam allows some banks to have up to 49% foreign ownership

HANOI: Vietnam's government said some private banks can increase their foreign ownership to up to 49% from 30% after they took over struggling financial institutions as part of the government's plan to restructure the banking system.

The government did not name any eligible banks in the statement posted on its website, but said the exemption did not apply to state-owned commercial banks.

"Total foreign investors' ownership in a commercial bank that compulsorily received a distressed rival may exceed 30% but not exceed 49% of its charter capital," according to the decree, which is expected to take effect from May 19.

In January, the central bank, the State Bank of Vietnam, directed two commercial banks to

take over underperforming rivals as part of the restructuring drive that it said was necessary for political stability and social order.

Vietnam Prosperity Joint Stock Commercial Bank took over GPBank and Ho Chi Minh City Development Bank took over DongA Bank.

In October last year, also as part of the central bank's restructuring, Military Commercial Joint Stock Bank took over smaller rival Ocean Bank, while state-owned Vietcombank took over Construction Bank.

Documents seen by Reuters earlier this week show Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank, at the centre of Vietnam's biggest financial fraud, has received a US\$26 billion (RM115 billion) central bank bailout amounting to 5% of the nation's 2024 economic output. – Reuters



The headquarters of Saigon Joint Stock Commercial Bank in Ho Chi Minh City. – REUTERS/SPIC

New Zealand crawls out of shallow recession

SYDNEY: New Zealand has crawled out of a shallow recession as the nation's all-important farming and tourism sectors splutter back to life, official data showed yesterday.

The country's economic output grew by 0.7% in the quarter to December, according to new government figures, a modest lift after tipping into recession last September.

It was largely fuelled by agriculture – New Zealand is one of the biggest milk exporters in the world – and a rebounding tourism sector.

"Higher spending by international visitors led to increased activity in tourism-related industries such as accommodation, restaurants and bars, transport, and vehicle hiring," a government statement said.

A recession is usually defined as two consecutive quarters of contraction.

Once dubbed a "rock star economy" for its ability to weather financial crises, New Zealand has been battered in recent years.

Natural disasters have devastated swathes of farming country, while global supply chain issues hurt the island nation more than most.

Tourist numbers have struggled to match the peaks seen before the Covid pandemic.

Finance Minister Nicola Willis said that data "confirms that New Zealanders can look forward to a better future". – AFP

Eli Lilly launches weight-loss drug Mounjaro in India

MUMBAI: Eli Lilly has launched its blockbuster diabetes and weight loss drug Mounjaro in India following approval from the country's drug regulator, it said yesterday.

Global demand for Lilly's diabetes and weight loss drugs has soared, with the launch presenting a big market opportunity for the United States-based drug company as India, world's most populous country, is seeing increasing rates of obesity and diabetes.

"The dual burden of obesity and type 2 diabetes is rapidly emerging as a major public health challenge in India," said president and general manager Winslow Tucker at Lilly India.

India has about 101 million people living with diabetes and obesity, a chronic relapsing disease, is a major risk factor for diabetes, Lilly said.

Mounjaro, chemically known as tirzepatide, is currently sold in the UK and Europe under the same brand name for both diabetes and weight loss. It is sold as Zepbound for obesity in the U.S.

CEO David Ricks told Reuters in February last year that Lilly expects to launch Mounjaro in India as early as 2025.

Analysts have projected global obesity drug sales reaching US\$150 billion (RM664 billion) a year by the early 2030s. – Reuters

Prudential bullish on future growth as profit rises

➤ Insurer expects dividends to increase by at least 10% this year

HONG KONG: Prudential PLC posted a solid increase in annual profit yesterday, propelled by strong growth in most of its segments, and robust demand for insurance products in Hong Kong and Singapore.

The insurer, listed in Hong Kong and London, expects to grow new business profit and basic earnings per share, based on adjusted operating profit and operating free surplus, by more than 10% in 2025 on a constant exchange rate basis, it said.

"In our view, the most important development is that Prudential is guiding to more than 10% growth in 2025 for all key metrics," analysts at Jefferies said in a note.

Prudential also estimated that dividends per share would increase by at least 10% this year, after declaring a second interim cash dividend of 16.29 cents per share, and a total dividend of 23.13 cents per share for 2024.

The company posted an adjusted operating profit before tax of US\$3.13 billion (RM15 billion) for the 12 months ended Dec 31, a 10% increase compared with the previous year, on a constant exchange rate basis.

Total new business profit grew 11% to US\$3.08 billion.

CEO Anil Wadhvani highlighted growing demand for long term savings and protection products across the company's markets, and a need for wealth management and retirement planning, particularly in the higher income Asian markets.

"Insurance penetration rates in Asia are low.

"We have seen good progress in 2024 with improved cash signatures for new business, growth in the number of active

agents in the second half (of the year), and actions undertaken to improve our variances," Wadhvani said.

The annual premium equivalent (APE) sales, a gauge of sales volume, for Hong Kong grew 5%, while the Singapore segment posted a 10% jump.

The company registered growth in 18 of its 22 markets.

However, the firm highlighted a challenging macroeconomic environment in China, with a substantial reduction in long-dated government bond yields, which it expects to continue through 2025.

Prudential's Hong Kong-listed shares were up 0.2% to HK\$78.00 as of 0539 GMT (1.39pm in Malaysia). – Reuters



Larry Fink (left), chairman and CEO of BlackRock, speaks during an interview with CNBC on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. – REUTERS/SPIC

BlackRock plans new ETFs, retail investor focus

LONDON: BlackRock is betting on an expanded range of retail-focused products, including more exchange traded funds, to attract a new generation of Europeans into investing, an executive said, as it tries to outcompete local rivals slowly gaining ground.

The US fund manager, through its iShares unit, has a 43% market share in European ETFs, three times its nearest rival, according to Morningstar data.

BlackRock and other index tracker providers have dominated Europe's investment market in recent years, squeezing local

managers, but analysts say they face a tough task keeping up their past growth rates.

Stephen Cohen, its chief product officer, said BlackRock wanted to strike more agreements with local banks to distribute a wider range of funds to attract millions of first-time European investors.

BlackRock will explore launching more bond and actively managed ETFs – a small but growing area in Europe – and targeted indices that track fewer stocks to meet changing client demands, Cohen said.

"Europe starts as a culture of

savings, it's not a culture of investing.

"That is now starting to change and change quite radically," Cohen told Reuters.

His comments come as the European Union on Wednesday announced a new "Savings and Investment Union" strategy to get more money out of low-yielding accounts and into investments, noting that 70% of household savings in the EU – worth €10 trillion (RM48 trillion) – are held as bank deposits.

Attracting consumers is the "missing ingredient" for the

European ETF market, said Morningstar analyst Jose Garcia Zarate, after its growth to date was mainly driven by institutions.

BlackRock – which already works with British banks Lloyds and Monzo – is exploring further distribution deals and particularly in markets where it is less established such as Eastern Europe, Cohen said, declining to give further details.

BlackRock is also preparing to launch a bitcoin exchange-traded product in Europe, Reuters reported last month, following on from the take-up of bitcoin ETFs in the U.S. – Reuters

Lamborghini sees tariff threat to US volumes

MILAN: Potential American tariffs on European-made products could hit revenue at Lamborghini, its CEO said, as the sports car maker posted strong results for last year, despite a contraction in the luxury market.

The Italian car maker, part of the Volkswagen group, said yesterday its revenues rose 16% last year to €3.09 billion (RM15.9 billion), while its operating profit was up 15.5% to €835 million, topping the €800 million threshold for the first time.

Chief executive Stephan Winkelmann said the company now had an order book covering 18 months and its aim was to preserve it in coming years, to achieve "controlled growth", as potential US tariffs could add further uncertainty to an already contracting luxury market.

Lamborghini sold a record 10,687 vehicles last year, with around 3,000 units in the United States, its single largest market.

Asked about the automaker's ability to pass on potential US tariffs to car buyers to preserve margins in the country, Winkelmann said in a media call that there was a "sweet point".

"If you go beyond that you lose volumes, that is a fact," the CEO said.

"We need to assess what our competitors do and how American clients react, but there is a risk on volumes for sure."

Winkelmann said the wider luxury car market saw a 10% contraction last year versus 2023.

"Our feeling is that a post-Covid bubble is over," he said.

"While such sudden growth in our market was unexpected, we knew it could not last forever."

"In particular there has been a contraction in the Chinese (luxury) market. Our market is now stabilising." – Reuters

SoftBank to acquire semiconductor firm Ampere for US\$6.5b

TOKYO: SoftBank Group said on Wednesday that it had reached a deal to acquire US semiconductor firm Ampere for US\$6.5 billion (RM31 billion).

The deal, which comes as demand for chips has exploded thanks to the AI boom, is still subject to regulatory approval, SoftBank said in a statement.

Ampere Computing is a chip design firm "focused on high-performance, energy efficient, sustainable" AI technology, based on the ARM compute platform, the statement said.

SoftBank Group is already the majority shareholder in Arm Holdings, whose technology is used in 99% of smart phones.

The acquisition, which is expected to close in the second half of 2025, would reinforce SoftBank's aggressive push into AI.

In February, SoftBank Group and American tech giant OpenAI announced that they would form a joint venture to offer advanced artificial intelligence to businesses.

The two were already working together on the Stargate drive announced in January by US President Donald Trump to invest up to US\$500 billion in artificial intelligence infrastructure in the United States. – AFP

Fed in no rush to cut rates, Trump disagrees

➤ Economic growth seen at 1.7% this year, inflation higher at 2.7%

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump administration's initial policies, including extensive import tariffs, appear to have tilted the US economy toward slower growth and at least temporarily higher inflation, Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell said on Wednesday, drawing the ire of the president.

Trump posted late on Wednesday on his Truth Social platform: "The Fed would be MUCH better off CUTTING RATES as U.S. Tariffs start to transition (ease!) their way into the economy. Do the right thing."

Earlier, in explaining why rates were being kept unchanged, Powell described the uncertainty faced by Fed policymakers as "unusually elevated."

With overall sentiment sliding due to policy "turmoil", prices are projected to rise faster than previously expected at least in part, and perhaps largely, because of Trump's plans to impose duties on imports from US trading partners, Powell said after the Fed announced it had held its benchmark overnight rate steady in the 4.25%-4.50% range.

While Fed policymakers still expect the central bank to deliver two quarter-percentage-point rate cuts by the end of this year, matching their projection in December, that is largely due to weakened economic growth offsetting higher inflation, and what Powell called the "inertia" of not knowing what else to do given the muddled outlook.

There is "just really high uncertainty. What would you write down?" when making projections, Powell told a press conference after the Fed's latest two-day policy meeting.

"I mean it's just ... really hard to know how this is going to work out."

"We understand that sentiment is quite negative at this time, and that probably has to do with turmoil at the beginning of an administration that's making big changes," Powell said.

Overall economic data remains solid, the Fed chief said, pointing to the current unemployment rate of 4.1% and a sense that the job market remains roughly in balance.

Powell's remarks and the Fed's latest set of policymaker projections was heavily influenced by what has transpired since Trump took office on Jan 20 with a vow to impose the import tariffs.

Data released along with the latest policy and economic projections showed Fed officials in near unanimity that the outlook was less certain than usual, and that risks considered balanced as of the Fed's Jan 28 and 29 meeting were now

tilted towards slower growth, higher joblessness and higher inflation.

If the Fed's median outlook for the next three years comes to pass, it would be the weakest three-year run of economic growth since at least former President Barack Obama's first term in the White House and the slow recovery from the 2007-2009 recession.

"We now have inflation coming from an exogenous source," said Powell, using a term economists employ to describe an outside shock, in this case tariffs that could, if Trump follows through with all his plans, lift the average tax rate on imports to levels not seen since the Great Depression.

Some of those levies have already been imposed, with the bulk due in early April in the form of steep 25% taxes on most goods from Mexico and Canada, and a sweeping set of tariffs meant to match whatever other countries impose on their imported goods from the US.

Powell said the Federal Reserve will be watching intently in coming months to determine how much of all those actions passes through to consumer prices, whether those levies or other countries' retaliatory responses seem to be causing more persistent price pressures and, perhaps most importantly, whether it all starts to feed into inflationary psychology among families and businesses. – Reuters



Powell speaking at a press conference, following a two-day meeting of the Federal Open Market Committee on interest rate policy, in Washington. – REUTERS/PC

Nvidia CEO confident chip maker can weather trade war

SAN JOSE: Nvidia boss Jensen Huang expressed confidence on Wednesday that the artificial intelligence (AI) chip giant can handle US President Donald Trump's trade war.

"We have a really agile network of suppliers; they are not just in Taiwan or Mexico or Vietnam," Huang said while meeting with journalists at Nvidia's annual developers conference in San Jose, California.

"If we add onshore manufacturing by the end of this year, we should be quite good."

Nvidia is not expecting tariffs to significantly affect its financial performance in the short term, according to Huang.

He noted that the tariff situation is evolving,

and that what it does to Nvidia costs will depend on which countries are targeted by Trump.

Trump has threatened to slap extra tariffs on imports of computer chips to the United States, which will heap pressure on Nvidia's business, which depends on imported components mainly from Taiwan.

The White House recently put out a release saying Trump is intent on making the US a "manufacturing superpower", ramping up pressure to shift production back to this country.

However, chip fabrication facilities can take years to build.

Since its founding in 1993, Nvidia has specialised in graphics processing units (GPUs)

coveted by video game enthusiasts.

GPUs are also ideally suited for AI and the rise of that technology has catapulted the Silicon Valley-based chip maker into the spotlight.

"We're not making chips anymore; those were the good old days," Huang quipped.

"What we do now is build AI infrastructure."

High-end versions of Nvidia's chips face US export restrictions to the major market of China, part of Washington's efforts to slow its Asian adversary's advancement in the strategic technology.

Asked about this, Huang replied that his company is not alone in needing to respect each country's laws. – AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: MARCH 20

Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

20 MAR 2025

Participation

Retail (16.33%) Net (in RM mil.) +19.53	Institution (42.98%) Net (in RM mil.) +266.15	Foreign (40.69%) Net (in RM mil.) -285.68
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Bought (in RM mil.) 441.32	Sold (in RM mil.) 421.79	Bought (in RM mil.) 1268.94	Sold (in RM mil.) 1002.79	Bought (in RM mil.) 932.51	Sold (in RM mil.) 1218.19
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Preliminary status (Excluding Trade Amendments) | Final data, refer to Bursa website



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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	11,301.37 -62.69
FBMVKLCI	1,504.16 -13.50
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	473.23 -2.23
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	154.16 -0.61
CONSTRUCTION	255.66 +1.23
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,405.30 -207.13
ENERGY	750.30 +9.91
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	475.13 -1.72
HEALTH CARE	1,892.44 -7.48
TRANSPORTATION	1,014.44 +6.29
PROPERTY	997.22 +3.45
PLANTATION	7,451.49 +14.12
FBMSHA	11,026.82 -31.97
FBMACE	4,778.71 +67.22
TECHNOLOGY	50.03 +0.28

TURNOVER: 3.269 bil VALUE: RM2.642 bil

FBM KLCI down 0.89% but broader market up slightly

BURSA Malaysia's benchmark index ended yesterday broadly lower, mirroring regional market trends, as investor sentiment was dampened by the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) decision to maintain interest rates and the People's Bank of China's (PBOC) unexpected decision to keep its key lending rates unchanged, said an analyst.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI slipped by 13.5 points, or 0.89%, to 1,504.16 from Wednesday's close of 1,517.66.

