

# theSun on Sunday

Malaysian Paper

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## Royal compassion

His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim presents personal contributions of RM1,000 each to 308 heads of households affected by the Putra Heights gas pipeline inferno.

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Sultan Ibrahim expressing his views during a visit to the site of the gas pipeline fire tragedy in Putra Heights yesterday. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

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# King gives aid to affected residents

A total of three hundred and eight household heads receive RM1,000 each to ease their burden

**KUALA LUMPUR:** His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim has presented personal contributions through Yayasan Sultan Ibrahim Johor to residents affected by the Putra Heights gas pipeline blaze.

A total of 308 heads of households, who are staying at a temporary relief centre at Dewan Serbaguna in Masjid Putra

Heights, received RM1,000 each to ease their burden.

His Majesty also spent time engaging with and enquiring about their well-being.

The King arrived at the relief centre at 10.22am, accompanied by the Raja Muda of Selangor Tengku Amir Shah Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah.

Also present were Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar and Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay.

In a post on the Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar Facebook page, His Majesty expressed appreciation to all personnel of government departments and agencies as well as NGOs who joined forces to assist the affected residents.

The King also received a briefing on

the fire before being driven in a Subang Jaya City Council four-wheel drive vehicle to visit the explosion site.

Sultan Ibrahim spent about 40 minutes surveying the devastation at the scene, Bernama reported.

The fire at the Petronas gas pipeline, which occurred at 8.10am on Tuesday, saw flames soaring over 30m high and temperatures reaching 1,000°C.

Fire and Rescue Department personnel took nearly eight hours to completely extinguish the inferno.

A total of 87 houses have been declared a "total loss".

## Selangor scraps Hari Raya event

**PETALING JAYA:** Out of respect for those affected by the recent gas pipeline tragedy in Putra Heights, the Selangor government cancelled the 2025 Madani Aidilfitri event just hours before it was set to take place.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari made the announcement yesterday.

"With the consent of the Sultan of Selangor, and in agreement with the prime minister, I hereby announce the cancellation of the Madani Aidilfitri Open House 2025 for the state of Selangor, which was scheduled for tomorrow (April 6)," he said in a post on his Facebook page.

He said food for the occasion would be redirected to temporary evacuation centres, orphanages, boarding schools and frontline personnel.

"On behalf of the state government, I offer my sincere apologies for any inconvenience caused by this cancellation. My heartfelt thanks to the entire organising and operations team, which has worked tirelessly to prepare for this event.

"Nonetheless, I deeply appreciate the collective understanding shown in putting community well-being above all else.

"May Allah SWT bless our efforts and our unity in supporting the victims and all involved."

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had directed that all prepared food be distributed to those in need. - By **AZURA ABAS**

## Final safety checks at blast site today

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Final safety assessment at "ground zero" of the Putra Heights gas pipeline disaster is expected to be completed today, said Fire and Rescue Department Director-General Datuk Nor Hisyam Mohammad.

He said the findings would be presented to the Selangor Disaster Management Committee.

"This final assessment covers the crater site and does not include areas where infrastructure was affected. We are also currently conducting water extraction operations at the crater site following overflow due to rain."

Selangor police chief Datuk Hussein Omar Khan said the preliminary technical investigation report on the cause of the explosion is expected to be ready within two weeks. - Bernama

## Timely assistance from Berjaya Cares Foundation

By **KIRTINEE RAMESH**  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**SUBANG JAYA:** With a strong commitment to helping families affected by the gas pipeline explosion in Putra Heights, Berjaya Cares Foundation (BCF) chairman Tan Sri Vincent Tan presented RM900,000 in financial aid to the heads of 300 households at the Putra Heights LRT station yesterday.

This donation made through BCF, the

charitable arm of Berjaya Corporation Berhad, includes RM3,000 in immediate cash aid for each household.

Tan said the initiative is aimed at alleviating the financial strain on vulnerable families as they embark on the challenging journey of rebuilding their homes and restoring their livelihoods.

"In times of crisis, we believe it is our responsibility as a corporate citizen to stand with communities in need. This donation reflects our unwavering

commitment to supporting humanitarian relief efforts and helping with recovery.

"We honour the resilience of the victims and thank the frontline responders who are working tirelessly to aid recovery.

"Together, through collective action and compassion, we can bring hope and strength to those facing unimaginable challenges. Our hearts are with you today and in the long journey ahead.

"In the spirit of kindness and unity, we encourage more companies and individuals to step forward and contribute to this noble cause, providing relief to those enduring hardship," said Tan.

Also present at the event were Transport Minister Anthony Loke and Selangor Investment, Trade and Mobility Committee chairman Ng Sze Han.

Loke said a sponsorship has been secured to donate free motorcycles to those affected by the explosion.

He added that the government would offer additional support to rebuild homes that were completely destroyed.

"We understand the immense hardship these families are facing, and the government is committed to supporting them in every way possible.

"This aid is part of our ongoing efforts to ensure no one is left behind."

A recipient of the assistance expressed gratitude for the assistance.

"I'm deeply grateful for the support we've received. It reassures us that we haven't been forgotten, and that means more than words can express to me and my family during this challenging time."

Another resident, who gave his name only as Farhan, said: "Honestly, we are truly grateful for this support. It came at the right time, lifting a huge weight off our shoulders. It has given us a renewed sense of hope to begin anew."



Tan presenting aid to a resident at the Putra Heights LRT station yesterday, accompanied by Loke (right). - **ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN**

## Another group to get loaned vehicles

**KUALA LUMPUR:** A second group of 30 residents affected by the Putra Heights gas pipeline blaze received cars for temporary use from automotive company Carro yesterday.

Selangor Investment, Trade and Mobility Committee chairman and Kinrara assemblyman Ng Sze Han said the assistance is to help them manage their daily activities.

"On behalf of the Selangor government, I sincerely thank Carro for generously contributing 30 vehicles to assist those affected by the incident.

"This morning, we handed the keys to

family representatives. The cars will be available to them for a month," he said after presenting the keys yesterday.

Ng said 25 vehicles from Chery Malaysia were handed to a first group of recipients on Friday, with further distributions to follow in the coming days.

He said more than 150 residents have applied for temporary vehicles via Google Forms, adding that the extent of damage to their vehicles is not a determining factor.

"As long as they need a car, we will try our best to help," he said, adding that more than 200 vehicles have been offered by several automotive companies to support

the affected individuals.

These include 50 cars from Chery, 30 from Carro, 62 from YonMing, 30 from Tan Chong Motor Holdings Bhd and Warisan TC Holdings Bhd, 20 from GoCar and 50 from Carsome.

Ng added that Panasonic Malaysia would be assisting affected residents through the distribution of household appliance vouchers.

"Panasonic is offering 240 e-vouchers worth RM500 each to help them purchase household appliances. The Google Form for the e-voucher application is expected to be accessible today," - Bernama

# Chilling premonition before gas explosion

Health and safety practitioner urges Petronas, Gas Malaysia to provide reassurance to residents

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Days before the Putra Heights gas pipeline explosion, longtime resident Jasbinder Singh, 53, had a chilling premonition.

"I told my wife this could explode," he recalled, having observed excavation works near his neighborhood leading up to the disaster at Putra Heights in Selangor on Tuesday.

A health and safety practitioner and a resident of Putra Avenue, Putra Heights for over 15 years, Jasbinder described witnessing the massive blaze from his balcony.

"I immediately knew it wasn't a house fire – it was too large. It had to be a gas pipeline."

Jasbinder said he and his wife had often joked about the ongoing digging activities near the pipeline but assumed that the

contractors were authorised and aware of the risks.

"I used to joke with my wife in the car – 'Did you ask them if they have permission to dig?' I knew the pipeline was there."

Describing the intense heat from the fire, Jasbinder compared it to "a strong ray, like sitting under the sun on a scorching beach day."

Although his home was about 300 meters from the explosion site, he feared that the overwhelming heat could set his house ablaze.

Acting swiftly, he evacuated his wife and daughter to a nearby LRT station while alerting neighbours.

"I didn't pick up anything. I just closed all the windows, removed the curtains as I was scared they might catch fire, and ran."

Jasbinder monitored his house remotely

through CCTV footage, returning six hours later to retrieve essential documents.

Following the disaster, Jasbinder urged Petronas and Gas Malaysia to engage directly with residents along the pipeline, explaining safety protocols and providing reassurance.

"If the pipes cannot be relocated, then give us some peace of mind. We need to understand what went wrong and how it will be prevented in the future."

He also emphasised the importance of clear evacuation plans, particularly for households like his, positioned between the blaze and neighbouring homes where the danger was most severe.

Jasbinder's concerns echo those of many Putra Heights residents, who are still grappling with the aftermath of a disaster that disrupted the community.

The incident displaced more than 300 people, who are now being sheltered at two relief centers. Fortunately, no fatalities were reported. – Bernama

## Temple refuge for pets, strays injured in blaze

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH AND HARITH KAMAL  
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**SUBANG JAYA:** The devastating fire that broke out on April 1 in Putra Heights left families, pets, and community members scrambling for safety.

As the flames rapidly spread, many were caught off guard, with both people and animals desperately seeking shelter and aid.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) Selangor veterinarian Dr Natasha Lee has been on the ground since the incident, providing care for the rescued animals. They were placed in cages at the Sri Maha Kaliyamman Temple.

"Some animals are healthy, others were dehydrated, and sadly, a few suffered severe injuries. We've also seen some that didn't survive," she said when met at the Sri Maha Kaliyamman Temple on Friday.

"The speed of the fire left many pets with no chance to escape. Some were tied up, others were in cages. It all happened so fast," Lee told *theSun*.

She said, so far, around 30 cats, five dogs and two snakes have been rescued.

"Some animals have been reunited with their owners, while others remain in treatment at veterinary clinics, foster care or boarding facilities."

"We have three cats showing signs of infectious diseases. If their owners don't come forward, we'll put them up for adoption," Lee said.

Initially, Sri Maha Kaliyamman Temple priest Menachy Sundram Saminatham opened the temple grounds to shelter victims before they were relocated to a temporary evacuation centre.

Now, the temple is being used as a temporary shelter for pets, with veterinarians providing care for the affected animals.

Menachy said: "Around 7:50am that day we heard a loud explosion and saw flames. Even inside the temple, we could feel the heat."

He added that the heat scorched the trees behind the temple, partially melted the water tank, and damaged the donation



The Sri Maha Kaliyamman Temple grounds initially housed impacted residents, but is now a shelter for animals affected by the fire, said Menachy. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

box, but the most distressing moment came when children, some with burns, rushed to the temple crying for help.

"We immediately brought them in, gave them water, and did everything we could to help."

By the third day, the temple also began taking in injured and displaced animals, despite some resistance from the community.

"Many opposed the idea, but we opened our doors to anyone in need – humans and animals alike."

Meanwhile, a resident from Kampung

Kuala Sungai Baru which was also affected by the fire, said some of the victims cared more about the lives of their pets than the things they lost.

"My cat has been missing since Tuesday when the fire occurred. She's an active cat – I don't know if she survived or ran away. I've looked everywhere, but there's no sign of her."

"I just hope when we're allowed to go back, I'll find her and that she's safe," said the resident who wanted to be known as Aishah, when met at the Putra Heights Mosque.

## Foreign minister begins humanitarian mission to Myanmar

**SUBANG:** Malaysia's Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan visited Myanmar as part of a humanitarian mission following the devastating earthquake that struck the country on March 28.

The aircraft carrying Mohamad and his delegation departed from the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Air Base here at around 8am and is expected to arrive at Nay Pyi Taw International Airport in Myanmar at 9:30am.

The humanitarian mission is jointly led by Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa, symbolising close Asean cooperation in humanitarian response and reflecting regional solidarity and support for the people of Myanmar.

Malaysia, as the Asean Chair, and Thailand are spearheading this initiative, as agreed upon during the Asean Foreign Ministers' Special Emergency Meeting chaired by Mohamad via video conference last Sunday to discuss follow-up actions in response to the disaster affecting both Myanmar and Thailand.

In a statement on Friday, the Foreign Affairs Ministry said that while in Nay Pyi Taw, Mohamad and Maris are scheduled to meet with the Chairman of the State Administration Council (SAC), Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, as well as Myanmar's Foreign Minister U Than Shwe.

The two ministers will also receive a briefing from the Asean Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre) regarding ongoing relief and humanitarian operations.

Mohamad will also highlight Asean's coordinated disaster response efforts and Malaysia's contributions to date, including the deployment of the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (Smart) and the delivery of humanitarian aid.

Coinciding with the visit, Malaysia's second batch of humanitarian aid weighing 15 tonnes will arrive in Nay Pyi Taw. The aid, coordinated through the AHA Centre, will be delivered using a Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) A400M aircraft as part of Asean's collective relief efforts.

On March 28, a 7.7-magnitude earthquake struck Myanmar, with Mandalay, Bago, northeastern Shan State and Nay Pyi Taw among the hardest-hit. To date, the death toll in Myanmar is 3,145, with 4,589 people injured and 221 reported missing. – Bernama

## Rukun Negara loyalty campaign to start soon

**MALACCA:** The National Unity Ministry will launch the Rukun Negara Loyalty campaign through various social media platforms starting this year, said its Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang. He said the campaign, based on the fifth principle of Rukun Negara – Courtesy and Morality – is important to instill as the two elements appear to be increasingly eroding among users of social media platforms.

"As we will be celebrating the 55th anniversary of Rukun Negara this year, I am proposing to launch the Rukun Negara Loyalty Campaign in Malacca."

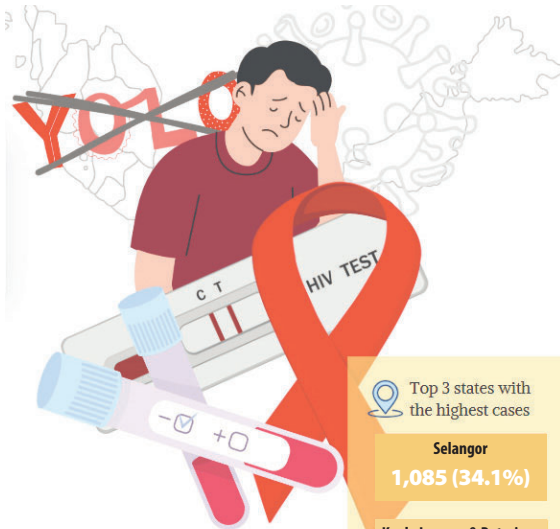
"I am confident that this can be implemented well as one of Malacca's signature programmes is the Rukun Negara Speech Competition," he said.

He told reporters this after officiating the kick-off ceremony for the 2025 Unity Week Celebration at Malacca International Trade Centre (MITC) in Ayer Keroh on Friday night.

He said currently his ministry has various physical programmes based on unity among the community such as the Rukun Negara Club in primary schools and Rukun Negara Secretariat at public university level. – Bernama



# Risky behaviours fuelling HIV spike



According to the Health Ministry 2024 data, men made up 90% of HIV cases in Malaysia, with 75% of them between the ages of 20 and 39.

Top 3 states with the highest cases	
Selangor	1,085 (34.1%)
Kuala Lumpur & Putrajaya	365 (11.4%)
Sabah	344 (10.8%)

Some attribute surge to 'Yolo' mindset, but experts say there's more to the problem

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM  
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**PETALING JAYA:** A worrying trend is emerging among young Malaysian men – risky behaviours that are fuelling a rise in HIV cases.

According to the Health Ministry's 2024 surveillance data from the National AIDS Registry, men made up a staggering 90% of HIV cases, with 75% in the 20-39 age group.

Selangor tops the list with 1,085 new cases (34.1%), followed by Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya with 365 (11.4%) and Sabah with 344 (10.8%).

Some quarters attribute the surge to a "Yolo" (You Only Live Once) mindset, linking it to risky sexual behaviour. But experts say there's more beneath the surface.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia anthropology and sociology senior lecturer Dr Velan Kunjuran believes the issue is deeply rooted in societal views of masculinity.

"The Yolo mentality isn't just

about living for the moment.

"It's shaped by peer influence, masculine ideals and gendered socialisation.

"Traditional gender norms depict men as dominant, fearless and impulsive, pushing them towards behaviours like unprotected sex or multiple partners."

In Malaysia, these norms reinforce the notion that risk-taking is a marker of manhood.

Velan pointed to the concept of hegemonic masculinity – the culturally dominant ideal of manliness – which pressures men to prove themselves through bold actions.

"Peer validation is critical," he said, adding that many young men feel compelled to engage in casual sex or avoid conversations about sexual health just to fit in.

Another key driver is the stigma surrounding sexual health.

"Many fear judgement if they speak up, which leads to misinformation and dangerous choices."

He highlighted glaring gaps in Malaysia's sex education system.

He added that cultural and religious taboos continue to stifle open discussions, leaving young Malaysians without the tools to make informed decisions.

"Unlike Western countries where sex education is institutionalised, here, young people often rely on hospitals or specialised centres for basic information."

Compounding the issue is the role of dating apps and social media.

Their anonymity and accessibility encourage casual encounters, often without safe sex practices.

Velan cited Pakistan, where similar digital trends had triggered spikes in HIV cases.

But it's not just about sex. Broader social pressures – economic stress, job insecurity and isolation – are also fuelling risky behaviours.

"When life feels uncertain, some turn to these behaviours for temporary relief."

"It becomes a coping mechanism, but one that carries serious risks."

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## Tourist dies while on caving trip

**KUANTAN:** A Dutch woman died during a group caving activity at Gua Kepayang on the Keniam-Terenggan Trail in Taman Negara here on Friday.

Pahang Fire and Rescue Department director Mohd Razam Taja Rahim said Pommelen Catharina Maria Meijjs, 33, was reportedly found unconscious six hours into the activity with 16 other individuals from various countries, including a tour guide.

He said a search and rescue (SAR) team, comprising personnel from the Kuala Tahan Fire and Rescue station, the Civil Defence Force from Kuala Tahan and police rushed to the scene upon receiving an emergency call at about 7am, Bernama reported.