The benchmark index opened 4.74 points higher at 1,522.40 and moved between 1,504.14 and 1,524.23 throughout the day.

On the broader market, gainers edged losers 479 to 453, while 459 counters were unchanged, 1,046 untraded, and 17 suspended.

Turnover rose to 3.27 billion units worth RM2.64 billion against Wednesday's 2.92 billion units worth RM2.73 billion.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said, while the Fed's decision was largely anticipated, expectations of further monetary easing from China were unmet, leading to disappointment among investors.

He added that Malaysia's stock market, like its regional peers, reacted negatively as concerns over China's economic recovery weighed on sentiment.

Heavyweights, Press Metal and MISC added one sen each to RM5.01 and RM7.13, respectively, Petronas Gas rose two sen to RM16.94, SD Guthrie increased three sen to RM4.86, while Maybank trimmed 18 sen to RM10.18, Public Bank dipped six sen to RM4.48, and IHH Healthcare lost 33 sen to RM6.77.

As for the active stocks, Reneuco put on one sen to five sen, JUM Corp advanced seven sen to RM2, Pertama Digital and Innature were flat at 17 sen and 21.5 sen, while V.S. Industry gave up 9.5 sen to 81 sen. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWD1	0.175	+0.030	+20.89	2,341,506
MYEG-C70	0.095	-0.010	-9.52	1,403,166
HSI-CWCF	0.050	-0.055	-52.38	1,285,405
HSI-CWEJ	0.230	-0.045	-16.36	1,144,538
MYEG-C7Q	0.120	+0.015	+14.29	908,972
MYEG-C8F	0.120	-0.015	-11.11	803,833
RENEUCO	0.050	+0.010	+25.00	751,215
MYEG	0.920	-0.020	-2.13	675,891
HSI-PWD6	0.130	+0.015	+13.04	669,087
HSI-CWCM	0.275	-0.060	-17.91	568,810
VS	0.810	-0.095	-10.50	536,566
PERTAMA	0.170	-	-	530,510
IJM	2.000	+0.070	+3.63	398,916
CIMB	6.800	-0.130	-1.88	387,465
SAPNRG	0.040	-0.005	-11.11	349,473
BYD-C34	0.205	+0.010	+5.13	342,804
INNATURE	0.215	-	-	339,699
NATGATE	1.420	+0.050	+3.65	329,423
GAMUDA	3.950	-0.030	-0.75	308,326
HSI-PWFJ	0.175	+0.015	+9.38	306,636



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
LPI	13.800	+0.480	1,110
UTDPLT	22.000	+0.480	10,732
UWC	2.400	+0.170	37,441
GESHEN	4.650	+0.150	392
HKEK-CQ	0.795	+0.140	25
MPI	17.740	+0.140	2,013
XIAQMI-C33	1.350	+0.140	25
YTLPOWER	3.410	+0.140	214,888
HSI-CWEL	0.435	+0.125	500
CVIEW	1.890	+0.120	51
DAYANG	1.900	+0.120	140,011
MMAG	0.700	+0.110	30,566
SURIA	1.550	+0.110	243
WELCHIP	1.090	+0.110	11,638
BKAWAN	19.600	+0.100	14
HSI-CWAD	0.835	+0.100	40
PENTA	2.940	+0.100	31,153
T7GLOBAL-WD	0.105	+0.100	26,090
YGG	0.550	+0.100	58
HSI-CWEB	0.960	+0.095	300

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
T7GLOBAL-WD	0.105	+2000.00	26,090
RENEUCO-WA	0.015	+200.00	63,242
S6FCAP-WC	0.015	+200.00	2,252
DAYANG-C48	0.050	+150.00	400
99SMART-CN	0.010	+100.00	6,033
DIALOG-CIV	0.010	+100.00	3,000
GENM-C3B	0.010	+100.00	1,109
HSI-PWDS	0.010	+100.00	6,501
ITRONIC-WA	0.020	+100.00	84,140
MI-C25	0.020	+100.00	1,500
NEXGRAM-WD	0.010	+100.00	212
OCR-WE	0.010	+100.00	13,000
KEYFIELD-CB	0.055	+83.33	30
EVD-PA	0.025	+66.67	1
DAYANG-C45	0.015	+50.00	2,000
DIALOG-CIX	0.015	+50.00	7,868
HSI-PWDP	0.015	+50.00	100
NATGATE-CI	0.015	+50.00	401
XDL	0.015	+50.00	567
UWC-C10	0.110	+46.67	1,548

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	41,964.63	383.32	0.92
S&P 500 (US)	5,675.29	60.63	1.08
NASDAQ (US)	17,750.79	246.67	1.41
NYSE (US)	19,581.32	159.74	0.82
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	5,483.14	-24.22	-0.44
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,717.35	10.69	0.12
DAX (GER)	23,088.33	-199.73	-0.86
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	37,751.88	-93.54	-0.25
TOPIX INDEX (JPN)	2,795.96	12.4	0.45
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	24,219.95	-551.19	-2.23
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,974.99	-35.18	-0.88
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	189.56	-0.22	-0.12
SHANGHAI SEI COM (CHN)	3,408.95	-17.48	-0.51
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,637.10	8.48	0.32
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	76,409.19	960.14	1.27
ASX 200 (AUS)	7,918.89	90.64	1.16
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,148.92	93.65	1.16
FBM KLCI	1,504.16	-13.5	-0.89
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,931.18	22.87	0.59
WTI (US\$/BBL)	67.68	0.52	0.77
BRENT (US\$/BBL)	71.26	0.48	0.68
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	3,051.80	10.6	0.35
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	34.17	-0.04	-0.12
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	995.21	-2.39	-0.25
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	512.15	2.15	0.42
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,987.50	83	0.84
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	464	2	0.43
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	562.75	-0.75	-0.13
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	42.1	-0.26	-0.61
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	8,121.00	100	1.25
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	197.6	2.9	1.49

As at 5pm, Mar 20

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	62.240	-1.320	3,900
PETDAG	17.460	-0.340	3,450
IHH	6.770	-0.330	141,513
AMWAY	5.490	-0.200	954
HEIM	26.480	-0.200	873
UCHITEC	3.200	-0.200	23,525
HSI-CWA5	0.300	-0.185	7,004
ALLIANZ-PA	18.700	-0.180	11
BLDPLNT	10.020	-0.180	354
HSI-CWCN	0.960	-0.180	100
MAYBANK	10.180	-0.180	93,455
ALLIANZ	18.200	-0.160	150
HSTECH-C20	0.570	-0.155	1,684
HSI-CWCC	0.400	-0.140	1,440
PANAMY	14.020	-0.140	523
CIMB	6.800	-0.130	387,465
HSTECH-C18	0.325	-0.130	5,250
XIAQMI-C34	1.130	-0.130	80
VS-C94	0.025	-0.125	3,193
HSI-CWCT	0.620	-0.120	29,088

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSTECH-H13	0.005	-87.50	1,388
VS-C94	0.025	-83.33	3,193
MYEG-C7M	0.005	-75.00	218,500
AEON-C33	0.005	-66.67	1,500
IHH-C47	0.030	-66.67	31,716
MBSB-C73	0.010	-66.67	2,000
NDX-HJ	0.005	-66.67	500
OWG-WB	0.005	-66.67	8
HSI-CWCF	0.050	-52.38	1,285,405
GIIB-WA	0.005	-50.00	6,000
HARTA-C2L	0.005	-50.00	450
HARTA-C20	0.005	-50.00	1,620
HONGSENG	0.005	-50.00	8,129
HSTECH-C16	0.005	-50.00	3,000
IHH-C49	0.020	-50.00	5,100
PHB	0.005	-50.00	11,194
UWC-C8	0.005	-50.00	612
VS-C89	0.005	-50.00	1,000
ZENTECH	0.005	-50.00	26,734
HSI-CWCG	0.125	-46.81	68,920

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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WTEC inks underwriting deal with Alliance Islamic for IPO

KUALA LUMPUR: Manufacturer and trader of foam and non-foam products WTEC Group Bhd has signed an underwriting agreement with Alliance Islamic Bank Bhd as part of its upcoming initial public offering (IPO) on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia.

WTEC's IPO includes the public issuance of 90.2 million new shares, making up 18.8% of its total shares after listing.

Additionally, 43.2 million existing shares, or 9% of the total, will be offered for sale.

Of the 90.2 million new shares, 24 million will be offered to the Malaysian public through balloting. Another 9.6 million will be allocated to eligible directors, employees, and contributors to the company's success under the pink form allocation.

The remaining 56.6 million shares will be privately placed with bumiputera investors approved by the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MitI).

Of the 43.2 million shares for sale through private placement, 39.8 million will go to selected investors, while 3.4 million will be allocated to bumiputera investors approved by MitI.

Under the underwriting agreement, Alliance Islamic Bank will guarantee 33.6 million new shares allocated to the Malaysian public and pink form allocation.

WTEC manufactures and trades foam and non-foam products, serving a diverse range of industries including automotive, electrical and electronics, construction, medical and personal protective equipment, and others.

Beyond Malaysia, the group also exports to other foreign countries including but not limited to Vietnam, Australia, Thailand, and other international markets.

Ringgit ends higher against dollar on dovish Fed signal

THE ringgit ended higher against the US dollar yesterday as the US Federal Reserve (Fed) maintained its benchmark interest rate but signalled that the rate-cutting narrative remained on track.

The local note gained 0.33% to RM4.4215/4270 from Wednesday's close of 4.4330/4400.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the Fed remains unfazed about the interest rate outlook despite navigating heightened policy uncertainties, particularly concerning the impact of import tariffs.

"The Fed's latest macroeconomic projections reaffirm their outlook of two rate cuts in 2025, 2026, and 2027, consistent with December's forecast. This reinforces greater clarity on monetary policy direction, with no deviation from the planned course," he told Bernama.

Additionally, Mohd Afzanizam said the Fed's decision to reduce the monthly redemption cap on US Treasury bonds to US\$5 billion from US\$25 billion signals an intent to ease rates soon, as the move eases ample liquidity in the financial system.

The ringgit traded mostly higher against a basket of major currencies.

It bounced versus the euro to 4.7973/8033 from 4.8324/8400 at Wednesday's close, improved against the British pound to 5.7276/7347 from 5.7496/7587 but eased vis-a-vis the Japanese yen to 2.9728/9767 from 2.9595/9643.

The local note also strengthened against Asean currencies.

It edged up against the Singapore dollar to 3.3117/3164 from 3.3251/3306 at the close on Wednesday, advanced versus the Thai baht to 13.1163/1388 from 13.1778/2056 and gained vis-a-vis the Philippine peso to 7.72/7.74 from 7.74/7.75 previously.

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.4930	4.3580	4.3480
1 Australian Dollar	2.8650	2.7490	2.7330
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3770	3.2780	3.2700
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1330	3.0480	3.0360
1 Euro	4.9090	4.7490	4.7290
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6200	2.5220	2.5060
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3770	3.2780	3.2700
1 Sterling Pound	5.8520	5.6650	5.6450
1 Swiss Franc	5.1620	4.9410	4.9260
100 UAE Dirham	123.7600	117.3200	117.1200
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7740	3.5140	3.3140
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.5500	59.9000	N/A
100 Danish Krone	67.4500	62.0600	61.8600
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.4300	55.5200	55.3200
100 Indian Rupee	5.2900	4.9700	4.7700
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0281	0.0255	0.0205
100 Japanese Yen	3.0310	2.9340	2.9240
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	43.7200	40.1600	39.9600
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6300	1.5300	1.3300
100 Philippine Peso	7.9700	7.5100	7.3100
100 Qatar Riyal	124.6000	118.2900	118.0900
100 Saudi Riyal	121.1000	114.9600	114.7600
100 South Africa Rand	25.7500	23.2400	23.0400
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5600	1.4300	1.2300
100 Swedish Krona	45.9200	41.7800	41.5800
100 Thai Baht	13.9800	12.3900	11.9900

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Axiata Group Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM3.20



Source: Bloomberg

AXIATA Group hosted a conference call this week ahead of its EGM for shareholders (March 24) to vote on the XL and Smartfren (FREN IJ, NR) merger. The EGM for XL and FREN shareholders is on March 25. Recap: Post the merger, Axiata and Sinarmas Group will have joint control of MergedCo (renamed XL Smart Telecom or XLS) with equal 34.8% stakes. The merger is on track for a mid-2025 completion, with approvals in principal given by Indonesia's Communications Ministry and Financial Services Authority. XLS will be led by ex-Robi Axiata CEO Rajeev Sethi.

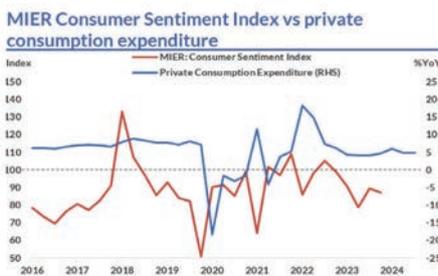
While the merger rationale and strategic intent are well acknowledged (i.e. scale benefits, market price repair, and financial resilience), we think market concerns will likely hinge on the risks from XLS's earnings deconsolidation (from majority control to associate) at group level. On proforma earnings (assuming the merger had been in effect in 2024), Axiata's reported PATAMI is set to see a 34% decline to RM627 million from RM947 million. This assumes the deconsolidation of XLS's FY24 PATAMI (RM355 million), interest savings of RM82 million (proceeds from the share equalisation used to repay group debt), intercompany elimination with Linknet (RM105 million), and associate contributions from XLS (RM55 million).

Assuming FREN's FY24 LATAMI of IDR1.29tn (-RM374 million) is kept (erring on the conservative) for FY25-26 and using our current FY25-26 core earnings for XL, we estimate Axiata's FY25-26 core earnings will be lowered by 9-14% (pre-synergies and integration costs), all else being equal. We make no changes to our forecasts pending merger completion and fresh management guidance.

BUY with RM3.20 TP. – RHB Research, March 20

Consumer Products

Neutral



Source: Company data, RHB

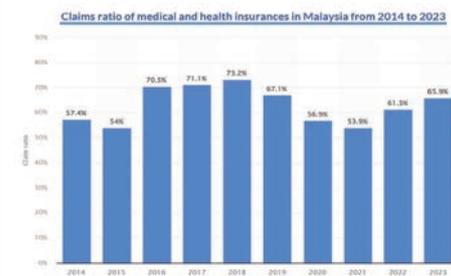
4Q24 – a seasonally stronger quarter. Most companies recorded higher QoQ sales, lifted by favourable seasonal factors towards the year-end and aided by the earlier timing of the Lunar New Year in 2025. On a YoY basis, most domestic-driven businesses registered positive topline growth, reflecting resilient consumer spending on the back of healthy economic growth and employment markets. That said, consumer sentiment remained subdued as elevated costs of living continued to limit discretionary spending, thereby pressuring inflation-weary consumers to downgrade and be selective on spending. That explains the relatively weaker earnings of the consumer discretionary companies vs the consumer staples players.