"The SAR team took about four hours to reach the location. However, the operation to bring the victim out could not continue due to muddy and slippery trails, as well as unfavourable weather conditions.

"Apart from the hilly terrain, the operation to bring down the body had to be halted at about 6pm and resumed the next day using a helicopter," he said in a statement.

"The victim's body was taken to the Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital in Kuantan for a post-mortem."

## Kidnap victim saved, suspects arrested

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Police were forced to open fire before apprehending three suspected kidnappers in a car at Jalan Cengkeh in Taman Cheras yesterday.

District police chief ACP Aidil Bolhassan said the suspects, three men aged between 24 and 30, were in a car with a man who is believed to have been kidnapped in Taman Nusa Bestari, Johor earlier in the morning.

"At 2:30pm when a police car stopped and instructed the suspects to exit their vehicle, they repeatedly rammed the police vehicle in an attempt to flee," he said in a statement.

To stop their actions, which posed a threat to the safety of the officers, several shots were fired at the car tyres, he added.

The 26-year-old victim is believed to have been abducted in front of an entertainment outlet at about 6am, and the incident was captured on CCTV. — Bernama

# Free books initiative draws massive crowd

**KUALA LUMPUR:** An initiative by a bookstore to give away free books has received overwhelming response, with throngs of people queuing for up to two hours at the premises, indicating that physical books are still popular among the public.

BookXcess, located in KL East Mall, is offering 200,000 books of various genres over three days, starting on Friday. Each visitor is allowed to pick a maximum of 10 books.

Bernama spoke to several people waiting in line, and found all of them had one thing in common — they prefer reading books in print rather than digital format.

University student R. Vishal, 19, said while the world, including his peers, is increasingly inclined toward digital reading material, he still chooses physical books as he feels calmer, more

200,000 copies covering various genres offered to public at KL outlet

comfortable and less distracted when reading them.

"Many of my friends prefer e-books or just reading the summaries (of books) on social media but I prefer physical books. Printed material helps me understand the content better," he said.

Private sector employee Tan Xiao Ren, 39, said he was there to take the opportunity to find suitable reading material for his two children, aged seven and four, to encourage them to pick up the reading habit from an early age.

"Parents today face the challenge of kids being addicted to gadgets. I feel it's necessary to introduce them to books that can not only help them develop critical thinking

skills but also expand their knowledge," he said.

Lecturer Dr Sophie Yusof, 46, believes that physical reading material and the reading culture will always have a place in society if promoted in engaging ways.

"Malaysians actually love initiatives like this but we don't get many such offers. If more initiatives like this are organised, I believe more people would become interested in reading," she said, while suggesting initiatives like membership programmes to encourage the public to buy physical books at affordable prices.

Universiti Teknologi Mara Faculty of Communication and Media Studies lecturer

Mohamed Shamil Hizamie Mohamed Norhisham said the free book initiative could attract more people to start reading, especially those who cannot afford to buy books.

"Books, especially physical ones, are like 'long-term investments'. But not many are willing to invest or spend money on books. So, when programmes like this offer free reading material, it removes that barrier, although we're not sure if they'll actually read them," he said.

Mohamed Shamil Hizamie, who is also the coordinator of the faculty's publishing programme, also suggested that publishers and publishing houses diversify mediums, including using augmented reality (AR) technology that allows readers to see 3D virtual objects in physical books.

"If we want to attract the younger generation, we need to be more creative in order to encourage them to read. There is already a group of book lovers, which is why book fairs are packed. But we should focus on expanding the reading culture to everyone, not just a small segment," he added.

BookXcess Sdn Bhd co-founder Andrew Yap said the event is a form of appreciation and a way to give back to the community, Bernama reported.

"We want to leave as many books as possible for the community here before we move to a new location. This is the first time we are giving away books in such a large quantity and we hope in the future, we can give away one million books."

Yap said his company, which has been in operation for 19 years, has 22 bookstores nationwide, adding that he is optimistic the number will continue to grow as there has been no decline in the demand for physical books.



Yap said the event is a form of appreciation for public support and a way to give back to the community, adding that the company hopes to offer a million free books in the future. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

## Four arrested in child sex abuse material crackdown

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Four individuals, including a civil servant, were arrested and over 50,000 pieces of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) were seized during Operation Cyber Guardian recently.

Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Ayob Khan Mydin Pitchay said the operation took place between Feb 24 and March 28 at several locations in Selangor and Penang.

He said the operation was conducted with authorities from several countries, including Japan,

Hong Kong, South Korea, Thailand and Singapore.

"In Malaysia, the operation was conducted in Kajang, Ampang Jaya, Petaling Jaya and Shah Alam in Selangor, where four arrests were made, including one involving a civil servant.

"In Penang, the operation was carried out in the Northeast district," he said on Friday.

The operation involved 46 police personnel, the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission and the Kg Detection

Unit to trace electronic devices.

He said the suspects, aged 26 to 49, included an accountant, web designer and a telco employee, adding that preliminary investigations revealed that the suspects used electronic devices to access and obtain CSAM online through peer-to-peer sharing before distributing the material via Telegram groups and storing it for personal viewing.

He said most CSAM content is stored on devices such as hard drives, mobile phones, desktop

computers, laptops and tablets.

"The case is being investigated under the Child Act 2001, Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017, Penal Code and other relevant laws."

He also said four investigation papers were opened under Section 10 of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017 for accessing CSAM and Section 293 of the Penal Code for possessing obscene materials.

He added that one of the suspects was recently charged in

Petaling Jaya under Section 292 of the Penal Code and fined RM3,000 after pleading guilty. He will also face charges under Section 10 of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act.

"In Shah Alam, another suspect was fined RM6,000 after pleading guilty under the same section, while two other investigation papers are pending forensic reports," he said, adding that the joint operation across six countries led to the arrest of 435 individuals. — Bernama

# Importance of early intervention

Extraordinary journey of a mother's love and strength for her special needs child

BY T.C. KHOR  
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**PETALING JAYA:** From the moment Raisa was born in 2020, her mother, Rose Zaimi Mohamed Zaid, 45, knew life would change in ways she had never imagined. As the youngest of four children, Raisa quickly carved a place in their home, filling it with love, laughter and chaos.

"I had a feeling her journey would be extraordinary, and I was right," said Rose, who lives in Taman Sea. She first learnt about Raisa's potential Down syndrome diagnosis through non-invasive prenatal testing at 20 weeks.

"At the time, the probability was only 20%. It was an unplanned pregnancy, and I was already feeling overwhelmed. The possibility of Down syndrome added to my uncertainty and fear," she told *theSun*.

At just five months old, Raisa joined the Kiwanis Down Syndrome Foundation (KDSF) Infant Stimulation Programme (ISP), which focuses on stimulating cognitive, motor and social skills through early intervention.

Founded in 1989 by the Kiwanis Club of Kuala Lumpur, KDSF advocates early intervention for children with Down syndrome in Malaysia. The ISP caters to infants aged 2 to 24 months, offering physio and occupational therapy to help them reach developmental milestones such as rolling, crawling and walking.

"KDSF has supported nearly 3,000 children in acquiring essential skills. Raisa was one of them," said Lee Sook Foong, KDSF's operations director.

"Now, at nearly five, Raisa is in the School Readiness Programme (SRP1), preparing for a structured school environment."

Rose, a homemaker, described SRP1 as a positive experience that fosters independence through hands-on activities.

"My daughter gained confidence in completing tasks like colouring or matching independently. The sensory-rich activities have been great for her."

Raisa also attends a pre-integrated special education programme at Sekolah Kebangsaan Bandar Utama Damansara, tailored for children with special needs.

For Rose and her husband, an engineer, also aged 45, juggling Raisa's therapy sessions, their three other children's online schooling and early intervention was challenging, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown.

"We had to adapt then. The older kids struggled with online learning, and Raisa's physiotherapy sessions were tiring. But we kept going, one day at a time."

After a year of speech therapy at the audiology and speech clinic of Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM (HUKM) Hospital and WQ Park (a health and rehabilitation centre), Raisa began speaking at age three.

"It took about a year for her to say her first word. Once she did, her vocabulary grew rapidly."

Rose acknowledged that services for Raisa have been accessible but expressed concern about her education and independence.

"I worry about how she'll adapt to structured education and whether she'll continue to thrive. Balancing support with fostering independence is always on my mind."

Many schools in Malaysia lack resources and trained staff for children with Down syndrome, said Lee.

"Teachers may not have sufficient training to meet their unique educational needs. Inclusive education requires individualised



With the KDSF early intervention programme and speech therapy sessions, Raisa began speaking at three years old.

teaching methods, learning assistants and specialists."

Lee emphasised that early intervention and regular medical follow-ups are key to addressing gaps in support and ensuring children thrive. Conditions associated with Down syndrome require ongoing monitoring, even if the child appears

healthy, she said, adding that the programme requires trained educators, therapy services and customised learning materials.

KDSF is at Lot 13490, Jalan Jenjarum, off SS23/1, Taman Sea, 47400 Petaling Jaya. Donations can be made via Maybank at 5125-3017-2440.