In 2025, wage hikes in the public and private sectors would be positive for the consumer sector, as these would boost disposable income and consumer sentiment. This may be playing out, as most companies we talked to are seeing a positive momentum in their numbers QTD. On top of that, robust economic growth and job markets should continue to underpin the sector's health, with lower-income groups to be supported by cash assistance and various subsidies from the government. On the flip side, the inflationary impact arising from the petrol subsidy rationalisation is still unclear at this juncture – we await more clarity on the mechanism.

We like MRDIY, as it is a major proxy to capture the increase in consumer spending, as beneficiaries of the abovementioned sector tailwinds fall well within its customer base. We also like Farm Fresh – for its topline growth, driven by new product launches and expansion, with margins supported by lower input costs and favorable FX rates. – RHB Research, March 20

Healthcare Facilities & Services

Overweight



Source: Statista

DATUK Dr Kuljit Singh shared his view that the Association Private Hospitals of Malaysia (APHM) continues to fully support the implementation of the diagnostic-related group (DRG) system in Malaysia provided the mechanism is carefully designed and able to demonstrate an improving patient outcome. We learnt that DRG is only implemented in public healthcare (not mandatory for private healthcare) in countries already practicing it. APHM is of the view that the proposed DRG mechanism in Malaysia should be implemented in such a manner where private hospitals are reimbursed based on DRG rates when public hospitals decant patients to the private sector.

The insurance and takaful operators (ITOs) are seeking various measures to streamline cost following Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) latest ruling to cap the premium hike until end 2026 amid the higher usage of treatment in private hospitals as well as high medical cost inflation. Despite the ITOs considering to delist private hospitals from the guarantee letter facility, APHM firmly opposes such a move as this could undermine a patient's right to access quality healthcare. In response, APHM yesterday proposed measures to address rising healthcare cost which include co-payment, NHIS, non-claim bonus, as well as exemption of sales and service tax or SST on group insurance for employees.

The proposal to implement the National Health Insurance Scheme remains up in the air after several changes of government administration. APHM sees several challenges i.e. long waiting time at public hospitals, rate of contributions from income earners, as well as service quality. – RHB Research, March 20



A chapati set with palak paneer.



A chapati set at Chapati Bites. – STAMARAI CHELVI/THESUN

Warm, soft and fluffy chapati at Big Singh Chapati. – BIGSINGH CHAPATIPIC



BY STAMARAI CHELVI

CHAPATI, or Indian flatbread, is a staple diet in the northern parts of India, such as Punjab. Soft, thin and round-shaped chapati is a delicious and healthy meal.

It is made with whole wheat flour called *atta* and served with sides such as dhal curry or potato gravy.

The recipe is as follows: Add vegetable oil and salt to the *atta* flour, knead into a dough and divide into small balls. Flatten each ball with a rolling pin before cooking on a *tawa*, a round cast-iron skillet.

Chapati, a source of soluble fibre, is good for the heart and stomach as it is low in calories. It is commonly eaten during lunch or as a light snack, and can be paired with vegetable or non-vegetable dishes.

These days, chapati is often seen as a substitute for *tortilla* and used as a sandwich wrap for vegetables or a meat filling.

You may have the impression chapati is dry, tasteless and difficult to chew, but here are some eateries that will instantly change your mind:

Tasty Chapathi, Petaling Jaya

The name says it all! Serving

Chapati hotspots

➤ Three places in Klang Valley known for tasty Indian flatbread



The chapati at Tasty Chapathi is soft, puffy and tasty. – PICS FROM TASTY CHAPATHI

authentic North Indian cuisine, the restaurant's chapati is soft, puffy, and yes... tasty, which tempts you to order more.

Moreover, it offers an impressive variety of delicious side dishes, from chicken tikka to palak paneer.

The restaurant makes the paneer from scratch, which is why it tastes fresh and creamy, and the dish pairs well with the soft chapati that they make.

You can also pair the chapati with mutton rogan josh, butter chicken, methi fish, mutton keema and chicken curry.

Practically everything on the menu, from desserts to drinks, tastes good, but the chapati is a must-try.

Big Singh Chapati, Taman Tun Dr Ismail

The chapati here is warm, soft and fluffy. The restaurant is also famous for naan, biryani, its signature

tandoori chicken and beverages such as *lassi*, Punjabi tea and masala tea.

The eatery serves authentic Punjabi cuisine and has good ambience, featuring wall paintings that are Instagram-worthy.

Chapati Bites at Full Moon Sen Vegetarian Food Court, SS5

Chapati Bites is a stall in a fully vegetarian food court Full Moon Sen Restaurant at SS5 in Petaling Jaya.

Made fresh, cooked over hot plate and served warm, the chapati here is small but soft-textured and slightly flaky. RM10 gets you three delightful chapati with three side dishes: *dhall*, vegetables and *raita* (yoghurt).

Do note the stall only operates in the morning and it is recommended to visit on a weekend to enjoy a leisurely breakfast.

Hotel chain celebrates Malaysian heritage with classic dishes

CHAMPIONING the unique blend of Malaysian flavours, Marriott Bonvoy Hotels and Resorts recently launched The Malaysian Kitchen across the nation.

The year-round campaign celebrates the nation's vibrant culinary heritage. Launched during Ramadan, this initiative brings together talented Marriott Bonvoy chefs to curate authentic flavours of Malaysia. Preserving authenticity, the Malaysian Kitchen takes recipes from the East and West by honouring the ancient techniques and traditions used to make heritage cuisine.

Drawing from the nation's culinary identity including Ramadan bazaars, street markets and secret family recipes, The Malaysian Kitchen connects to roots by embarking on a gastronomic journey.

Spiced journey

At the heart of The Malaysian Kitchen are the stories behind these iconic dishes, from the memories of family gatherings and nostalgia of childhood flavours to the tradition of generational cooking techniques, which embody the soul of Malaysian cuisine and evoke fond memories of home, culture and shared meals.

At The St. Regis Kuala Lumpur, executive chef Norazizi Taslim presented *nasi lemak ayam rendang*, a dish that echoes the warmth of family gatherings.

"Nasi lemak is more than a meal — it is a taste of home. The rich aroma of coconut rice, the crunch of crispy anchovies and the deep, slow-cooked *sambal* transport me back to weekends spent with my family. Every bite is a nostalgic embrace," shared Norazizi.

Meanwhile, at W Kuala Lumpur, chef Anas Luqman fired up the grill with *ayam percik*, a Ramadan bazaar favourite.

"The moment the marinated chicken sizzles over charcoal, I am instantly taken back to my childhood — watching vendors expertly glaze the chicken with coconut-spiced marinade," said Anas.

The Ritz-Carlton, Langkawi's junior sous chef Syafiq Ruzi presented his signature beef satay. Inspired by weekends spent in Kajang, often regarded as Malaysia's satay capital, Syafiq's take on this dish is a tribute to those lively family outings.

"Satay is not just food, it is about the experience — the anticipation of watching skewers sizzle, the aroma of spices in the air and the first bite dipped into rich, nutty peanut sauce," he reminisced.

For chef Lee Ken Suan at Penang Marriott Hotel, *char kuey teow* is the soul of Penang's street food culture.

"The secret lies in the *wok hei* — the coveted breath of the wok. Each



Nasi kerabu by Fuad.

noodle strand must absorb the smoky essence, while the addition of duck egg and chicken lap cheong elevates the dish to pure indulgence."

At Renaissance Kuala Lumpur, chef Cheah E Keong presented chicken rice, a timeless comfort dish steeped in nostalgia.

"The Hainanese community perfected this dish over generations, and my version honours that tradition while enhancing its refined flavours," he said.

At Aloft Kuala Lumpur Sentral, chef Elossa Danette presents Sarawak

laksa, a dish deeply connected to her childhood and family traditions.

"Sarawak laksa takes me back to my grandmother's kitchen, where I first learned how to make it. It represents family, culture, identity and community," she shared.

For those seeking coastal flavours, Perhentian Marriott Resort & Spa presents *nasi kerabu*, a dish perfected by chef Fuad Yusof.

His version is true to the traditional East Coast recipe, with butterfly pea flower-infused rice, Kelantan-sourced *budu* (fermented

anchovy sauce), handmade *solok lada* (stuffed chilli), and charcoal-grilled beef *percik*.

"Authenticity begins with honouring tradition," he added.

From the bustling metropolis of Kuala Lumpur to the serene beaches of Langkawi, every dish tells a story and every bite takes guests on a journey.

Diners can embark on this gastronomic journey at participating Marriott Bonvoy Hotels & Resorts across Malaysia.



Nasi lemak ayam rendang by Norazizi.

Your weekend horoscope



ARIES

Mar 21 – Apr 19

You may feel a surge of energy and motivation. It is an ideal time to initiate new projects and set personal goals. However, be cautious in your relationships — misunderstandings could arise. Focus on clear communication to maintain harmony. Be mindful of potential communication mishaps.



TAURUS

Apr 20 – May 20

You might feel drawn to revisit past relationships or unresolved issues. Use this time to reflect and heal. Avoid making major financial decisions, as your judgement could be clouded. You will feel a subtle shift, urging you to prepare for upcoming opportunities. Use this time to recharge and focus on your well-being.



GEMINI

May 21 – June 20

Your social life takes centre stage. Reconnecting with old friends or colleagues can lead to exciting opportunities. However, double-check details to avoid misunderstandings, which may cause communication mishaps. Clear communication is key. Engage in activities that stimulate your mind and foster connections.



CANCER

June 22 – July 22

This week highlights your career and public image. Professional matters come into focus. While you may feel the urge to make significant career moves, it is advisable to hold off. Instead, use this period to focus on refining your current plans and to strategise for future endeavours. By week's end, you will gain clarity on your professional path, ready to move forward.



LEO

July 23 – Aug 22

You are encouraged to broaden your horizons. You might feel the need to retreat and recharge, revisit educational pursuits or travel plans that were previously set aside. Avoid overspending and focus on budgeting, as financial prudence is advised during this period. Your adventurous spirit may inspire you to seek new experiences. Embrace this period of exploration.



VIRGO

Aug 23 – Sept 22

Financial matters require attention, urging you to reassess joint investments. It is best to avoid major investments or financial commitments this week. Instead, review your financial plans and seek advice if necessary. There is clarity in your relationships, encouraging open and honest communication. You will feel a shift towards deeper emotional bonds.



Chefs repurpose vegetable and fruit peels into delicious condiments such as chutneys and jams.



Winnov's AI-powered food waste tracking system provides real-time insights into food waste.

AI-powered food waste reduction

Expanded initiatives by Hilton Hotels to tackle scraps from *iftar* buffets

As Malaysians observe Ramadan, Hilton Hotels is expanding its Green Ramadan initiative and leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) technology to combat food waste.

The initiative combines Hilton's strategy to create positive environmental and social impact across its operations, supply chain and communities, United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP) Recipe of Change Sustainable Ramadan campaign and Winnov's AI technology in food waste tracking.

Building on last year's Green Ramadan initiative at Hilton Kuala Lumpur and DoubleTree by Hilton Shah Alam i-City, which achieved 64% reduction in food waste, this year's programme includes Hilton Kuala Lumpur, Hilton Petaling Jaya, DoubleTree by Hilton Damai Laut Resort and DoubleTree by Hilton Putrajaya Lakeside.

These hotels have implemented operational innovations and guest-facing initiatives to drive meaningful food waste reduction. During *iftar* buffets, which traditionally feature abundant food offerings, Winnov's AI-powered food waste tracking system provides real-time insights into food waste, allowing kitchen teams to make precise adjustments to food preparation and production. This system tracks pre-consumer (spoilage, prep waste, overproduction) and post-consumer (plate) waste.

The kitchen teams at these participating hotels leverage Winnov's detailed reports to optimise operations. These reports highlight most wasted ingredients, waste patterns, financial impact and ingredient usage trends. By analysing guest

demographics, the teams can also adjust menus to better align with preferences, ensuring guest satisfaction and environmental responsibility.

Other strategies include smaller portion sizes, live cooking stations and artfully reduced food displays, all aimed at raising awareness about food waste. The introduction of carbon emission labelling at buffet stations empowers diners to make climate-friendly food choices.

Additionally, each participating hotel is championing a "Green Ramadan" by implementing innovative sustainability practices tailored to their individual operations:

📍 Hilton Kuala Lumpur has partnered with Vision Waste Disposal Sdn Bhd to transform biodegradable waste into biogas, which in turn generates renewable energy.

📍 Hilton Petaling Jaya is offering *iftar* and *sahur* menus that feature wholesome vegetarian options and incorporate low-waste practices to minimise food waste without compromising quality.

📍 DoubleTree by Hilton Damai Laut Resort utilises an on-site composting machine to transform all food waste into natural fertiliser, creating a self-sustaining ecosystem for its lush gardens.

📍 DoubleTree by Hilton Putrajaya Lakeside is repurposing kitchen scraps. Trimmings and excess ingredients such as vegetable and fruit peel are turned into pickle, fritter batter, condiments, dry rub and more.

Hilton's Green Ramadan initiative, which was launched in 2023 across several key markets in the Middle East, saw a 61% reduction in food waste within 30 days. In 2024, the programme expanded to 32 hotels across seven countries, resulting in a further 21% reduction against the 2023 baseline.

Malaysia ranks fourth in the region for food waste after Laos, Thailand and Cambodia, with a rate of 81kg of food waste generated per person per year, according to the latest report from UNEP in 2024.



LIBRA

Sept 23 – Oct 22

Partnerships and relationships are in the spotlight. Past relationship dynamics are coming into focus, offering an opportunity for reflection and growth. This marks a fresh start in your partnerships, encouraging balance and harmony. Open and honest communication is key to navigating any challenges that arise.



SCORPIO

Oct 23 – Nov 21

Productivity and daily routines are emphasised so reassess your habits, identifying areas for improvement. It is an excellent time to organise your workspace and streamline tasks. However, be cautious of overexertion — balance work with adequate rest. You may feel motivated after implementing positive changes in your lifestyle. Focus on creating a balanced routine for mental health.



SAGITTARIUS

Nov 22 – Dec 21

Creative pursuits and leisure activities bring joy this week. Engage in hobbies that inspire you. Past passions or lovers may come back into your life, offering a chance for closure or rekindling. Be mindful of potential misunderstandings in romantic relationships. Your creative spark is ignited, inspiring new projects and artistic endeavours.



CAPRICORN

Dec 22 – Jan 19

Unresolved matters are coming to the surface, urging you to address them. Address any lingering issues with loved ones to restore harmony. Focus on creating a nurturing environment at home. This is an ideal time for home improvements or family discussions. But, be cautious of potential miscommunications. This is a good time to create stability.



AQUARIUS

Jan 20 – Feb 18

Communication is key this week. Be clear and concise, double-check your messages, emails and contracts to avoid confusion. Short trips or local activities can provide a refreshing change of pace. Express your thoughts and ideas with confidence. However, it is important to remain patient with those who may not be as quick to grasp your perspective. Remember, patience is virtue.



PISCES

Feb 19 – Mar 20

Reassess your budget, spending habits or past financial decisions and avoid making impulsive purchases. Identify areas for improvement and take a proactive approach to financial stability. Avoid impulsive spending and focus on long-term financial goals. Emotionally, this week may bring moments of self-reflection regarding your personal values.

Electrifying dance experience

► Hardwell returns, ArtBat debuts at Neon Music Festival

THE anticipation is building as Neon Music Festival 2025 (NMF) gears up for another electrifying edition at KL Base Sungai Besi on April 11.

Organised by Neon Projects Sdn Bhd, the festival promises a night of high-energy performances, cutting-edge visuals and an unforgettable atmosphere.

Dutch DJ and producer Hardwell will make his long-awaited return to Malaysia after a seven-year hiatus and lead this year's powerhouse lineup. A pioneer of Big Room

Techno, Hardwell is known for chart-topping anthems such as Spaceman, Apollo and Run Wild, with collaborations spanning global icons such as Craig David, Jason Derulo, Jay Sean and Austin Mahone, as well as remixes for Rihanna, Calvin Harris, Ellie Goulding and Coldplay. As a headliner at festivals such as Tomorrowland, Ultra, EDC Las Vegas and Coachella, Hardwell's return is set to be a landmark moment for Malaysian dance music fans.

Joining the festival is highly acclaimed

Ukrainian duo ArtBat, making its regional debut with its immersive UpperGround audiovisual experience. Renowned for its cinematic soundscapes and high-energy melodic techno, ArtBat has captivated audiences worldwide with mesmerising visuals and emotive performances.

NMF is also set to make history by featuring a first-ever triple B3B (back-to-back) performance from progressive house heavyweights DubVision, Matisse & Sadko and Third Party. While Matisse & Sadko have played in Malaysia before, this collaboration, which also marks Third Party's Malaysian debut, will deliver a long-overdue return of progressive house anthems to local shores.

22Bullets B2B Marvinz1r, Blink, Chukies & Whackboi, Dirty Signal, Honey Gee and RXB are rounding out the lineup, ensuring a diverse and dynamic night of music.

Beyond the music, this year's festival promises a 360-degree audiovisual experience, featuring high-definition real-time reflective graphics, laser displays and a top-tier sound system. Attendees can also expect stunning photo ops, art installations and an emphasis on safety, comfort and hospitality.

Tickets are on sale now, ranging from RM268 to RM458.



ArtBat debuts with immersive UpperGround experience.



Hardwell returns to Malaysia after seven years with his signature Big Room Techno.



Mozdbar's Marrow of Man new split album stands triumphantly on the Palestinian side. — SPOTIFYPIC

Psalms of anti-colonialism

■ BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

THOUGH the message and direction is valid, metal bands under the Red and Anarchist black metal (RABM) subgenre are typically boring to listen to. Though they stand in opposition politically and morally to bands from the National Socialist black metal (NSBM) circle — who are often fascists or neo-Nazis, the RABM circle is, unfortunately, almost entirely occupied by bands that are not able to write decent metal music.

Once in a blue moon, something actually good will manage to crawl out of this particular metal scene and earlier this month, Amsterdam-based Marrow of Man did exactly that. Releasing a split album with Nightmare Effigy from the US, the one-man Dutch band's four songs on *Decimation of the Spirit* is a searing left-wing assault on the occupiers of Palestine.

Now completely embracing the RABM spirit, behind the veil of the corpsepaint makeup, Marrow of Man's Sahand Mozdbar kicks his side of the split off with the explosive *Empire of Genocide*.

"Long shadows are cast / By the arm of an empire so inhuman / Over the lands that gave birth to Christ / And are now bombed to be resettled by the colonial forces," Mozdbar howls over his signature style of guitar riffs and beating drums.

The other three songs from Marrow of Man's half of the split, *Beneath the Olive Trees*, *Black and White* and *In the Name of Liberty*, continues the barrage against the imperialism, colonialism and genocide faced by trapped Palestinians.

For the remainder of *Decimation of the Spirit*, Nightmare Effigy takes the reins with five songs. Rather than continuing with Marrow of Man's pro-Palestinian approach, the one-man project takes black metal back to its cold, traditional roots, evoking riffs and melodies similar to the infamous bands that began the second-wave of black metal in the 80s.

Decimation of the Spirit's second half is slightly weaker than its first half, but it is a good introduction for Nightmare Effigy via being on the same split album as the more established Marrow of Man. Rather than merely being a strong follow-up to the band's debut album last year, Marrow of Man's side of the split is also Mozdbar's excellent entry into RABM, elevating an otherwise floundering scene.

Decimation of the Spirit is available on streaming platforms.

Conan O'Brien tapped to host Oscars again

CONAN O'Brien will return to host a second consecutive Oscars, the Academy said after this month's well-reviewed gala drew almost 20 million viewers in a slight ratings uptick.

The late-night comedian will return for the 98th Academy Awards on March 15, 2026, Academy CEO Bill Kramer and President Janet Yang said in a press release.

The confirmation of next year's host comes unusually early, with Kramer and Yang praising O'Brien for "skillfully guiding us through" this month's Oscars, in which indie movie *Anora* won best picture.

Among the other prizes, best actor-winner Adrien Brody (*The Brutalist*) set a new record for the longest-ever Oscars acceptance speech, spending five minutes and 40 seconds on stage.

"The only reason I am hosting the Oscars next year is that I want to hear Adrien Brody finish his speech,"

quipped O'Brien.

The show's producers, Raj Kapoor and Katy Mullan, will also return next year.

With 19.69 million viewers, the Oscars telecast increased its audience figure for a fifth straight year. This was in part due to the show streaming live for the first time, on Hulu.

The combined figure was slightly up from last year's early ratings of 19.5 million, for a gala dominated by smash-hit films *Oppenheimer* and *Barbie*.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Oscars ratings sank as low as 10.4 million. The Academy Awards telecast regularly topped 40 million just a decade ago.

O'Brien's first Oscars stint, which included a lively opening monologue, a quirky musical number and a surreal pre-taped riff on satirical body-horror flick *The Substance*, earned wide praise. — AFPIC



O'Brien's debut as Oscar's host drew widespread acclaim. — AFPIC



theSun Motoring

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The Honda e:N1 is based on the popular HRV.



The charging ports are located at the front of the car.

Back in the game!

Honda Malaysia may have taken its time, but the upcoming e:N1 will mark its entry into the EV segment

BY KESHY DHILLON

IF THERE is any country that has been utterly dominating the electric vehicle market, it would be China. And there is no denying that.

Whether you gauge it from sales figures, or production figures, or the number of new brands coming out of China, there is simply no denying that China is at the forefront of the EV segment.

But having said that, the Europeans have a glimmer of a presence in the segment as well, with Mercedes and its EQ series, and BMW's i models which have had better success than its Stuttgart based competitor by simply creating better electric cars.

Porsche has enjoyed a good run with its Taycan though that is losing steam. Audi and the Volkswagen have had a decent run as well but like Porsche, seem to be losing their edge as well.

The Japanese on the other hand have stayed largely silent. Call it elegant silence but Japanese companies like Honda and Toyota have preferred to use a wait and see method and opting for a safer "multi-pathway" approach by offering everything from internal combustion engines to hybrids as well as EV's rather than throwing everything



Unfortunately there is no frunk up front.

behind a single technology. That seems to have worked well for them.

On the local front though, the Japanese have stayed largely silent, with most Japanese EV's being offered by local grey importers rather than through official channels - until now.

Honda Malaysia has confirmed that it will be launching its first salvo at the EV segment with its e:N1 model.

Based on the HRV, the e:N1 has not exactly been well received where ever it has been offered, which has been mystifying because we just drove it

recently and found that it is quite impressive in every way.

What does it have to offer you?

Simply put, everything you need. The HRV is already a great platform to begin with - neither very big nor small, which means that it is brilliant for your everyday needs, especially in urban areas.

Interior spaciousness is great as well, and because it is an EV, Honda



Generous boot space.



The design of the e:N1 is almost 100% identical to the HRV.

could flatten the floors – which means more legroom for taller passengers.

You also get a lot of tech

The infotainment system is a giant 15.1-inch vertically stacked screen that is digitally split into three, something like that of the new Ford Ranger Wildtrak.

This makes perfect sense because even though there are no buttons for the essentials, everything is just a touch away.

For example, there are no physical controls for the air-conditioning, but because the controls are clearly laid out at the bottom of the screen, adjusting the temperature or blower speed is just a touch away.

Chinese companies and their notoriously complicated infotainment systems can learn a lot from Honda.

The e:N1 is also the first Honda in our part of the world to come with Blind Spot Monitoring system, which is fantastic news because this just worked for the left side of the car.

Honda has long insisted to stick with its Lane Watch Assist system, but it did not age very well, and the tech only worked for the left side of the car.

Now with Blind Spot Monitoring, it just means that Honda has finally caught up and is offering technology that makes day to day driving a lot more pleasant.

Besides that, it also comes loaded with electronic safety nets such as road departure mitigation with lane departure warning, lane keeping assist system, rear cross traffic monitoring, agile handling assist, as well as adaptive cruise control with low speed follow.

What excites us the most?

That would be the massive infotainment screen. You might be wondering why because it is quite common, particularly in the EV segment, but it is not the physical device that excites us, it is the software.

The one thing that most car makers, including those that claimed to be technologically advanced like Tesla, can never get right is software interaction. The way you use and connect with the software will ultimately dictate your overall experience with the car.

The infotainment system in an EV is one of the most important aspects of the cabin. It gives access to entertainment and navigation, control parts of the car such as switching on and off safety systems and even adjust the air-conditioning.

Like it or not, modern cars have all but ditched physical buttons so intuitive software has never been more important.

In a recent interview, Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak criticised Tesla for its “miserable user interface” calling it the “worst in the world”.

In my opinion though, Honda on the other hand has absolutely nailed it as far as intuitive software is concerned.

The massive screen is separated into three distinct layers with the top part dedicated to navigation, Carplay and Android Auto.

The second layer is for entertainment, the trip computer and vehicle controls such as managing the safety systems and such. This is also where you can turn on and off certain things like Lane Keeping Assist.

The third layer is just for air-conditioning and that is permanently displayed there, just as it should.

This is important because in some cars, you have to swipe through two to three layers of software just to adjust the temperature or turn down the blower.

But not in the Honda, and this is what makes it such an easy car to get into and just go about your business.

And this means that the learning curve for the e:N1 is not that steep, particularly for older folks who want to trade in an EV but are worried about complicated software.

You interact with the Honda e:N1 just as you would a regular petrol powered Honda HRV, and that makes a world of difference.

The instrument cluster is also digital, and it also feeds you a lot of unnecessary information just like the ones found in Chinese EV’s. But unlike those, you can simplify the readouts so you can focus on what matters most.

That I truly appreciate because I don’t like being overwhelmed with information that I don’t particularly care about, like being shown the time in three different angles at once.

What powers the e:N1?

A single front-mounted electric motor, effectively making the e:N1 a front-wheel-drive car.

The motor gets its power from a 68.8kWh lithium-ion battery, allowing for a total system output of 204PS and 310Nm of torque.

Acceleration to 100kph is seen off in 7.7 seconds while top speed is rated at 160kph.

In a world of face morphing



You get three driving modes – Econ, Normal and Sport.



Rear seat space is quite generous.

acceleration times, the performance may not sound all that impressive, but it’s a different story in real life.

The accelerator of the e:N1 is rather sensitive, and that makes the car feel like it is always eager to get going.

In fact, it is quite easy for the front wheels to break traction if you’re not gentle with the pedal.

It’s a good thing then that the e:N1 comes with three driving modes – Econ, Normal and Sport.

During our drive, we left the car in Econ mode most of the time, which makes the accelerator feel like a regular petrol powered HRV, and that is when the e:N1 is at its best.

How does it drive?

The best thing about the e:N1 is in the way it drives. Honda has been making great cars for decades and all

that accumulated know how has certainly trickled down into the e:N1.

A regular person may not feel the difference, but because we drive so many different EV’s, particularly those from China these days, the suspension tuning truly stands out.

Except for a handful of carmakers, a lot of the EV cars from China lack proper suspension tuning. Most of the time the suspension is too soft, resulting in a bobble head effect for passengers.

Apparently Chinese car buyers prefer soft suspension, but not for this writer.

The best suspension is one that keeps the car planted while telling the driver exactly what is going on at the



Two type-c ports make life more pleasant when travelling.



There’s no gear knob in the traditional sense, just gear selector buttons.



Rear seat space is quite generous.

point where the tyre meets the road. And at the same time, it is also absorbing all of the little ruts, dips and bumps, ensuring the passengers feel close to nothing.

This is exactly what you get with the Honda e:N1, a well-tuned suspension.

Other than that, the learning curve of the e:N1 is nearly identical to the one you go through with any new petrol powered car.

This is the not the same with all EV’s?

EV’s from Tesla, Smart, XPeng, BYD, Leapmotor and some other brands have an incredibly steep learning curve. That is because they are nearly 100% devoid of physical buttons with most of the key controls located in the infotainment system.

You have to dive deep into the menu



The dashboard is the same but the infotainment screen is the one thing that sets the e:N1 apart from the HRV.



Large 15.1-inches infotainment. One of the best features of the electric Honda. The software is one of the best in the EV segment.



to do simple things like adjust the position of the air-conditioning vents or even turn up the temperature. For those that are not technologically inclined, this might be difficult.

You don’t get any of that with the e:N1 though, as mentioned earlier in the article, a lot of car makers can take a page out of Honda’s book on how to make intuitive software.

That just means that the learning curve for the e:N1 is incredibly linear. It is truly an easy car to learn and get used to, particularly for the elderly who want to transition to an EV but are afraid of complications associated with software or even charging the car.

How fast does it charge and how far will it go?

The e:N1 takes 78kW of DC charging and 11kW of AC charging. The charging ports, both Type 2 and CCS2, are located at the front of the car.

Charging will either take 45 minutes with the DC charger or six hours with the AC. Either way, this will work best if you have a home charger or a charge port at your workplace or a nearby shopping mall.

As for range, Honda claims a WLTP range of 412km. But during our drive from the traffic laden streets of Bangkok onto the busy highways to Pattaya and around the coastal town, we saw a real world range of 380km with 98% state of charge.

Of course, the overall distance will vary depending on your driving style, but 380km is good enough to go about your business around town and charge the car once or twice a week.

Final thoughts?

As a car, the Honda e:N1 offers everything you will ever need in an EV. In fact, it is quite composed and is akin to one of those ultra smart school kids that can’t seem to get a bad grade and has a bright future cast in stone ... but the biggest thorn on Honda’s side is the price tag.

We don’t know yet how much the car will cost, but the price tag in Thailand is a good indication, though we hope it is not.

In Thailand, the e:N1 is priced at 1.5

million Baht, which roughly converts to about RM196,000. And that is too steep of an asking price considering the competition.