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## Trump hails 'very productive' call with Vietnam leader

**PALM BEACH:** US President Donald Trump said Vietnam's top leader told him in a "very productive" call on Friday that he wanted to make a deal on tariffs, after the southeast Asian nation was hit by huge levies.

A manufacturing powerhouse that counted the United States as its biggest market last year, Vietnam was hammered with a thumping 46% tariff in Trump's global trade blitz.

"Just had a very productive call with To Lam, general secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, who told me that Vietnam wants to cut their tariffs down to zero if they are able to make an agreement with the US," Trump said on Truth Social.

"I thanked him on behalf of our country, and said I look forward to a meeting in the near future."

Trump's apparent willingness to engage in talks with Vietnam highlighted wider uncertainty over his tariff policy, after officials had insisted that the levies were non-negotiable.

Vietnam took advantage of its location and cheap skilled labour to position itself as an alternative manufacturing hub to China during a trade war between Beijing and Washington in Trump's first term.

Many companies shifted parts of their supply chain, and Vietnam's trade surplus with the United States doubled between 2017 and 2023.

But now big brands such as Nike – which produced 50% of its footwear and 28% of its apparel in Vietnam in the 2024 financial year – face vastly higher costs, which they will have to absorb or pass on to customers. – AFP

## Alarm over arrest of alleged spies

**MANILA:** The Philippines expressed alarm yesterday over the arrest of three Filipinos in China on suspicion of espionage, saying they were ordinary citizens and the arrests could be retaliation for Manila's crackdown against alleged Chinese spies.

Chinese authorities arrested the Filipinos and accused them of working for the Philippine intelligence agency to gather classified information on its military. *China Daily* reported earlier this week, citing state security officials. It said the three had confessed to the crime.

The Philippines' National Security Council disputed Beijing's accusations, saying the three were former recipients of a government scholarship programme created under an agreement between the Chinese province of Hainan and the Philippine province of Palawan.

"They are ordinary Filipino citizens with no military training who went to China at the invitation of the Chinese government to study," National Security Council spokesperson Jonathan Malaya said.

"They are law-abiding citizens with no criminal records and were vetted by the Chinese government."

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not respond to a request for comment. – Reuters

# Modi in Sri Lanka for defence, energy deals

**COLOMBO:** Sri Lanka's leader rolled out the red carpet yesterday for Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as Colombo balances ties with neighbouring giant India and its biggest lender, China.

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake welcomed Modi – the first foreign dignitary to visit Colombo since the leftist leader swept elections last year – with a 19-gun salute.

Dissanayake and Modi are expected to sign agreements on energy, defence and health, but the visit's highlight will be the launch of an Indian-backed 120 megawatt solar power project.

The solar plant on the island's northeastern Trincomalee district had been stalled for years, but reinvigorated with New Delhi's backing as a joint project.

Modi, who praised his "spectacular welcome" to Sri Lanka after arriving in

## Colombo grapples with competing interests of Delhi and Beijing

Colombo late on Friday evening, was given an honour guard parade in the capital's Independence Square.

His visit comes as Colombo grapples with the competing interests of New Delhi and Beijing.

New Delhi has been concerned about China's growing influence in Sri Lanka, which it considers to be within its sphere of geopolitical influence.

Dissanayake's first foreign visit was to New Delhi in December, but he followed that with a visit to Beijing in January, underscoring Sri Lanka's delicate balancing act.

China has emerged as Sri Lanka's largest single bilateral creditor, accounting for more than half of its US\$14 billion

(RM62 billion) bilateral debt at the time the island defaulted on its sovereign debt in 2022.

Beijing was also the first to restructure its loans to Sri Lanka, a move that cleared the way for the island to emerge from that year's worst-ever economic meltdown.

Colombo also signed an agreement announced in January with a Chinese state-owned company to invest US\$3.7 billion on an oil refinery in the island's south.

It would be Sri Lanka's largest single foreign investment and is seen as crucial for the island's economy.

New Delhi has expressed concern over China's growing influence in Sri Lanka.

Modi's visit to Sri Lanka

comes after a summit in Thailand and a string of meetings with leaders of regional nations as he sought to shore up India's relations with neighbours.

On the sidelines of the Bangkok BIMSTEC meeting – the grouping of the seven nations on the Bay of Bengal – Modi held a rare face-to-face meeting with Myanmar's State Administration Council Chairman Min Aung Hlaing.

Modi also held talks on Friday with the interim leader of Bangladesh, Muhammad Yunus, the first such meeting since a revolution in Dhaka ousted New Delhi's long-term ally Sheikh Hasina and soured relations.

India was the biggest benefactor of Hasina's government and her overthrow sent cross-border relations into a tailspin, culminating in Yunus choosing to make his first state visit last month to China. – AFP

## Myanmar quake death toll at 3,354

**BANGKOK:** The death toll from Myanmar's devastating earthquake climbed to 3,354, with 4,850 injured and 220 missing, state media said yesterday, as the visiting UN aid chief praised humanitarian and community groups for leading the aid response.

The leader of the military government, Senior General Min

Aung Hlaing, was back in the capital Naypyidaw after a rare foreign trip to attend a summit in Bangkok of South and Southeast Asian nations, where he also met leaders of Thailand, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and India.

Min Aung Hlaing reaffirmed to Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi the government's plans to hold "free and fair" elections in

December, Myanmar state media said.

Modi called for a post-quake ceasefire in Myanmar's civil war to be made permanent, and said the elections needed to be "inclusive and credible", an Indian foreign affairs spokesperson said on Friday.

Critics have derided the planned election as a sham to

keep the generals in power through proxies.

Since overthrowing the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi in 2021, the military has struggled to run Myanmar, leaving the economy and basic services, including healthcare, in tatters, a situation exacerbated by the March 28 quake.

The civil war that followed the coup has displaced more than 3 million people, with widespread food insecurity and more than a third of the population in need of humanitarian assistance, the UN says.

UN aid chief Tom Fletcher spent Friday night in Myanmar's second-biggest city Mandalay, near the epicentre of the quake, posting on X that humanitarian and community groups had led the response to the quake with "courage, skill and determination".

"Many themselves lost everything, and yet kept heading out to support survivors," he said.

The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights said on Friday the government was restricting aid supplies to quake-hit areas where communities did not back its rule.

The UN office said it was investigating 53 reported attacks by the military, including airstrikes, of which 16 were after the ceasefire was declared on Wednesday.

A government spokesman did not respond to calls seeking comment. – Reuters



Residents sleeping under mosquito nets on the street in Mandalay. – AFP/PIIC

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# Supreme Court lets Trump cut teacher training grants

## Move to dismantle Education Department

**NEW YORK:** The US Supreme Court allowed Donald Trump's administration on Friday to proceed with millions of dollars of cuts to teacher training grants – part of his crackdown on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives – handing the Republican president his first victory at the nation's highest judicial body since he returned to office in January.

The court decided 5-4 to put on hold Boston-based District Judge Myron Joun's March 10 order requiring the Department of Education to reinstate in eight Democratic-led states funding for grants under two teacher training programmes while a legal challenge continues.

Conservative Chief Justice John Roberts and three liberal justices dissented from the decision. The Supreme Court has a 6-3

conservative majority. The three conservative justices who Trump appointed during his first presidential term sided with him in the decision.

The brief and unsigned opinion from the court said that the administration is "likely to succeed in showing the district court lacked jurisdiction to order the payment of money".

The decision marked an early win for Trump after the court previously declined to let him fire a US watchdog agency head or withhold payment to foreign aid groups for past work.

The eight states – California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York and Wisconsin – sued after the Department of Education announced on Feb 17 that it had cut US\$600 million (RM2.6 billion) in teacher training funds that were promoting what it called "divisive ideologies" including diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.

Joun decided that the administration likely violated the Administrative Procedure Act governing federal agency actions given that the Department of Education terminated grants awarded under programmes authorised by Congress without providing analyses of the programmes.

The Teacher Quality Partnership and Supporting Effective Educator grant programmes were established to help support institutions that recruit and train educators in a bid to address critical teacher shortages, especially in rural and underserved communities.

Trump on March 20 signed an executive order as a first step "to eliminate" the Department of Education, making good on a campaign promise. – Reuters



Student protesters hold signs while taking part in the 'Hands Off Our Schools' rally in Washington, DC on Friday. – AFP/IC

## Russell Brand charged with rape

**LONDON:** British police said they charged actor-comedian Russell Brand (pic) on Friday with rape and multiple counts of assault in cases relating to four women between 1999 and 2005.

Brand, who was once one of Britain's most high-profile broadcasters and is the former husband of US pop singer Katy Perry, denied the allegations when they first emerged in 2023 and said he had never had non-consensual sex.

After the charges, Brand said on X that while he had been a fool when he was younger, "what I never was was a rapist. I have never engaged in non-consensual activity".

He started his message by describing the law being used as "a kind of weapon".

Police said Brand, who lives in Oxfordshire, southern England, was charged with one count of rape, one count

of indecent assault, one count of oral rape and two counts of sexual assault.