We hope that it is priced a lot more competitively because it is a great car and people deserve to drive great cars.

But, even if Honda Malaysia does price it competitively, the competition is not going to let Honda’s management team have a good night’s sleep.

Some Chinese brands have a knack of throwing grand discounts at a moment’s notice. Just a few days ago a well-known Chinese EV brand dropped the price of one of its popular EV’s down by an unbelievable RM26,000.

The reason they did that? Supposedly to match the price of the Proton eMas 7.

And that is what Honda Malaysia is up against. But even if Honda offers a great car at a great price, it is unlikely that they will take part in the price war. They simply do not have a knack for that, as history has shown.

Then it comes down to preference, will you want a car from a brand that has just found its footing in Malaysia? Or will you want a car from a brand that has a long history in Malaysia, with established service centres and a strong network of spare parts?

More importantly, will you buy a car from a brand that will drop the price of its cars at a moment’s notice, inadvertently affecting the second-hand value of your car? Or will you buy a car from a brand that holds steadfast to its values?

The choice is clear. For now, though, we just hope that it is priced competitively.

Specifications

- Motor:** Single, front-mounted
- Power:** 204PS
- Torque:** 310Nm
- 0-100kph:** 7.7 seconds
- Top speed:** 160kph
- Charging:** 45 minutes with 78kW DC / 6 hours with 11kW AC
- We like:** Infotainment software, easy to drive.
- We don’t like:** Brutal competition may outclass it.

Lexus unveils next-gen BEV

LEXUS has introduced the latest iteration of its battery electric vehicle (BEV), the new RZ, marking a significant step in the brand's continued expansion into the luxury EV market.

The model will be released gradually across various global markets beginning September 2025.

The unveiling reinforces Lexus' leadership in vehicle electrification, a position it has held since the introduction of the RX 400h in 2005.

By 2024, the brand had achieved a milestone with electrified vehicles, including hybrids, plug-in hybrids, and battery electric models, accounting for more than half of its lineup.

Lexus remains committed to increasing the adoption of BEVs, hybrids, and plug-in hybrids while advancing vehicle technology to enhance driving performance, mobility solutions, and sustainability efforts.

The new RZ introduces a fully reengineered BEV system designed to provide higher motor output, an extended driving range, and significantly reduced charging time.

The inclusion of Lexus' next-generation Steer-by-Wire System brings a new dimension to handling, improving steering precision and responsiveness.

Enhancements to the platform have refined the Lexus Driving Signature, ensuring a more intuitive and engaging experience behind the wheel.

Additionally, the DIRECT4 all-wheel-drive system has been further optimised to deliver a performance that faithfully responds to the driver's intent.

One of the standout additions to the RZ lineup is the high-performance RZ 550e F SPORT. This model is equipped with more powerful front and rear motors, producing a maximum system output of 402hp.

Designed for an exhilarating driving experience, the RZ SPORT offers enhanced acceleration and agility.

Lexus has also introduced Interactive Manual Drive for the first time, a feature that synchronises acceleration and deceleration with immersive sound. This innovation provides a heightened sense of engagement and a sportier feel for the driver.

The exterior design of the new RZ incorporates exclusive color options, front and rear spoilers, and aerodynamic wheels, all of which enhance the vehicle's overall performance and visual appeal.

The interior reflects Lexus' signature craftsmanship, offering a clean and spacious cabin designed for both comfort and sportiness.

The F SPORT model features exclusive design elements, including a uniquely designed steering wheel, aluminum pedals, and high-performance seats, all of which contribute to a more immersive driving experience.

Lexus has designed the new RZ to cater to a broad spectrum of drivers, from those who prioritise everyday convenience to those seeking an engaging and dynamic ride.

With its latest advancements in electrification, cutting-edge technology, and refined performance, Lexus continues to strengthen its position in the luxury EV segment while advancing its vision for a sustainable future.



New ULTRA variant aims to maintain competitive edge in electric SUV market

BYD SIME MOTORS, the official distributor of BYD vehicles in Malaysia, has unveiled the BYD Atto 3 ULTRA, an upgraded version of the country's best-selling electric vehicle (EV).

Priced at RM123,800, the new variant aims to maintain its competitive edge in the electric SUV market while reinforcing BYD's commitment to making EV ownership more accessible.

The BYD Atto 3 has played a transformative role in Malaysia's EV landscape, making electric mobility more practical and attainable for local consumers.

Sime Motors' Southeast Asia Managing Director, Jeffrey Gan, stated that the model's strong sales record and the enhancements in the ULTRA variant will help solidify its position as a leading choice among EV buyers. He highlighted the company's dedication to providing a seamless ownership experience, backed by an extensive service network and a newly introduced eight-year free service package.

BYD Malaysia's Managing Director, Eagle Zhao, emphasised the company's dedication to delivering world-class EV technology.

He noted that the Atto 3's reliability has been proven, with over 6,300 units sold in Malaysia and a global sales figure exceeding 950,000 units across 116 countries.

The Atto 3 ULTRA introduces several key enhancements, including a digital key with NFC

functionality, enabling drivers to unlock and start their vehicle using a smartphone or compatible device.

The new Bluetooth Key function allows access through the BYD app without an internet connection, ensuring uninterrupted convenience.

The interior features a refreshed all-black design with yellow contrast stitching, replacing the previous red accents for a sportier look. Ventilated front seats have also been added to enhance comfort, particularly in Malaysia's warm climate. Additionally, the SUV receives a new stylish rim design, further complementing its aerodynamic profile.

The SUV maintains a 0-100 kph acceleration time of 7.3 seconds, a driving range of 420km



(WLTP), and is powered by a 60.48 kWh Blade Battery. It delivers a maximum power output of 201hp and 310Nm of torque. Exterior color options include Ski White, Harbour Grey, and Cosmos Black, while the interior now features black seats with yellow stitching.

To mark the launch, BYD Sime Motors is introducing an exclusive ULTRA Launch Package for the first 1,000 customers.

The package includes a RM5,000 cash rebate, an eight-year free service package valued at RM4,888, a free 7kW wall charger worth RM3,699, a complimentary Vehicle-to-Load (V2L) adaptor, a Type 2 charging cable, and unlimited internet for two years.

In addition to the special launch offer, BYD Sime Motors provides a comprehensive warranty package, covering six years or 150,000km for the vehicle, eight years or 160,000km for the high-voltage battery, and eight years or 150,000km for the drive unit.

Customers also have the option to purchase the Service Plus package, which includes additional benefits such as tire rotation, alignment, balancing, and an annual 12V battery replacement.

With extensive warranty coverage and a strong after-sales support network, BYD aims to enhance consumer confidence in EV ownership.

As Malaysia's EV market continues to expand, the Atto 3 ULTRA is set to strengthen its position as a top choice among electric SUV buyers.

IONIQ 9 now with advanced technology, driving range

HYUNDAI'S highly anticipated IONIQ 9 is set to redefine the electric SUV segment with its combination of cutting-edge technology, efficiency, and luxury.

The automaker has confirmed that the vehicle will be equipped with a powerful 110.3 kWh battery, providing a range of up to 539km in its highest trim.

Designed to perform in extreme conditions, the IONIQ 9 features an advanced heat pump that ensures battery efficiency in colder climates. Energy efficiency remains a key focus for Hyundai, with several features incorporated to optimise power consumption.

The vehicle's aerodynamic design includes a 3D-

underbody cover, newly developed wheels, and hidden antennas, contributing to a remarkably low drag coefficient of 0.259 Cd.

Available in six and seven-seat configurations, certain markets will receive versions featuring swiveling rear seats to enhance passenger interaction.

Performance-wise, the IONIQ 9 will be available in multiple powertrain configurations. A 218hp rear motor powers the Long-Range RWD model, while the Long-Range AWD variant includes an additional 94hp front motor for improved traction.

The Performance AWD model features 218hp motors on both axles, offering enhanced acceleration. The top-tier Performance AWD variant accelerates from 0 to 100kph in just 5.2 seconds, while the Long-Range AWD achieves the same in 6.7 seconds. Designed for maximum efficiency, the Long-Range RWD completes the sprint in 9.4 seconds.

With its combination of advanced technology, efficiency, and refined luxury, the Hyundai IONIQ 9 is poised to set new benchmarks in the electric SUV market, offering an elevated driving experience for both daily commuters and long-distance travelers.



Hyundai IONIQ 9

Hybrid powertrain for GR sports cars

TOYOTA is advancing its hybrid technology for performance vehicles under its Gazoo Racing (GR) sub-brand, aiming to meet stringent global emissions regulations while maintaining high performance.

According to reports, the next generation of GR sports cars will feature a hybrid powertrain derived from a new engine currently undergoing testing.

At the core of this development is the newly designed 2.0-liter four-cylinder turbocharged engine, codenamed G20E.

This power unit, which was first showcased in the mid-engined GR Yaris M Concept, is engineered to support both plug-in hybrid and mild hybrid configurations.

While official specifications have yet to be disclosed, sources indicate that the road-going version is expected to deliver over 400hp and 500Nm of torque, while motorsport applications could see outputs exceeding 600hp.

Hiroki Yamada, a GR engineer involved in the project, confirmed that the engine is designed with hybrid integration in mind.

He emphasised that the hybrid system will play a crucial role in both motorsport and production models to ensure compliance with future emissions regulations.

Toyota's long-term objective is to develop more fuel-efficient engines for high-performance GR vehicles.

The idea of introducing hybrid powertrains to GR models has been in Toyota's plans for some time.

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COMPANIES WINDING-UP PETITION
 NO. WA-23/2025-258-03/2025

In the matter of Section 465 (1) (e) read with Section 466 (1) (a) of the Companies Act, 2016

And

In the matter of the Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

And

In the matter of KWAGUCHI MOULD SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO.: 199201021339 (252843-V))

BETWEEN

GUNJUNG SURAJAYA SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO.: 201001038764 (922688-T))

...PETITIONER

AND

KWAGUCHI MOULD SDN. BHD. (COMPANY NO.: 199201021339 (252843-V))

...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 6.3.2025 presented by Gunung Surajaya Sdn. Bhd. (Company No.: 201001038764 (922688-T)) AND that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Kuala Lumpur on 17.4.2025 at 9.00 o'clock in the morning and any Creditor or Contributory of the said Company or Contributor of the said Company 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 Contributor of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at No. 45A, Medan Angkasa Makim 13, 11500 Ayer Hitam, Pulau Pinang.

The Petitioner's Solicitors is at Messrs. The Chambers of Cheong at B-02-15, Sunway Nexis, No.1, Jalan PJU 5/1, Kota Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

The Chambers of Cheong
 Messrs. The Chambers of Cheong

NOTE: Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the abovesaid Messrs. The Chambers of Cheong, notice in writing of his intention to do so. The Notice must state the name and address of the person or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm or his or their solicitors (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovesaid not later than 12.00 o'clock noon of 16.4.2025.

This Advertisement of Petition is prepared by The Chambers of Cheong, solicitors for the Petitioner whose address for service is at B-02-15, Sunway Nexis, No.1, Jalan PJU 5/1, Kota Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.
 03-7624 4962 03-7624 4963
legal.tcc@ccm.com
 (Ref: TCCO/100681/25/KM/WUP/PK/HL)

302 Jobs

theSun Malaysian Paper

WE ARE HIRING!

1 MEDIA SALES Executive/Specialist

Job Description

- Building and sustaining strong working relationship with advertising agencies and clients.
- New business development and business retention.
- Conceptualise, plan and execute creative and innovative marketing campaigns to enhance brand visibility and engagement.
- Create, develop and continuously improve marketing material, presentations and proposals that showcase our products/services effectively.

Requirements

- SPM level with at least two years of experience.
- Diploma or Bachelor's degree in business, marketing or other related fields.
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply, training will be provided.
- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing.
- Possess own transport and willing to travel.
- Able to start work immediately.

Office based in Petaling Jaya (Five-day week)

2 MEDIA SALES Representative/Agent (Freelance)

Requirement

- Minimum one year sales experience in classified ad, print and digital advertising.
- Those without sales experience but with media advertising knowledge may also apply.
- Attractive commission package and incentives.
- 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

PERISYHARAN JUALAN DALAM MANKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG
PENYERANAN UNTUK PERLAKSANAAN NO: PA-38-04-01/2025

Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 258 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965

Dalam perkara mengenai Gajian Perseharan No: 0796SC2017015826 (bertarikh : 29/05/2017) ka atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipanggil di bawah Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik Pajak Negeri 6476/02/2923, Lot 2388, Maklum Bandar Butterworth, Seksyen 2, Daerah Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang

Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Atran 83 Kaedah- Kaedah Mahkamah, 2012

ANTARA
PUBLIC BANK BERHAD (No. Syarikat : 6463-H) ...PLAINTIF

DAN

YEO YOW CHUAN (No. Kad Pengenalan : 82072/125001) ...DEFENDAN

Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya di Pulau Pinang mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Perintah bertarikh 2 Oktober 2024 dan 21 Februari 2025, adalah dengan ini diisytiharkan bahawa Timbunan Pendaftar/Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Pusat Operasi e-Lelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA LELONG AWAM

Pada Hari Khamis, 10 April 2025, Pada Jam 11:00 pagi,
SECARA ELEKTRONIK DI LAMAN WEB e-LELONG, PUSAT OPERASI e-LELONG, KOMPLEKS MANKAMAH KUANTAN, PULAU PINANG

NOTA: Bakal pembeli adalah diisytiharkan agar membuat carian Hakmilik secara rasmi di Pejabat Tanah dan Memeriksa semua lanjutannya, bebanan, serta mengenai pasli dengan legal hartanah, tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari <https://elelong.khkamah.gov.my/tenderweb>

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:
 No. Hakmilik : Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik Pajak Negeri 6476/02/2923
 : Lot 2388
 : Bandar Butterworth, Seksyen 2 / Seberang Perai Utara / Pulau Pinang
 : Hakmilik Pajak

Pegangan
 No. Petak/No. Tingkat/No. Bangunan : 233 / 1 / M2
 Keluasan Tanah : 936.0000000000 kaki persegi
 67.0000000000 meter persegi

Pemilik Berdaftar Syarikat Nyata : YEO YOW CHUAN
 : Petak ini hendaklah digunakan untuk tujuan rumah banga sahaja.
 : Tanah yang dibentukkan ini tidak boleh dipindahmilik, cagar, pajak, pajakan kecil atau apa juga urusnaga tanpa kebenaran Pihak Berkuasa Negeri.

Sekatan Kepentingan

Bebanan / Lain-Lain Kawasan Rizab :
 Kewajad :

LOKASI DAN PERHAL HARTANAH :
 Hartanah tersebut adalah Pagarapuri yang berlatarlat pos di 2-22, Blok B, Jalan Kampung Gajah, Taman Bagan Jeram, 12200, Butterworth, Pulau Pinang,
 Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "sepertimana sedia ada" terlekkuk kepada satu harga rizab sebanyak RM 330,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: TIGA RATUS TIGA PULUH RIBU SARAHAJ) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang ditamparkan. Pembelia yang berminat hendaklah mendeposikan 10% daripada harga rizab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama PUBLIC BANK BERHAD / HARI BEKERJA sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Bagi harga bidaan hendaklah dibayar oleh pembida yang berjaya kepada PUBLIC BANK BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (120) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk butiran selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan:-

Firma Guaman : TOH THEAM HOOK & CO.
 Alamat : NO. 155, 151 FLOOR
 MEDIUM KIKUK SATTI
 TAMAN INDERAWASIH, 13600, PE, MY
 No. Telefon : 04-3861917
 04-3861921
 No. Faks : 04-3861921
 No. Rujukan : TTH/PBB/HL-185/2023/05T/DURA

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF COMPANIES ACT, 2016
AND
IN THE MATTER OF O&I AND COMPANY SDN. BERHAD
Registration Number : 196001000608 (3733-U)
[IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP]
NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016 that a Final Meeting of the Company will be held at 0-26-A1 Gurney Tower Office, 18 Persiaran Gurney, 10250 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang on 25 April 2025 at 10:00 am for the following purposes:

- To receive an account from the Liquidator showing the manner in which the winding up has been conducted and to hear any explanations that may be given by the Liquidator.
- To consider, and if thought fit, pass the following resolution as an Ordinary Resolution:-

"That the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator, shall be kept by the Liquidator at 0-26-A1 Gurney Tower Office, 18 Persiaran Gurney, 10250 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang, for a period of three (3) months from the date of Final Meeting and that thereafter such books, accounts and documents may be destroyed by the Liquidator."

Dated this 21st day of March, 2025

NIGEL LOH KWONG WENG
 Liquidator

theSun WE ARE HIRING!
 Malaysian Paper

HR & ADMIN POSITIONS : (Executive/Senior/Assistant Manager)

Job Description

- Maintain HR records, including employee files, salaries and benefits information.
- Handle employee attendance records, payroll and claims.
- Handle employee relations and resolve any workplace conflicts or issues.
- Provide HR support and guidance to managers and employees.
- Ensure compliance with all employment laws and regulations.
- Stay updated on changes in work legislation and industry standards.
- Handle employee training and development programmes.
- Manage employee benefits programmes and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Stay updated on current industry trends and best practices in HR management.
- For Senior/Assistant Manager – with supervisor skills.
- Handle recruitment matters.
- Experience in payroll system would be advantageous.
- Handle General Admin and other HR duties.

Requirements

- Diploma/Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management or related field.
- Executive: 1+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
- Senior: 3+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
- Asst Manager: 5+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply for Assistant Executive post.
- Basic HR knowledge and proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

SAFETY & BUILDING MAINTENANCE (Executive)

Job Description

- Perform routine and preventive maintenance on factory & office building systems, including HVAC, electrical, plumbing and mechanical systems.
- Conduct regular inspections of the factory & office building to identify and address maintenance issues.
- Respond promptly to maintenance requests and ensure timely resolution.
- Maintain accurate records of maintenance activities, including work orders, inspections and repairs.
- Ensure all maintenance activities comply with relevant health, safety and environmental regulations.
- Coordinate with external contractors and vendors for specialised maintenance and repair works.
- Monitor and optimise energy usage to improve efficiency and reduce costs.
- Assist in preparation and management of maintenance budget.
- Assist in any ad-hoc operations and admin tasks assigned by Management from time to time.

Requirements

- Diploma/Degree in Building or Facilities Management, Safety & Health or related field.
- Additional certificate: Electrical Chargeman, preferably A4 or minimum A1 would be an added advantage.
- Minimum of one year of experience in Building Maintenance or Safety & Health.
- Adequate technical knowledge of building systems (HVAC, electrical, plumbing etc).
- Excellent problem-solving and troubleshooting skills.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a team.
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills.
- Able to handle work flexi hours.
- Able to handle urgent and last-minute job request.

Send in your CV with your photo via email to : thesun.hr2@gmail.com
 (Closing Date: March 31, 2025)

322 Notices

Pawnbrokers' forfeited pledges under Section 23 of the Pawnbrokers' Act 1972
Pawnbrokers' (Control and Licensing) Regulations 2004

The above will be sold by public auction during the first week of April 2025 at YWKA, No. 211 Macalister Street, Penang for articles pawned in June 2024 and earlier commencing from the date and time stated below:-

Date	Time
07.04.2025 (Monday)	10:00 A.M

Note: Interested bidders are to register with the licensed auctioneer 7 working days before the auction date.

*Term and conditions apply.

A.Dennys & Co Sdn Bhd
 Licensed Auctioneers
 22-07-704 Penang Chinese Town Hall,
 Jalan Masjid Kapitan Keling,
 10200 Pulau Pinang
 Tel no: 04-26115572

322 Notices

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTARY WINDING UP OF LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP
 (Section 50(4)(a) of the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2012)

Notice is hereby given that TECHACTIONS PLACEMENTS PLT (Registration No.: 201804002108 (LLP0016490-LGN)) will be making an application to the Registrar of Limited Liability Partnership for a declaration of dissolution pursuant to Section 50(2) of the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2012 within seven (7) days after the publication of this notice. Any partner or creditor of the LLP desiring to object to the application may do so in writing to the Companies Commission of Malaysia within thirty (30) days from the date of this notice.

Dated this 18th day of March, 2025

NIGEL LOH KWONG WENG
 Liquidator

322 Notices

REKA ENGINEERING SDN. BHD.
Registration No. 199201018186 (249690-M)
(In Members' Voluntary Winding-Up) (Incorporated in Malaysia)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Final General Meeting of the Company will be held at the office of the Liquidator, Suite D23, 2nd Floor, Plaza Pekeliling, No. 2 Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur on Monday, 21st day of April 2025 at 11.00 a.m. for the following purposes:-

- To receive accounts from the Liquidator showing how the winding-up has been conducted and to receive any explanations thereon.
- To resolve under Section 518 of the Companies Act 2016 that after the expiration of three months from the date of the Final Meeting, the books and papers of the company may be destroyed.

21st March 2025
 Kuala Lumpur
 Yap Siew Cheng
 Liquidator

CALL TO PLACE CLASSIFIED ADS

MS. SHOBA / MS. BALQISH
 03 7784 8888
 018 261 6626

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR VOLUNTARY WINDING UP OF LIMITED LIABILITY PARTNERSHIP
 (Section 50(4)(a) of the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2012)

Notice is hereby given that WANTHEFOOD VENTURE PLT (Registration No.:201804003451 (LLP0017833-LGN)) will be making an application to the Registrar of Limited Liability Partnership for a declaration of dissolution pursuant to Section 50(2) of the Limited Liability Partnerships Act 2012 within seven (7) days after the publication of this notice. Any partner or creditor of the LLP desiring to object to the application may do so in writing to the Companies Commission of Malaysia within thirty (30) days from the date of this notice.

NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNTUK DILELONG SEPERTI SEDIA ADA TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG : East Coast Region (Kota Bharu, Kuantan & Temerloh) 26-03-2025 (Rabu) Pukul 11:00pagi

TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Pukul 9:00pagi - 4:00petang)

PERTANYAAN (Tel): Kota Bharu 07-7747972, Kuantan 017-4973133, Temerloh 012-428 7538

FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) En Mohd Fawzi Bin Ibrahim (32954) & Mr Mazenan Bin Haji Mohamed (01/2024)

Aalamat : Lot 5198, Petak 41, Jalan 20, Kawasan Perindustrian Pengkalang Chepa, Fasa 2, Pengkalang Chepa, 16100 Kota Bharu.
 : Lot 10869, Lot 10870 & Lot 10871, Jin Tanah Putih, Tanah Putih 25100 Kuantan.
 : PT5101 & 5102, Kampung Megat Segama, 29000 Temerloh.

SILA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : <http://www.focalpark.com.my>

Item	Reg No	Jenis & Model	Tahun
AM1	WLH9412	HONDA ACCORD 2.4 (A)	2003
AM2	COW9409	NISSAN GRAND LIVINA 1.6 (A)	2011
AM3	VBG4238	PROTON IRIZ 1.6	2018
AM4	BKL26	BMW 525i (A)	2004
AM5	DES7069	HONDA WRV 1.5	2023
AM6	WTJ3655	PROTON EXORA 1.6	2009
AM7	DEP8897	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2023

(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perlelongan akan dilelong semula pada 09-04-2025)

SHORTS

Alcaraz 'doesn't support' Djokovic-backed lawsuit

WIMBLEDON champion Carlos Alcaraz pushed back on a lawsuit against the ATP Tour filed by the Novak Djokovic-led tennis players union on Wednesday, saying he does not support the move.

The Spaniard world No. 3, speaking ahead of the Miami Open, said he had not been given any notice of the legal case from the Professional Tennis Players' Association (PTPA) or the strongly-worded statement issued on Tuesday.

"Honestly, it was surprising for me, because nobody told me nothing about it, so I was just, yesterday, I saw in the social media," Alcaraz said.

The PTPA filing cites an Alcaraz quote from a press conference in which he criticised the tour schedule and the player said he was not aware of that decision.

"I saw that there were some statements that they put something that I said in press conference, which I didn't know.

"I don't support that letter, that, I don't support that, because, as I said, I didn't know anything about it," he added.

Alcaraz said he had mixed opinions about the nature of the complaint which is a wide-ranging critique of the way the sport is run by the ATP and the WTA Tour.

"There are some things that I agree with, there are some other things that I'm not agreeing with, but the main thing here is that I'm not supporting that, so that's it," he said.

Raducanu earns dominant win over wild card

FORMER US Open champion Emma Raducanu barely broke a sweat as she brushed aside Japanese wild card Sayaka Ishii 6-2, 6-1 yesterday to reach the second round of the Miami Open.

Raducanu, who was ousted in the first round at Indian Wells, regained her footing against Ishii as she won 77% of her first-serve points, fired down six aces and converted five of her six break point chances in the 65-minute match.

Up next for Britain's Raducanu will be American world No. 10 Emma Navarro, who won a WTA 500 event in Mexico in early March for her second career title before losing in the third round at Indian Wells.

"It's going to be an extremely challenging match," Raducanu said during her on-court interview. "She's probably in better form, so I can go out and express myself and try and compete for every point."

Raducanu is still searching for a full-time mentor after splitting with Vladimir 'Vlado' Plateni, who was in her corner during the first-round defeat to Moyuka Uchijima in Indian Wells but was not seen in her box for yesterday's win in Miami.

Texas-style Masters menu at Augusta

WORLD NO. 1 Scottie Scheffler unveiled a Texas-style menu for next month's Masters champions dinner.

Scheffler is excited about his menu for the April 8 champions dinner.

"It's my favourite foods, haven't quite changed too much but there's a little bit more nostalgic stuff," Scheffler said.

Appetizers include "Scottie-style" sliders, firecracker shrimp and "Papa Scheff's Meatball and Ravioli bites" followed by Texas-style chili, wood-fired ribeye steak or blackened redfish and a warm chocolate chip skillet cookie.

"Cheeseburgers is probably my favorite food," Scheffler said. "I always put the fries on my burger. That's 'Scottie-style.' I'll throw some cheese in there, some ketchup. It's great."

The chili recipe came from his long-time coach, Randy Smith, and Scheffler's father's meatballs also made the list.

"His meatballs were the best growing up," Scheffler. "Every time he made them we were jacked up about it. The raviolis are pretty good as well."

Proud Draper enjoying fruits of labour

FOR Britain's Jack Draper, his first Masters 1000 title at Indian Wells on Sunday was a moment of pride and joy but not, he suggests, a huge surprise.

The 23-year-old enjoyed an outstanding two weeks in the Californian desert, enjoying an upset win over Wimbledon champion Carlos Alcaraz in the semifinals, after beating top Americans Ben Shelton and Taylor Fritz.

In the final he defeated Denmark's Holger Rune in straight sets – a triumph which moved him into the top 10 for the first time in his career.

Asked what his main emotion had been in the aftermath of that triumph, Draper said: "I think big pride... to be able to celebrate that with my team... in tennis, there's lots of ups

and downs, there's lots of adversity, especially for me over the years.

"I feel like I've been on a big journey with my team and the guys around me, and they've been incredibly supportive of myself," Draper said yesterday as he prepared for this week's Miami Open in Florida.

Draper's Indian Wells victory was viewed as a surprise in many quarters but the player himself said he had felt an important win was increasingly within his reach.

He said his first tournament victory on the tour, in Stuttgart last June, had been a turning point in his confidence that he could reach the elite in the sport.

"I was a lot calmer because of that. I feel like that was something I needed to get over as a

hurdle in my mind as a young player.

"When you come onto the tour, it's difficult. You're kind of in the changing room with all the players you've watched on the TV and you admire.

"I'm sure everyone feels that, you feel like you don't belong and then you're out on court and you're playing.

"But I think the more and more experiences I've got of playing big matches and winning against big opponents and all this sort of stuff.

"And obviously, semifinal of US Open and winning Vienna, all the accumulation of things, I think over time is helping me to believe more and more that I'm capable of, you know... I don't know what I am capable of, I don't like to think too far ahead," he said. – AFP

Rehab at Valspar

Determined Schauffele still finding his game after injury

Xander Schauffele.
– REUTERS/SPIC



FOR Xander Schauffele, there's no place like the road.

Schauffele is playing this week at the Valspar Championship at the Copperhead Course of the Innisbrook Resort in Palm Harbor, Florida.

He's there, working to find his game after being sidelined six weeks because of an intercostal strain in the rib cartilage on his right side.

"As I feel sort of better and better, just need to get some reps under my belt. Competition golf is not the same as trying to play golf at home. It's been a process, and I'm pretty determined to play better."

At No. 3 in the world, he's the top-ranked player in the Valspar field, signing up at the last minute.

Schauffele has played in two events in his comeback, not finishing to his standards.

Two weeks ago, he finished 4-over and tied for 40th at the Arnold Palmer Invitational. Last week, at The Players Championship, closing rounds of 77 and 81 left him 13 over and in 72nd.

"I didn't think it was going to be this tricky. Maybe I'm being a little impatient, it's been two weeks of tournament golf for me, coming off of pretty much zero golf," Schauffele, 31, said.

"I have expectations and I think my team has expectations and just try to be professional through and through. But that includes

shooting better scores."

He shot the better scores in 2024 and had high expectations for 2025.

In 22 events last season, he made the cut in all of them. He had 15 top-10 finishes, was the runner-up three times and won twice – at the PGA Championship and The Open Championship.

The Masters Tournament is quickly approaching, set for April 10-13 at Augusta National Golf Club. Scottie Scheffler is the defending champion; Schauffele finished eighth, 10 strokes back.

Valspar could be his final tournament before the Masters.

"I think everyone around me would like it to be, yeah. I mean, I need to play better tournament golf," Schauffele said.

"I think the Masters is demanding, Augusta National's demanding, and you imagine you would like to, you would rather play good golf going in there than not."

He has a limit on how many balls he can hit on the range, and that's difficult for him to stick to. Schauffele has learned that patience doesn't come easy for him.

"I did blow that out of the water last week," he said. "Didn't feel amazing after it, to be completely honest, but fortunately got a good team around me to reel me in."