Brand is due to appear in court for a first hearing on May 2, police said.

In the 2000s, he was a regular on British screens, known for his flamboyant style and appearance. He worked for the BBC and starred in a number of films including *Get Him to the Greek* before marrying Perry in 2010. They divorced 14 months later.

By the early 2020s he had faded from mainstream culture, appearing primarily on his internet channel where he airs his views on US politics and free speech.

In September 2023, he returned to the headlines when the *Sunday Times*

newspaper and Channel 4 TV's documentary show *Dispatches* reported the rape allegations.

They said four women had accused Brand of sexual assaults, including a rape, between 2006 and 2013. London's Met police opened a sex crimes investigation some weeks later.

"These allegations pertain to the time when I was working in the mainstream, when I was in the newspapers all the time, when I was in the movies. And as I've written about extensively in my books, I was very, very promiscuous," he said.

"Now, during that time of promiscuity, the relationships I had were absolutely always consensual." – Reuters



## US Senate passes measure on tax cuts

**WASHINGTON:** The US Senate approved a Republican budget blueprint early yesterday that aims to extend trillions of dollars worth of President Donald Trump's 2017 tax cuts and sharply reduce government spending.

The vote, following an all-night legislative session, unlocks a manoeuvre that will allow Republicans to bypass the Senate's filibuster and pass the tax cuts later this year without Democratic votes.

Non-partisan analysts say the measure, if enacted, would add about US\$5.7 trillion (RM25.3 trillion) to the federal government's debt over the next decade.

Senate Republicans contend the cost is US\$1.5 trillion, saying that the effects of extending existing tax policy that was scheduled to expire at the end of this year should not be counted in the measure's cost.

The measure also aims to raise the federal government's debt ceiling by US\$5 trillion, a move Congress has to make by summer or risk defaulting on US\$36.6 trillion in debt.

It aims to partly offset the deficit-raising costs of tax cuts by cutting spending. Democrats have warned that Republican targets would imperil the Medicaid health insurance programme for low-income Americans.

Republican Senate Budget Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, warned that allowing the 2017 tax cuts to expire would hit Americans hard.

"The average taxpayer would see a 2% tax hike. A family of four making US\$80,610, the median income in the United States, would see a US\$1,695 tax increase," Graham said. – Reuters

## Israeli general condemns settler riot

**RAMALLAH:** The Israeli military's top commander in the occupied West Bank condemned recent violence by Israeli settlers against police and "unacceptable" conduct by soldiers, in a video shared by the army on Friday.

A military statement said that Major General Avi Bluth addressed a "series of unusual incidents" while visiting Israeli police officers in the West Bank, near the site of a riot involving settlers earlier this week.

Israeli police said they had arrested 17 suspects over the "violent riot" on Wednesday near the settlement of Givat Habaladim, northeast of the Palestinian city of Ramallah, during which Israeli settlers threw stones at officers and torched a police car.

Bluth "emphasised that these are exceptional incidents that must be addressed with the necessary severity".

Referring to the settlers' attack on Israeli forces, Bluth said in the video: "Beyond the fact that this is a red line that has been crossed and will be dealt with seriously, there is no greater act of ingratitude."

Rights groups often accuse the army of protecting Israeli settlers in the West Bank, and the United Nations has said that settler attacks against Palestinians are taking place in a climate of "impunity".

In a recent incident Bluth did not address in the video, the army said that this week "dozens of Israeli civilians set fire to property" in Duma, injuring several people.

The general mentioned "vandalism and graffiti" by reserve soldiers during a military raid on Wednesday, in the Dheisheh refugee camp near Bethlehem. – AFP

A close-up portrait of actress Sarimah Ibrahim. She has long, wavy brown hair and is wearing a dark, possibly black, garment. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey.

# theSun<sup>day</sup>

APRIL 6, 2025

## Special

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# Sarimah Ibrahim

Behind the glam



ON SUNDAY APRIL 6, 2025

theSunday Special

# Sarimah Ibrahim: A journey of growth, resilience & purpose

*In this exclusive interview with theSunday Special, she shares her journey, the power of emotional intelligence and what's next – including an exciting new horror film*

**C**HE Puan Sarimah Ibrahim has worn many hats – media personality, actress, TV host and now a passionate advocate for mental health. From Disney Channel to the hit drama *Lelaki Itu*, acting shaped her emotional intelligence and deep understanding of human nature. Today, she's using her voice to break mental health stigmas and drive meaningful change.

**From being a media personality to an actress and now a mental health advocate, how has your journey shaped you as a person?**

My journey has been constantly evolving, with each phase preparing me for the next. I started in entertainment at a young age, working with The Disney Channel, which exposed me to international standards of storytelling and production. From there, my career expanded into TV hosting, radio and acting, including *Lelaki Itu*, a massive hit on TV3 that garnered 11 million viewers and over a billion social media shares.

Acting has taught me much about human nature – the power of vulnerability, the importance of listening and the ability to enter someone else's experience. Hosting has given me the skills to connect with diverse audiences, think on my feet and adapt to any situation. But stepping into mental health advocacy has been the most transformative part of my journey.

Beyond my entertainment career, I studied Psychology and trained as a Transformative Coach, which gave me a deeper understanding of human behaviour, resilience and emotional well-being. Becoming a patron of the Mental Illness Awareness and Support Association (MIASA) and an ambassador for NGO Empati has reinforced my belief that mental health is just as important as physical health. I've had the privilege of speaking with individuals facing real struggles and it has shown me how vital it is to create safe spaces where people can talk openly without fear of judgment. Every effort is worth it if my voice can help even one person feel seen, understood and supported.

**How has your international experience influenced your career and personal growth?**

Living, studying and working internationally, I've learned that growth comes from stepping outside my comfort zone. My early education was at Sekolah Kebangsaan before continuing at Wesley College Dublin. Later, my acting training with renowned coaches like Mel Churcher and Gerry Grennell helped me refine my craft in ways I never imagined. Their guidance shaped my approach to acting, teaching me how to channel authenticity, emotional depth and technical precision in my performances.

Exposure to different cultures and industries has also made me more adaptable. I've worked on sets where I was the only non-native actor or host and I've had to learn to read a room quickly, adjust my approach and stay professional no matter what. That experience reinforced my belief that storytelling – whether through acting, hosting or advocacy – is universal. It transcends language and background and connects us on a human level.

**How has acting influenced your understanding of emotional intelligence?**

Acting is one of the greatest teachers of emotional intelligence. To bring a character to life, you must deeply understand your fears, motivations and emotional triggers. You must also listen – not just to the spoken words but to the silences, body language and what is often unspoken.

That ability to connect deeply with emotion naturally translates into real life. I've learned to regulate my emotions, read situations better and communicate more effectively. Emotional intelligence isn't just about understanding yourself – it's about understanding others, too. Empathy has been my greatest tool in personal relationships, on-set work and advocacy work.

**How do you balance your roles as a mother, mental health advocate and royal family member?**

I'm always working on balance. I don't believe in perfection – only in being present and making intentional choices. My daughter is my heart and she comes first. Motherhood has taught me patience, resilience and the beauty of slowing down.

At the same time, my advocacy work is deeply personal. Seeing how mental health struggles impact families has made me even more determined to participate in the conversation and break the stigma. Being part of the royal family comes with its responsibilities, but it also provides a platform to make a difference and I don't take that lightly.

Of course, my acting career is still evolving. I'm currently working on my first horror film, which is an exciting challenge for me as a performer. Balancing everything involves setting priorities, knowing when to say no and ensuring that I also care for myself while serving others.

**What advice would you give those struggling with mental wellness in today's fast-paced world?**

Struggling with mental wellness in today's fast-paced world is more common than people realise and it's important to acknowledge your feelings. You don't have to have everything figured out all the time and it's perfectly okay not to be okay. Suppressing emotions adds to the burden, so allowing yourself to feel and process what you're going through is a crucial step toward healing.

Seeking support can also make a significant difference. Talking to someone – whether it's a therapist, a trusted friend or a support group – can provide relief and perspective. You are never truly alone, even when it feels that way. Opening up to others can be a powerful way to navigate your challenges.

Staying present is another essential practice. Anxiety often stems from overthinking the future, while depression can keep you stuck in the past. Grounding yourself in the present moment can help ease these struggles. Simple mindfulness techniques, such as deep breathing, meditation or focusing on small daily tasks, can keep you centred and help reduce overwhelming thoughts.





Proud parents to little Tunku Sofia Najihah.



Work mode – calm, clear and on point.



**You are enough. Your productivity, appearance or achievements do not measure your worth. You matter just as you are."**

Sarimah Ibrahim

Taking care of both your mind and body is just as important. Prioritising rest, moving your body in ways that feel good, nourishing your mind with positive input and allowing yourself to enjoy life without guilt can create a strong foundation for mental well-being. Self-care isn't selfish; it's necessary.

Above all, remember that you are enough. Your productivity, appearance or achievements do not define your worth. You matter because you exist. In a world that constantly pushes people to do more and be more, you must remind yourself that who you are right now is already valuable.