"I'm trying to be smart about how I'm going about things, and I definitely feel, I feel like a kid again."

"I feel like I want to hit a million golf balls and sit out here for until 8 o'clock every night, but I got to be smart about it." – Field Level Media

Kyrgios earns first win in more than two years

AUSTRALIAN Nick Kyrgios came from behind to defeat Mackenzie McDonald 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in the first round of the Miami Open yesterday to earn his first win since October 2022.

Kyrgios, who retired from his first-round match at Indian Wells this month due to pain in his surgically repaired right wrist, soaked in the moment, looking skyward and taking a deep breath after sealing the win.

"It has been a long journey even to get to the start line of matches and be scared to even be able to finish them," he told *Tennis TV*.

"So to come in and get a win and feel like I belong again, it's pretty special."

Kyrgios, who had lost all three matches he played this year, got off to a slow start on a hot and humid day in South Florida but after dropping the first set, he began to settle in, finding his rhythm on serve to level the contest.

In the decider, he hit a well-disguised drop shot to set up a break point and converted when his American opponent double-faulted to hand Kyrgios a 4-3 lead.

From there he rode his best shot, his booming serve, to the finish line.

Next up for Kyrgios is Russian Karen Khachanov, who stunned the Australian in a

hard-fought quarterfinal at the 2022 US Open, a tournament Kyrgios was among the favourites to win that year.

Soon after that bitter disappointment he would take a lengthy break from the court to tend to a series of knee, foot and wrist problems that threatened to permanently derail the 29-year-old's career before returning to the tour this year.

Frenchman Gael Monfils, Belgian David Goffin, and Russian-born Kazakhstani Alexander Bublik were among the players who also advanced out of the first round with wins on Wednesday. – Reuters

SHORTS

Australian GP scores record ratings

THE Australian Grand Prix was watched by more than 1.1 million viewers on ESPN, setting a record for Formula 1's season-opening event, according to the network.

It beat the previous mark of 659,000 viewers in 2019, and was up 541,000 from last year's race broadcast on ESPN2. The 2025 race, which began at midnight on Sunday in America, also averaged 560,000 viewers in the coveted 18-49 year-old demographic.

The record viewership for the Australian GP comes amid reports that ESPN will not pursue the US broadcast rights to F1 once the network's media deal expires after this season.

However, F1 president and CEO Stefano Domenicali said at last month's Liberty Media earnings call that discussions continue despite ESPN's exclusive negotiating period having passed.

ESPN has aired F1 races since 2018 and is in the final year of a three-year extension that has the network paying about US\$90 million (RM405m) per season for media rights.

NBC Sports and Netflix are potential replacements after both met with F1 last month, according to *Front Office Sports*.

NBC Sports aired F1 from 2012 to 2017, while Netflix has helped boost F1's popularity in the US with its *Drive to Survive* docuseries, which recently released its seventh season.

Eight F1 cars go 'missing'

A logistical nightmare reportedly saw eight F1 cars go missing ahead of the Chinese Grand Prix.

Four teams had their freight delayed on the way over from Australia, hindering preparations for this weekend's race.

Red Bull, Mercedes, McLaren and Aston Martin were all impacted by "technical issues" relating to transport, according to F1 photographer Kym Illman. As a result, their cars did not arrive at the same time as the other six teams.

Many crew members were reportedly "sitting around in hotels" on Wednesday as there was little point in going to the track.

The missing cars eventually turned up in the evening, according to *Motorsport.com*, averting a deeper crisis ahead of today's running.

One team employee was quoted as saying: "There are no worries about free practice, but these days will be some late nights for our mechanics."

The four teams involved in the saga will be desperately hoping it does not impact their chances of success in Shanghai.

FIA announce change to help teams

THE situation with the missing cars prompted the FIA to intervene, with the governing body easing curfew restrictions in the paddock on Wednesday night.

All 10 teams were given a six-hour period in which they could not work on their cars, as opposed to the usual 11.5 hours. In a statement, the FIA cited "logistical challenges" as the reason behind the change.

"Due to the logistical challenges for the official tyre supplier resulting from delays in freight arrival, specially the requirement to revise the fitting schedule for Wednesday, the following concessions will be made," read the statement.

"On the Wednesday, and for this event only, the curfew period will be reduced by a period of five-and-a-half hours for a maximum of six operational personnel for the sole purpose of tyre preparations post tyre fitting from the tyre supplier."

It comes after the FIA introduced a new technical directive to combat the separate 'mini-DRS' issue which has drawn complaints from Red Bull in recent months.

Perez 'in talks' over comeback

SERGIO PEREZ appears to be eyeing a return to F1 following his Red Bull exit, with Cadillac emerging as a potential destination. They are on the lookout for drivers ahead of their inaugural season on the grid next year.

Talks have already been staged regarding a possible seat for Perez, according to Jimmy Morales. He is the director of Escuderia Telmex, an organisation set up by Mexican billionaire Carlos Slim to provide backing to elite Latin American drivers.

"We talked to everyone and started to see their plans and if they have any room for Checo," said Morales.

"The important thing is that he's interested. It's peace of mind, the ability to focus on your work."

"There are many things to consider in order to perform at your best. That's what we're looking for with Checo."

Norris takes shot at rivals

Briton blames competitors for doing 'bad job' Down Under

LANDO NORRIS has dismissed the view that McLaren's car is supremely fast and questioned why their F1 rivals were so far behind them at the Australian Grand Prix.

Norris took pole position narrowly ahead of his teammate Oscar Piastri in Melbourne, but their closest challenger Max Verstappen was some four tenths down on the Papaya to highlight the margin in one-lap pace.

Despite multiple downpours of rain wreaking havoc during Sunday's race, the Briton led for 55 of the 58 laps around the Albert Park Circuit to highlight his dominance as he clinched victory.

Ferrari were backed to mount a threat with Charles Leclerc and Lewis Hamilton, yet the Prancing Horse fell way short of expectations on a disappointing weekend.

Several of their rivals made mention of the ominous pace demonstrated by McLaren in both qualifying and the race.

Norris, however, took a dim view of their comments and insisted their rivals' failings were to blame for them not being closer.

"I don't know why people always talk about the car so much, like Oscar and I drove very well (in qualifying), but the others should not have been as far off as what they were," he told *Sky Sports F1*.

"That was clear, and I do think we have by a little margin the best car, I'm not denying that. But not everything is about the car, that is clear, but it was a deserved win."

Norris crossed the line to take his fifth career victory and it appears the biggest threat to the 25-year-old's Drivers' Championship hopes this season will be his garage neighbour Piastri.

The Australian was only slightly slower than Norris and would've challenged for the win had he not spun out after dipping his car onto the damp grass in the latter stages of the race.

His minor error denied McLaren what would've been their 50th one-two finish in Formula One, but Norris praised his team for executing their strategy to perfection in tricky circumstances after making bold calls on the tyre choices as the rain fell Down Under.

"We made some good decisions as a team, because last year, we would have done the same race and we wouldn't have won because we were not the best at making those decisions, but today we were," he added.

"I give a lot of credit to the team, because they worked hard over the winter to make sure they were ready for a day like today."

McLaren go into the second weekend of the season at the Chinese Grand Prix in Shanghai on Sunday level with Mercedes in the Constructors' standings with 27 points, while Red Bull are third with 18. – Express Newspapers



McLaren CEO Zak Brown (left) and Jos Verstappen. – REUTERS/SPIC

Verstappen Sr slams McLaren CEO Brown

MAX VERSTAPPEN'S dad has accused Zak Brown of 'stirring s***' after the McLaren CEO tipped the reigning four-time world champion to join Mercedes at the end of the season.

Verstappen is contracted to Red Bull until the end of 2028 but performance-related break clauses could free him up sooner if the team slip behind their rivals.

And the Australian Grand Prix suggested that Red Bull have ground to make up.

Lando Norris won the race to take the early advantage in this season's title battle, and Verstappen punched well above his weight to take second spot, with his Red Bull team-mate Liam Lawson failing to get out of Q1 or make an impact on race day.

Brown believes it is only a matter of time before Verstappen moves onto pastures new.

"Oh, I think he'll leave at the end of this

year, most likely to Merc," he told *The Telegraph*.

"There's been talk of Aston Martin, too, with Adrian Newey joining. But as great as Adrian is – and he's the greatest ever – you need a whole team around you. You need the culture. That takes time. If I was betting, I'd bet on Mercedes."

"In the last 10 years, they've won the championship seven or eight times. Last year they won five races. They have stability. We know Toto (Wolff) likes him."

"And I think we all feel they are best-equipped on the power unit side heading into the new engine regulations next year."

"Plus, George (Russell) is out of contract at the end of this season and Kimi (Antonelli) will be on a series of one-years."

It appears that Brown's comments have

not gone down well in the Verstappen camp.

Responding to an excerpt of the McLaren chief's recent interview posted by *Autosport* on *Instagram*, the Dutchman's father, Jos, commented: "He is only trying to stir s***."

Ex-F1 racer Jos also piped up on social media earlier this month to respond to a pundit who tipped his son to join Mercedes, calling the prediction "nonsense."

There is no love lost between Brown and the Red Bull garage. He and team principal Christian Horner have endured a fractious relationship in recent years, and Verstappen rubbed salt in the wounds when he beat Norris to last year's world title.

He told Brown to his face: "Like you said, before I could only win it in the fastest car. This year, it has been a little bit different!" – Express Newspapers

Listless Lions held by minors after travel woes

MADAGASCAR and Tunisia won away in World Cup qualification yesterday as two rounds of African group matches kicked off, but Cameroon were held by Eswatini after poor travel arrangements caused them to arrive only hours before kickoff.

Cameroon's Indomitable Lions, who have been to more World Cup finals than any other African country, were held goalless by the small southern African kingdom who picked up their first point of the campaign.

It was a listless performance from a strong Cameroon side, including Premier League players Andre Onana and Bryan Mbeumo, but not surprising as they had only arrived at their hotel in the South African city of Nelspruit around 15 hours before kickoff.

They had planned to fly from Cameroon to Nelspruit, where Eswatini hosted the

match because their own stadiums have been condemned as not up to international standard by the Confederation of African Football.

Because their charter left late, however, the Cameroon squad were unable to land at Nelspruit airport which had closed for the night.

They instead disembarked in Johannesburg, and had to wait three hours before making a five-hour bus journey to Nelspruit.

The draw left Cameroon on nine points at the halfway stage of the qualifying campaign, leading Group D but only two points above Libya and the Cape Verde Islands who have home games against Angola and Mauritius overnight.

Tunisia stretched their lead in Group H to five points as their league's top scorer Hazem

Mastouri scored in the fourth minute to secure a 1-0 away win over Liberia in Monrovia.

It was a winning start for Tunisia coach Sami Trabelsi, back for a second stint in charge of the team.

Madagascar's new coach, former French international Corentin Martins, got his tenure off to a superb start as they won 4-1 at the Central African Republic, who were hosting the match in Casablanca.

Central African Republic defender Hugo Gambor scored in the ninth minute but Madagascar bounced back to seal a comfortable win, including two goals from Rayan Raveloson

Madagascar lead Group I with 10 points, one ahead of the Comoros and Ghana. Comoros play on Thursday against Mali and Ghana host Chad today. – Reuters



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'Tuchel must win something'

German has to justify England role, says Redknapp

THOMAS TUCHEL was a surprise choice as England coach and will have to win next year's World Cup to justify the FA's decision to appoint him, according to Harry Redknapp.

German Tuchel became England's third overseas head coach when he was named as Gareth Southgate's successor last year and makes his debut against Albania at Wembley tomorrow (3.45am).

Former West Ham United, Portsmouth and Tottenham Hotspur manager Redknapp said Tuchel, who has an 18-month contract, was not his obvious choice, but that he has inherited a squad which is the envy of the world.

"It's all a strange situation really. I heard (former Arsenal goalkeeper) Jens Lehmann this morning saying could you imagine Germany having an English manager? It's impossible," Redknapp, who will return to the dugout for a South of England vs North of England fixture in June, told reporters.

"It wasn't a manager that jumped out at me when I heard it. I thought, oh my God. When we got (Italian Fabio) Capello, you've got Capello, he's a serial winner, the Champions League, Milan, wherever he managed. He was iconic. Tuchel's

been here, done okay."

The 51-year-old Tuchel won two league titles with Paris Saint Germain, the Champions League with Chelsea and the Bundesliga at Bayern Munich but this is his first international role.

England's World Cup qualifying campaign begins against Albania before they host

Latvia on Tuesday (3.45am) and Redknapp says the German will learn little from those fixtures.

"Listen, it's hard to judge at the moment. He's picked a squad to play two useless teams. I'll be watching *Coronation Street* when that's on. I just can't be bothered to watch that," the 78-year-old Redknapp added.

"What do we gain from seeing us beat Latvia 5-0 or 6-0? What do we learn about any of the players? It's difficult, until we get into a competition."

England also face Andorra and Serbia in Group K. "He's got to win

something, basically, to be a success. (Tuchel's predecessor) Gareth (Southgate) took us so far.

"He's got an opportunity, he's got a great squad, great group of players," said Redknapp. "You probably wouldn't swap them for anybody. So, it's all there for him to go and win a trophy."

Southgate steered England to two Euro finals and the World Cup semi-finals but failed to deliver any silverware.

Redknapp, who was always overlooked for the England job, said he would prefer an English coach for the post, but added only Newcastle United's Eddie Howe stood out as a candidate.

"I'm all for an English manager, me. I would like to see that. If you can't find an English manager, there's something gone wrong somewhere.

"It's not the coaching system, because they can do their coaching badges. The FA can't do anything about choosing who manages what clubs. That's down to the owners.

"They're all foreign owners. And they come in, and they seem to want to have foreign managers." - Reuters

'New manager's aura can inspire England'

ASTON VILLA forward Morgan Rogers says Thomas Tuchel's special "aura" can inspire England's bid to win the World Cup.

Tuchel met up with his players for the first time on Tuesday ahead of their opening World Cup qualifiers against Albania and Latvia at Wembley.

The German, who began work as Gareth Southgate's successor in January, held a team meeting on Tuesday where he outlined his mission for World Cup glory next year.

Rogers, currently managed by Unai Emery at Villa, said he has never worked with a boss with such a magnetic presence.

"When I met him his aura and demeanour, it's hard to describe but he has that level of confidence, that level of respect already," said Rogers.

"The presence is a bit different. Certain managers have different ways about them. Certainly his aura is one I've not experienced before. That's different to what I've faced before.

"You can see the way he is, the way he acts. He has been so chilled and calm. But when it is time to work, it is time to work."

England lost the last two

European Championship finals under Southgate as their wait for a first trophy since the 1966 World Cup goes on.

As England's third non-British coach, Tuchel is under extra pressure to deliver.

But Rogers is confident the former Chelsea and Bayern Munich boss, who won the Champions League in his time at Stamford Bridge, can cope with the expectations.

"Winning the World Cup is the only goal, he was very clear and transparent with what he wants to do, how he wants to do it, how he wants to go about it, what he sees in us, and what we need to improve," he said.

"It was very straight-up, no cutting round corners. It was straight and that's how he is. The best way to get information across is to be like that."

"The main thing I took from that (Tuesday's meeting) was about the love and commitment he wants from us within, how he wants us to be a family, how he wants us to be close and connected," the Aston Villa forward added. - AFP/Agencies



Phil Foden

Top-four finish, FA Cup win can save City's poor season: Foden

BY CARL MARKHAM

MANCHESTER CITY forward Phil Foden believes winning the FA Cup and finishing in the Premier League top four will "save a poor season" and set them up to challenge for the top honours again.

Nine League defeats have left Pep Guardiola's side 22 points adrift of leaders Liverpool and in a battle just to qualify for the Champions League, having exited that competition at the hands of Real Madrid in the playoff round.

The FA Cup and the often m u c h - d e r i d e d p o s t - s e a s o n C l u b World Cup, n e w l y e x p a n d e d and already m o r e difficult to win, is the o n l y

silverware left available to City.

While neither would have been top of their list back in August, Foden said they had to take something from a disappointing campaign.

"It is so important. I feel if we come up with the FA Cup and finish in the top four it will save a poor season in my eyes," Foden said.

"It is one of our main targets now to make sure that we are playing Champions League next season.

"It's in our hands if we win our games as we've got to believe in what we can do and believe we can do it.

"It'll be a real positive and maybe we'll go into next season with a bit more confidence.

"It wasn't our aim to be here at the start of the season but that's football sometimes, you never know what's round the corner.

"There's always teams improving and challenging us and, yeah, we've had a bit of a slip this season but we can still finish it off strong and save the season if you like."

In eight years the 24-year-old has won six League titles, the Champions League, two FA Cups and four League Cups in an almost unprecedented golden spell for an academy player.

When success becomes the norm, failure is felt all the more keenly and Foden said it had brought a new appreciation of just what he had achieved.

"One hundred per cent. If I ever win anything again I am going to make sure I enjoy it even more because it shows how quickly things can change," he added. - The Independent

NEWCASTLE UNITED'S Dan Burn knows his career has not been a "straight line" but at the age of 32 everything is suddenly falling into place for the towering defender who on Friday could earn a belated first England cap.

Six days ago he took a call from new England manager Thomas Tuchel who informed him he was part of his squad for the World Cup qualifiers against Albania and Latvia at Wembley.

On Sunday Burn's majestic header, his first goal of the season, paved the way for Newcastle's first domestic trophy for 70 years, a 2-1 League Cup final win over Liverpool.

Burn setting sights on World Cup

So on Tuesday he was the man everyone wanted to talk to at England's St George's Park headquarters.

"I've had worse weeks," Burn told reporters. "When it got to 6 o'clock Thursday night and I'd not heard anything, I said to my wife, 'I don't think anything's going to happen, then I got a text saying, 'Are you still awake?'"

"(Tuchel) said that he just had been ringing everyone who hadn't made the squad, so again I

didn't think I was making it.

"But then he said he just needed to end the day on a good note, and that he wanted me in the squad."

Burn's role in Newcastle's League Cup triumph has cemented him in the club's folklore but he is now setting his sights even higher - next year's World Cup finals.

"I'm not just coming in as a cheerleader, I want to play," Burn told reporters. "I want to make as big of

an impression as I can and then just try and make the next camp. But obviously, every little kid's dream is to play in a World Cup.

"So to know that I've got that opportunity, if I take it, it's special. When you've been passed up over so many international breaks you sort of accept that time's passed but luckily the new manager has taken a chance on me.

"I've been doubted a lot over my career. I think not many people who watched me play at Darlington would have said I'll be sat here doing a press conference for England. But I feel like I deserve to be here." - Reuters

RESULTS

WORLD CUP (AFRICA QUALIFIERS)

Group D: Eswatini 0 Cameroon 0.

Group H: Liberia 0 Tunisia 1.

Group I: Central African Republic 1 Madagascar 4.

SHORTS

Takraw boys off to great start

MALAYSIA began their Group B campaign in the 2025 Sepak Takraw World Cup quadrant event on a strong note after defeating France 2-0 in Bihar, India, yesterday.

The national squad, comprising Muhammad Shahalril Aiman Halim, Amirul Zazwan Amir, Norfaizzul Abd Razak, and Muhammad Fetri Mohd Azwadi, had little difficulty securing the first set with a 15-6 victory in the match held at the Patliputra Indoor Stadium.

In the second set, Malaysia made two substitutions, bringing in Aidil Aiman Azwawi and Muhammad Noraizat Mohd Nordin, before overpowering the French duo 15-7.

The national team are scheduled to play their second Group B match against Myanmar.

Anita Azrina to head PSM

FORMER Petronas group senior general manager of strategic communications, Datin Anita Azrina Abdul Aziz, has been appointed as the Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia (PSM) chairman, effective today.

Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh announced that Anita Azrina will serve for the 2025-2027 term.

She said that in addition to Anita Azrina, the ministry has also appointed Asian Football Confederation (AFC) secretary-general Datuk Seri Windsor John as the new deputy chairman of PSM.

"Both of them were previously members of the PSM board. I believe that Anita Azrina's corporate experience with Petronas and Windsor's expertise in football will help continue the efforts of the previous chairman, Datuk Hans Isaac," she told reporters during the Youth and Sports Ministry Sportswriters Association of Malaysia (SAM) iftar event in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

On Monday, Hans announced via Instagram that he would no longer be serving as PSM chairman, a position he had held for the past two years.

Isaac increased PSM's revenue to RM10.64 million in 2024, with the Bukit Jalil National Stadium contributing RM1.8 million through non-sporting activities such as concerts.

Hannah hoped that the appointments of Anita Azrina and Windsor would facilitate the Kuala Lumpur Sports City upgrade programme as part of Malaysia's preparations to host the 2027 SEA Games.

"I want KL Sports City to continue evolving into a world-class sports and recreation hub," she said.

SAM gets new office

THE Sportswriters Association of Malaysia (SAM) will relocate its office from the Olympic Council of Malaysia building on Jalan Hang Jebat to a new office space inside the Bukit Jalil National Stadium in the second week of April.

SAM president Norismadi Abdul Manap said the new office, consisting of two units, would also serve as a one-stop centre for association members covering events around the National Stadium.

"We would like to thank the Ministry of Youth and Sports (KBS) because our application for a new office space at the National Stadium has finally been approved after a long effort. After the second week of Raya, SAM's office will officially move to the new location," he added.

"With the office there, it will be more convenient for SAM members, especially during events at the National Stadium or in the surrounding area. They can arrive early, rest, or do their work in the office space," he said.

Norismadi also said SAM plans to further diversify activities for its members in 2025.

"Last year, we organised around 39 events. Our hope for this year is to have 30 to 40 events, one of which is the iftar gathering we held today (yesterday)," he said.

Kiwis focused on Fiji job on road to World Cup

NEW ZEALAND'S professional footballers will take on a team of amateurs when they face Fiji in Wellington today (2.10pm Malaysian time) seeking a place in the final of Oceania qualifying for the 2026 World Cup.

The winner will play either Tahiti or New Caledonia in Auckland on Monday for a direct ticket to the global showpiece in North America.

While New Zealand are by far the strongest team in the region, they missed out on the last three World Cups after losing intercontinental playoffs.

This time the world No. 89 All Whites are a shoe-in to qualify, with Oceania guaranteed a berth for the first time in the expanded, 48-team World Cup.

Amid great expectations from home fans,

New Zealand coach Darren Bazeley is urging his players to focus on Fiji and ignore the bigger picture.

"We're the favourites, we've got this team of professionals and everything but it's a big game for them as well," he said at the team's final training session in Wellington yesterday.

"We need to respect that, they're going to be organised and competitive. So we need to be ready for those challenges."

Ranked 148th, Fiji's squad includes policemen, labourers and warehouse workers but lacks their most accomplished player, Roy Krishna, a striker who played over 100 matches for A-League team Wellington Phoenix.

Fiji coach Rob Sherman, a former assistant coach at Melbourne Victory, said Krishna's

untimely knee injury was a major blow but the team were in good spirits ahead of the match at Wellington Regional Stadium.

"We believe we can win. It's about executing our game plan and believing in ourselves," he said.

New Caledonia and Tahiti meet in the first semifinal at the same venue, a match-up of French territories ranked 152nd and 153rd respectively.

New Caledonia coach Johann Sidaner said reaching the semifinals was already a triumph for his players, who have had little club football since civil unrest broke out last year.

"We are very delighted to be here," Sidaner said. "The group, the team, the selection is already very satisfied." – Reuters

Mirror image

Subadron sees his own reflection in Arif Aiman

FORMER Kuala Lumpur footballer Datuk Subadron Abdul Aziz sees a reflection of his younger self in Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi, whom he regards as the best player in the country at present.

Subadron said the sensational Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) winger possesses the ability to read the game, excellent ball control, and extraordinary agility, making him a constant threat to opposing defences.

He said that, at just 22 years old, the player's potential for further growth is immense, and it is not impossible that he will become a key pillar for both the Southern Tigers and the national team in their quest to rival Asia's football giants.

"Arif Aiman is brave and smart in the game, meaning he understands different situations during play.

"If you want to play football, stamina must be the top priority, and intelligence is the second.

"Without stamina, a player would tire after dribbling past two opponents - how could he get past three or four?"

"When I watch him (Arif Aiman), I can say he plays like I used to - intelligent and fast.

"To play as a striker, you must have speed. When you are fast and possess great technique, opponents cannot take you down easily, but if you lack skill, you'll be brought down effortlessly," he told Bernama.

Subadron was a key figure in Kuala Lumpur's success, helping the team secure the Malaysia Cup title for three consecutive years from 1987 to 1989.

Arif Aiman has proven himself to be one of Malaysia's most valuable football talents with his outstanding performances for JDT,



having scored seven goals in the Super League campaign and five goals in the AFC Champions League Elite (ACL Elite) tournament this season.

The three-time consecutive Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the National Football Awards has not only been a driving force behind JDT's attack but also a crucial asset in both the Super League and the national team, thanks to his ability to create chances and score goals.

All eyes will be on Arif Aiman in Malaysia's opening Group F match of the 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers against Nepal, scheduled to take place at the Sultan Ibrahim Stadium in Iskandar Puteri next Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Subadron has challenged all local players to showcase their true potential to compete at the highest level on the global stage.

"Everyone can play football, but not everyone is skilled. Without intelligence in the game, it is impossible to compete internationally against highly skilled foreign players.

"Football, both globally and in Asia, has advanced tremendously, with numerous prestigious tournaments and increasingly sophisticated pitches. If players continue to blame the pitch and other external factors, it will be difficult to progress, especially when they still struggle with basic ball control and positioning," said the owner of Subadron Football Academy. – Bernama

Wilkin ready to put in hard yards for first XI role

NEW COACH, new training methods but the goal remains the same for national heritage player Stuart Wilkin.

That is to work hard in training, impress the coaching panel and get a place in the starting XI for the Group F opener against Nepal in the 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers at the Sultan Ibrahim Stadium on Tuesday.

Wilkin believes that the high-intensity training preferred by new national head coach Peter Kklamovski would push players to compete and stay fully focused at the

highest level.

"Every coach has a different approach. Whenever there's a new coaching lineup, they usually bring their own ways of doing things... but I think it's a good thing to have a fresh start.

"I think competition is very high in training because there are so many good players... Such a high level of competition is only going to push everyone to their maximum potential," he told a press conference in Johor Bahru on Wednesday when asked about the intensity of

the training they have been put through, so far.

Wilkin, who played in the 5-1 win over Nepal in a friendly in March last year, is also cautious about underestimating "The Gorkhalis".

"You can never underestimate a team like Nepal. They will be a different side to the one we played in the friendly last year.

"We will definitely analyse what they'll do in their friendly against Singapore this week and make sure we are well-prepared on match day," he added. – Bernama



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Wembley initiation

OVER five months on from Thomas Tuchel's appointment as England's new manager, the German will finally take charge of the team for the first time in tomorrow's (3.45am Malaysian time) World Cup qualifier against Albania at Wembley.

Tuchel is under no illusions about his objective with England after being handed a contract only until the end of next year's World Cup.

England have not won a major tournament since the 1966 World Cup, although they have come agonisingly close to ending that drought in recent years.

Under Tuchel's predecessor Gareth Southgate they twice lost in the European Championship final and reached the latter stages of the last two World Cups.

The English Football Association have invested heavily in Tuchel's track record as a serial winner at Bayern Munich, Chelsea and Paris Saint-Germain, ignoring criticism for not trusting an English coach with a talented generation of players.

A qualifying group also containing Serbia, Latvia and Andorra should pose few problems for the side ranked fourth in the world.

But the next week will offer some pointers towards what to expect from Tuchel's England.

His first squad announcement contained a number of surprises.

Jordan Henderson and Marcus Rashford returned after being sidelined in the latter stages of Southgate's era and under interim boss Lee Carsley.

There was also a first call-up for 32-year-old Newcastle defender Dan Burn, who scored in Sunday's League Cup final win over Liverpool.

Tuchel takes first steps on England journey targeting World Cup glory

Tuchel was adamant that all three are real contenders to go to the World Cup and that a blend of experience and emerging talent is needed to thrive at international tournaments.

Henderson has not featured for England since November 2023, but Tuchel believes the 34-year-old Ajax midfielder can still play a vital role.

"He embodies everything. He is a serial winner, his personality and character. He is the glue in every team that he has played, the glue that makes things special," Tuchel told ITV.

"I am convinced. If a teacher in a school is convinced about the quality of the class, the character of the class, it is better than the other way around."

Southgate and Carsley were keen to promote and develop young talent.

But in backing the likes of Henderson, Burn and Kye Walker, Tuchel is placing more emphasis on experience.

England's major tournament post-mortems have often revolved around following the examples of the French, German or Spanish models on player development.

Tuchel, however, seems keen to tap into the "DNA" of English football by embracing the pace and power of the Premier League.

"The Premier League is a very physically demanding league, is a very direct league and I think we should be brave enough to play like an England squad and should not try to copy other nations' styles too much," he said.

Tuchel has demanded more

"rhythm and intensity" from his players.

But he is already acknowledging the difficulty he faces in implementing that style in what could be baking temperatures in the USA, Mexico and Canada next year at the end of a long and draining season for his squad.

Just for this squad alone he is missing six first-team options in John Stones, Harry Maguire, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Cole Palmer, Bukayo Saka and Ollie Watkins through injury.

Southgate transformed England's fortunes from perennial underachievers to regular contenders at major tournaments.

Tuchel is wary of tearing up Southgate's largely successful blueprint, but he hopes improving small details during the qualifying stage will lay the foundations to bring the World Cup home for the first time in 60 years.

"If we want to be prepared to be in the next final and to make the last step, we need to do it now in the first camp," he said.

"We only have six camps (before the World Cup), we only have 60 days, so we need to take care of every single day and make sure that we are on point. If we do this, hopefully, the last step takes care of itself." - Agencies



England manager Thomas Tuchel during training. - REUTERS/PIC



Rehab at Valspar

Story on page 28



Norris takes shot at rivals

FIA Formula World Char

Story on page 29