**What's next for you? Any exciting projects or initiatives?**

I'm excited about my upcoming horror film. I've never explored this genre before and I can't wait for audiences to experience it. I'm also continuing my work in mental health advocacy, developing initiatives that bridge emotional intelligence with leadership development.

At this stage of my life, I focus on storytelling, impact and leaving a lasting legacy of positive change. Whether through film, advocacy or personal interactions, I want my work to mean something beyond just the moment – it should inspire, uplift and create real conversations.

I'm also expanding my career internationally, working with my London-based agent, Fiona Cross Management, to explore exciting opportunities abroad. While my journey continues to evolve, some things remain constant – I am still emceeing corporate events for clients I've known and worked with for over twenty years. Everything always comes full circle and I'm grateful for the trust and relationships I've built.



**M**ARGOT Lee Shetterly once wrote in *Hidden Figures: The American Dream* that “women had to wield their intellect like a scythe, hacking away against the stubborn underbrush of low expectations.” And indeed, history has proven her right.

Shetterly's 2016 bestseller pulled back the curtain on the untold brilliance of women (particularly Black women) in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM). Women who defied systemic barriers and fought tirelessly for their rightful place in a field that long underestimated them.

The story struck a chord, eventually making its way to the big screen. *Hidden Figures* earned critical acclaim and received Oscar nominations for Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Picture and Best Supporting Actress at the 89th Academy Awards.

At its core, the story reveals an important truth. While men took centre stage in history books, women often did the work that pushed science and technology forward. Their calculations, problem-solving and innovations laid the foundation for breakthroughs that shaped the modern world. They weren't just supporting players; they were architects of progress.

Nearly a decade later, much of what NASA had predicted became reality. Artificial Intelligence, self-driving cars and smart homes have changed the way we live and scientific discoveries continue to push boundaries. But as we celebrate these advancements, a question remains: Who is leading this change? And are women finally getting the credit they deserve?

In Malaysia, a generation of women is making its mark in the traditionally male-dominated STEM fields, proving that innovation knows no gender. Their efforts are transforming industries, reshaping leadership roles and motivating the next generation of female scientists, engineers and technologists.

Names like Florence Tan, who currently serves as Deputy Chief Technologist at NASA's Science Mission Directorate (SMD) after earning an engineering degree from the University of Maryland.

Born in Muar, Johor, Tan developed a passion for space after watching *Star Trek* in the mid-70s. This interest propelled her to secure an internship at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre, where she contributed significantly to developing scientific tools for exploring planets, particularly for Mars missions.

However, much work remains, even with the growing attention paid to celebrating women in the industry. The World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report* notes that while governments and businesses have made progress, their efforts aren't strong or consistent enough to keep up with rapid changes in gender gaps in the workplace, especially in the fast-evolving fields of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

Purnima Wijendra, Head of Artificial Intelligence at Mandrill Tech Sdn Bhd and a Lecturer at UCSI, says the call for women to enter technology careers goes beyond the fight for equality. It is about weaving a richer tapestry of ideas, igniting change and propelling the world toward a future brimming with possibilities.

“The absence of women's perspectives in the tech industry reduces half the world's potential for innovation,” said Wijendra. “Together, we can turn the tide, ensuring that the tech industry becomes a beacon of progress, diversity and equal opportunity for all.”

As part of her commitment to empowering women in the STEM industry, Wijendra co-founded TechSprint Academy, an all-women coding school and launched initiatives like the Kuala Lumpur School of Artificial Intelligence and Pertubuhan Harapan Wanita (HAWA).



Hidden Figures the movie.

## She builds: Honouring women in STEM

BY AQILAH NAJWA JAMALUDDIN

*As technology and innovation advance, how can women's roles strengthen this space?*

These ventures aim to break barriers and create spaces for women to thrive in tech.

She emphasises that organisations, universities and industry leaders must lead in promoting diversity to enable more women to suc-

ceed. A mentor or a supportive figure is crucial for women to thrive in such a competitive field. The journey may be challenging, but with the correct values, women will be recognised and celebrated in their rightful place.

A 2023 Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia study revealed that although women represent a significant segment of STEM students, they are less likely to advance into

senior professional positions.

So, what could be the underlying cause? Is maintaining work-life balance while managing family responsibilities in a fast-paced environment challenging? Or do organisations favour men for advancement opportunities? Despite their demonstrated capabilities, how many companies still lack confidence in women's ability to excel in the industry?

Dato' Seri Dr. Mazlan Othman, Malaysia's first astrophysicist, has always been a trailblazer in space science engineering. She was Director at the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, completing two terms from 1999 to 2002 and 2007 to 2013.

While at the United Nations, she took an unconventional approach to balancing work and family. She shared that she'd often bring her daughter to the office, giving her a glimpse into the world of space science. However, this decision wasn't always well-received, as some saw it as a sign that she couldn't distinguish between work and family life.

Despite her role as a mother, her groundbreaking work ultimately led to the development of the Angkasawan Programme, which resulted in the first Malaysian going to space.

“The real challenge is getting women into the industry and ensuring they stay and thrive in it. Many women leave mid-career due to systemic challenges like lack of mentorship, limited career growth opportunities or the difficulty of balancing personal and professional responsibilities,” shared Wijendra.

She emphasises that support systems don't always have to come from formal programmes. They can come from everyday interactions, leaders who advocate for equitable opportunities and colleagues who uplift each other. Change happens when inclusivity is embedded in company culture, not just policies.

The question isn't always asked outright, but the answer is obvious: We must keep pushing for women to be seen, heard and celebrated in male-dominated industries. And it's not just the responsibility of individuals. Companies and institutions should also drive real change.

Malaysia's STEM scene is evolving fast, and women are taking the lead. From pioneering research to revolutionary innovations, female scientists, engineers and tech leaders are shaping the future.

As the landscape of technology and innovation unfolds, it's important for women to step into the spotlight, break through barriers, and set bold new standards of excellence. That means challenging outdated biases, fostering mentorship and creating equal opportunities. With the proper support, Malaysia can set the stage for a future where she builds, innovates, and leads.



Purnima Wijendra



# Want to live longer and healthier? Focus on these 2 things!

**I**f you've been scrolling through social media or tuning into the latest health podcasts, you might have noticed a common theme surrounding longevity and well-being. You've likely read about diet, mindfulness or the latest superfoods. But what if I told you that the most crucial factors for a longer, healthier life can be narrowed down to two essential pillars?

## The two most reliable predictors of longevity

Renowned physician and researcher Dr Peter Attia is one of the leading figures of Medicine 3.0. According to him, many biomarkers can predict a person's life expectancy. These include whether they have diabetes, smoke, testosterone levels, cholesterol levels, ApoB, BMI, etc. But if you rank and order those biomarkers, VO2 max will be at the top and muscle strength will be directly below it.

### What is VO2 max?

To kick off our discussion, let's unravel the acronym VO2 max. Simply put, VO2 max is the maximum rate at which your body can consume oxygen during intense exercise. It's a strong indicator of your cardiovascular fitness and overall health. The higher your VO2 max, the more oxygen your body can utilise. This translates into better endurance during workouts and daily activities – whether sprinting to catch a bus or chasing after your energetic toddler.

### Why does VO2 max matter?

Now, why should you care about your VO2 max? Studies show that individuals with a higher VO2 max tend to live longer. It's not just about running marathons or competing in triathlons; it's about overall cardiovascular health. A higher VO2 max translates to a healthier heart, better lung function and more efficient metabolism. This leads to lower risks of chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and even some forms of cancer.

In Malaysia, where lifestyle-related diseases are becoming increasingly prevalent, enhancing your VO2 max could be your ticket to a healthier future. It's important to note that improving this number is not solely reserved for fitness fanatics. With some strategic changes to your routine, you can boost your VO2 max and enjoy the long-term benefits – trust me!

### How do you improve your VO2 max?

Let's discuss the million-dollar question: how do you improve your VO2 max? Here are some practical tips that you can easily integrate into your busy life:

1. **Steady-state cardio:** Also known as Zone 2 training, is an activity (such as running, swimming, cycling, dancing, etc.) that elevates your heart rate. You can comfortably hold a conversation while performing it. It is typically 60-70% of your maximum heart rate. According to Dr Attia, this creates your aerobic base and should be the bulk of your VO2 max training.
2. **Incorporate interval training:** While most of your VO2 max training should be spent in Zone 2, you should also incorporate training with higher effort. If you are a beginner, high-intensity interval training (HIIT) can significantly boost your VO2 max. It involves alternating between periods of high-intensity exercise, where you push yourself to maximum effort and periods of lower-intensity activity or rest. For example, maximum-effort sprinting for 30 seconds, followed by a minute of walking or jogging and repeating this cycle for 20-30 minutes. When you are more

BY ASHRAF WAHAB



advanced, you can try the 4x4 protocol. It consists of 4-minute intervals of high-intensity exercise followed by 4 minutes of rest. Because these intervals are more extended than HIIT, the intensity is slightly lower but still challenging and close to maximum effort.

3. **Consistency is key:** You won't see results overnight, so make it a priority to exercise consistently. Dr Attia says this is why VO2 max is at the top of the list. Someone with a high VO2 max has worked hard to achieve it.

### How strong are your muscles?

Moving on to our second pillar: muscle strength. Contrary to popular belief, strength training isn't just for bodybuilders or athletes. In truth, muscle strength is vital for everyone – not just for aesthetics but for longevity.

### Why does muscle strength matter?

As we age, we lose muscle mass – a condition known as sarcopenia. This decline can lead to falls, injuries and reduced mobility. Research indicates that maintaining muscle strength can lead to a healthier life. Strong muscles



support your joints, decrease the risk of injury, and improve your balance and overall function, ensuring you stay active as you age. Additionally, those muscles play a critical role in metabolic health. More muscle means more calorie burn at rest, which can help you manage your weight and improve your overall metabolic profile. Who wouldn't want to boost their metabolism by packing on some muscle?

### How do you build muscle strength?

Let's get into the nitty-gritty: how can you strengthen those muscles? Here are some easy ways to incorporate strength training into your routine:

1. **Start small:** You don't need to become a gym hero overnight. Begin with body-weight exercises like squats, push-ups and lunges. You can add weights or resistance bands to your routine as you gain confidence.
2. **Train major muscle groups:** Aim to work on all major muscle groups at least twice weekly. Use different exercises to target your legs, arms, back and core and create a balanced routine.
3. **Prioritise compound movements:** All-in-one exercises, such as squats, deadlifts, and bench presses, target multiple muscle groups simultaneously. This means you'll make the most of your time at the gym or home.
4. **Progressive overload:** You also need to gradually increase the intensity of your workouts. You can do this in various ways, such as increasing the weights or your workout's pace. As our bodies adapt, workouts become more effortless. Therefore, you must consistently challenge yourself and work harder than last time.
5. **Stay consistent:** Like aerobic training, consistency is essential. Try incorporating resistance training into your routine at least twice weekly. Make it a non-negotiable part of your week, just like your office meetings.
6. **Mind your recovery:** Your muscles need time to heal and grow. Ensure adequate recovery time and give your body what it needs – hydration, nutrition and good sleep. Remember, muscle is built during rest, not just during workouts!

### The perfect balance

Elevating your VO2 max and building muscle strength seems like two separate journeys, but they are interconnected pathways to achieving greater overall health and longevity. Just like in a well-balanced diet, keeping both elements at the forefront of your fitness routine is essential.

As we embrace the hustle and bustle of urban life in Malaysia, prioritising our health can sometimes take a back seat. However, focusing on improving your VO2 max and building muscle strength can set you on the path to a longer, healthier life.

So, let's ditch those fleeting diet fads and trendy supplements! Instead, embrace the simple, practical pillars of longevity – cardiovascular health and muscle strength. The next time you ponder that ultimate question of living longer and healthier, remember: it really can boil down to just two things. Now, go on and get moving! Your future self will thank you for it.

# Myth busted: Common falsehoods people still believe

**I**n today's age of social media and instant information, myths and misinformation spread like wildfire, shaping beliefs and influencing decisions. But what if everything you thought you knew was wrong? Let's set the record straight on five widely believed myths.

## MYTH 1: Humans only use 10% of their brain

**THE TRUTH:** We use virtually all parts of our brain

This myth has been widely circulated in pop culture, often suggesting that if we could unlock the remaining 90%, we'd gain superhuman intelligence or psychic abilities. However, brain imaging studies have repeatedly proven that nearly all regions of the brain are active throughout the day, even when resting.

According to Dr. Barry Gordon, a neurologist at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, "We use virtually every part of the brain and most of it is active almost all the time." The idea that 90% of the brain lies dormant is simply a misinterpretation of early neurological research.

**Evidence:** Functional MRI (fMRI) scans have shown that different brain areas light up during various activities, from problem-solving to daydreaming. The brain is like a complex network – every part has a role and none is "unused."



## MYTH 2: Sugar makes kids hyperactive

**THE TRUTH:** Sugar has no proven link to hyperactivity in children

Many parents believe that too much sugar leads to hyperactivity, tantrums or out-of-control behaviour in children. However, scientific studies have found no direct link between sugar consumption and hyperactivity.

A major review published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* analysed multiple studies and concluded that sugar does not significantly affect children's behaviour or cognitive performance. Instead, the perception of hyperactivity often comes from parental expectations. When parents believe their child has consumed sugar, they're more likely to notice and label normal energetic behaviour as excessive.

**Evidence:** A double-blind study where some children were given sugar and others a placebo found no difference in behaviour – except in how parents perceived their child's energy levels.

## MYTH 3: Goldfish have a three-second memory

**THE TRUTH:** Goldfish can remember things for months

Many people assume that goldfish are forgetful creatures that can't retain information beyond a few seconds. However, research has proven that goldfish have long-term memory and can recall events for weeks, even months.

Studies from Plymouth University in the UK have shown that goldfish can be trained to recognise specific sounds, learn feeding schedules and even navigate mazes. In one experiment, goldfish were trained to press a lever to receive food at a specific time of day – and they remembered the task weeks later.

**Evidence:** Behavioural studies show that goldfish can associate certain cues with rewards, proving they have far more memory capacity than previously believed.



## MYTH 4: Cracking your knuckles causes arthritis

**THE TRUTH:** Cracking your knuckles does not lead to arthritis

Knuckle cracking is often discouraged because it can lead to arthritis. However, no scientific study has ever found a direct connection between the habit and joint disease.

The popping sound that occurs when cracking knuckles is caused by the release of gas bubbles in the synovial fluid, which lubricates the joints. Dr. Donald Unger famously tested this himself – he cracked the knuckles of one hand for 60 years while leaving the other untouched. The result? No arthritis in either hand.

**Evidence:** A study published in *The Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine* found no increased risk of arthritis among habitual knuckle-crackers compared to non-crackers.

## MYTH 5: MSG causes headaches and is bad for your health

**THE TRUTH:** MSG is safe to consume and has no proven link to headaches or long-term health issues

Many Asians grew up hearing that monosodium glutamate (MSG) – a familiar flavour enhancer used in Chinese, Japanese and Malaysian cuisine – causes headaches, dizziness and other health issues. This belief originated from a 1968 letter in a medical journal in which a doctor described feeling sick after eating Chinese food, coining the term "Chinese Restaurant Syndrome." Since then, MSG has been unfairly blamed for various health problems.

However, scientific studies have repeatedly shown that MSG is safe for consumption. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) have all classified it as safe. Some people report headaches and other symptoms likely due to the placebo effect or excessive sodium intake rather than MSG itself.

**Evidence:** A 2016 study published in the journal *Food Science & Nutrition* reviewed multiple research papers and found no conclusive link between MSG and adverse health effects in normal dietary amounts. MSG contains one-third less sodium than table salt, making it a healthier alternative for reducing sodium intake.



# 7 most beautiful mosques in Malaysia

*Malaysia is home to some of the most beautiful mosques in the world!*

BY ASHRAF WAHAB

## Crystal Mosque, Kuala Terengganu

Well-known to locals but still considered a hidden gem for foreign tourists, Kuala Terengganu's Crystal Mosque is a mesmerising sight. Its striking steel and glass structure shines brightly against the Terengganu River. The mosque's unique design fuses traditional Malay and Middle Eastern architectural elements, making it a spectacular sight, particularly at night when the lights illuminate its glass and crystal facade. Visitors are often captivated by the sheer elegance and tranquil ambience of the surroundings, perfect for an evening stroll.



## Sultan Iskandar Mosque, Johor Bahru

The magnificent architecture of the Sultan Iskandar Mosque in Bandar Dato' Onn, Johor Bahru, showcases an exceptional blend of Moorish and Islamic styles, with intricate tile work and elegant minarets drawing the eye. The mosque stands proud in its vibrant surroundings and serves as one of Johor's oldest and most significant mosques. A visit here offers an opportunity for spiritual reflection and allows you to engage with the local community, which often gathers here for various cultural events and festivals.



## Sri Sendayan Mosque, Negeri Sembilan

Nestled in the serene surroundings of Negeri Sembilan, the Sri Sendayan Mosque is a perfect blend of traditional and contemporary design. Opened in 2019, this mosque showcases stunning white marble and intricate craftsmanship. Its serene atmosphere, lush green gardens, and spacious prayer areas provide a perfect retreat for reflection and peace. One of its most admirable features is the grand dome, reminiscent of the great mosques around the world.



## Eight Domes Mosque, Jertih

In the quiet town of Jertih, you'll find the Eight Domes Mosque, known locally as Masjid Lapan Kubah. At first glance, it looks like the St. Basil Cathedral in Moscow. As the name suggests, this mosque boasts eight colourful domes, giving it a unique architectural identity. It is also surrounded by a paddy field, making it an even more distinctive sight. This mosque is lesser known than others but offers a calm retreat away from the hustle and bustle of urban life.



## Chinese Muslim Jamek Mosque, Klang

A fascinating representation of multiculturalism in Malaysia, the Chinese Muslim Jamek Mosque in Klang is a beautiful amalgamation of Chinese architectural influences fused with Islamic design. The mosque's picturesque setting includes ornate arches and intricate wooden carvings that reflect the rich heritage of Chinese culture. It serves as a significant mosque for the Chinese Muslim community in Klang. When you visit, take a moment to appreciate the beautiful blend of traditions, a testament to Malaysia's diversity and harmony.



## Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque, Shah Alam

The Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque, often called the Blue Mosque, is one of Malaysia's largest mosques and an iconic symbol of Shah Alam. Its striking blue and silver dome is the largest in the world, making it a mesmerising sight against the skyline. The mosque combines modern design with traditional elements, featuring beautiful stained glass windows and an expansive prayer hall accommodating thousands of worshippers. A visit here would not be complete without exploring the lush gardens surrounding the mosque—another perfect spot for tranquil reflection.



## Putra Mosque, Putrajaya

Thanks to Chinese social media, the Putra Mosque is a popular spot among Chinese tourists. Fondly known as 'the Pink Mosque,' its location close to Kuala Lumpur has also contributed to its popularity. Dominating the skyline with its striking pink domes and elegant minarets, the mosque is a landmark of Islamic architecture. Built from rose-tinted granite, it features intricate domes and stunning calligraphy adorning its walls. Surrounding the mosque is the picturesque Putrajaya Lake, making it a perfect backdrop for photographs.



VIII

ON SUNDAY APRIL 6, 2025

theSunday Special

# Crafting wellness in every bite

Discover the brands revolutionising pet nutrition in Malaysia with tailored recipes, natural ingredients and sustainable practices

## Tailored nutrition for Malaysian pets: Royal Canin

Royal Canin's dedication to tailored nutrition has earned it a loyal following among Malaysian pet owners. It addresses the specific needs of cats and dogs with precision and care. Its breed-specific formulas are designed to meet the unique physiological requirements of different breeds, ensuring optimal health. For instance, the Poodle Adult formula features specialised kibble that promotes dental health, catering to the breed's susceptibility to dental issues.

Maintaining a pet's skin and coat health is a top priority in Malaysia's tropical climate. Royal Canin's nutrition solutions incorporate essential fatty acids and other nutrients to support a healthy coat and minimise skin irritation caused by humidity. Their life-stage approach ensures that pets receive appropriate nutrition throughout their lives – puppies and kittens benefit from high-energy formulas rich in essential nutrients. In contrast, senior pets receive joint support and targeted health benefits for aging-related needs.



## PledgeCare: Natural nutrition with a local touch

PledgeCare is a proud Malaysian brand redefining pet nutrition with its commitment to natural, wholesome and locally sourced ingredients. Focused on ensuring pets' health and happiness, the brand offers air-dried dog food and treats with a high meat content devoid of artificial additives, preservatives or fillers.

The air-drying process, a hallmark of PledgeCare's approach, preserves the nutritional integrity of the ingredients while enhancing flavour and shelf life. This method ensures that pets receive the benefits of raw feeding without the complexities of preparation or risks associated with spoilage. Each recipe includes a balanced mix of proteins, vegetables and essential nutrients, making it suitable for dogs of all breeds and sizes.

One of the brand's standout features is its commitment to sustainability and community. By sourcing ingredients locally, PledgeCare supports Malaysian farmers while reducing its operations' environmental footprint. Additionally, a portion of every sale is directed toward animal welfare initiatives, reflecting the company's dedication to giving back to the community.



## Natural Balance: Simplified nutrition for sensitive pets

Natural Balance has earned its reputation as a go-to brand for pet owners seeking reliable nutrition for pets with food sensitivities or allergies. Its range of Limited Ingredient Diets (LID) is specially crafted to reduce the risk of triggering adverse reactions, focusing on simplicity and quality without compromising essential nutrients.

Each Natural Balance formula includes a single protein source, such as salmon, duck or lamb, paired with a limited number of easily digestible carbohydrates, like sweet potatoes or brown rice. This minimalist approach ensures pets with sensitive stomachs or allergies can enjoy safe and nourishing meals.

The brand's dedication to transparency is a highlight. Every bag of food is rigorously tested and pet owners can access test results online for added peace of mind. This commitment to quality and accountability sets Natural Balance apart in the pet food market.



## Orijen: Biologically appropriate nutrition for pets

Orijen has set a benchmark in pet nutrition by crafting biologically appropriate foods that closely mirror the natural diet of cats and dogs. Renowned globally, Orijen emphasises fresh regional ingredients and prioritises high-protein, low-carbohydrate recipes that align with the dietary needs of carnivorous pets.

Each Orijen formula is designed to include WholePrey™ ratios, incorporating fresh meat, organs, cartilage and bone to balance nutrients naturally. This approach eliminates the need for synthetic additives, ensuring pets receive essential vitamins and minerals through wholesome, unprocessed ingredients. Orijen guarantees quality while supporting sustainable farming and fishing practices by using ingredients like free-range chicken, wild-caught fish and cage-free eggs.

Orijen's commitment to freshness is evident in its sourcing. Ingredients are delivered to its kitchens daily, ensuring exceptional quality in every batch. The company's freeze-drying process further retains the nutritional integrity of raw ingredients, offering pets the benefits of raw feeding without compromising safety.



## ACANA: Wholesome nutrition rooted in nature

Acana stands out in the pet food industry for its commitment to providing balanced, nutrient-rich recipes that cater to pets' natural dietary needs. Known for its use of high-quality, locally sourced ingredients, Acana focuses on creating biologically appropriate diets inspired by the whole prey concept, ensuring pets receive a balanced mix of meat, organs and bones in their meals.

What sets Acana apart is its emphasis on diversity in its recipes. From free-run poultry and grass-fed lamb to wild-caught fish, every ingredient is carefully selected to offer variety and optimal nutrition. By incorporating fresh fruits, vegetables and botanicals, Acana provides a holistic approach to pet health, supporting digestion, immunity and overall vitality.

Acana's commitment to quality is evident in its ingredient sourcing. The brand works closely with trusted farmers, fishers and ranchers to ensure freshness and sustainability. Its recipes avoid artificial additives, fillers and grains.



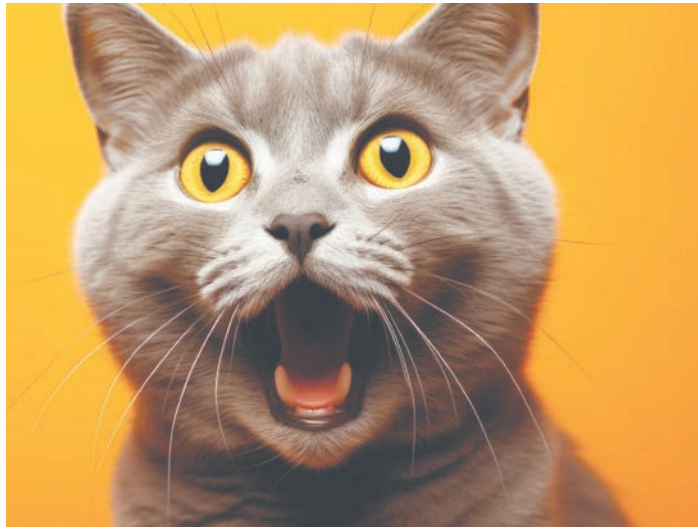
**THEY'RE** cuddly, they're loyal, and they don't roll their eyes at our jokes; no wonder we love our pets. But behind the pet selfies, gourmet biscuits and tiny raincoats, there's a quiet question echoing louder in recent years: Are we giving our pets the life they deserve or the one that suits us best?

Let's be honest. Most of us didn't grow up with pets who had electric water fountains and lavender-scented grooming wipes. A bowl, a leash and maybe the occasional flea bath were the extent of the toolkit. But things have changed. Today, pets are more than companions – lifestyle accessories, social media content and emotional support. And while there's nothing wrong with showering love on a creature who can't even pronounce your name, it's worth checking if our love has started to look more like control.

The pandemic played a big part in shifting how we view pets. Locked indoors, with little human contact, many turned to animals for comfort. But five years on, we've re-emerged into our busy lives – and not everyone has managed the transition gracefully. Some pets, once the centre of attention, are now left alone for hours as owners return to office life. Animal shelters have seen a new kind of surrender: not due to cruelty, but sheer overwhelm. Turns out, a living, breathing animal doesn't just sit still like your decorative fern.

#### Apartment life: Not quite animal kingdom

There's also the matter of space. Urban homes are shrinking, but our pet dreams remain large. You've got huskies doing laps in studio flats, cats climbing Ikea wardrobes instead of trees, and parrots who've never seen sunlight.



**“There's a line between affection and projection. It's lovely to love your pet, but part of that love should include understanding what makes them tick. And recognise that their needs and preferences might not always mirror ours.”**

## Paws and reflect!

*A not-so-fluffy look at modern pet ownership – are we getting it right or just doing what feels right for us?*

Animals aren't meant to sit still all day. Dogs need to sniff, run and sometimes roll in things we'd rather not discuss. Cats need to scratch, explore and judge things from high places. Keeping them cooped up might be convenient, but it isn't always kind. And no, buying them a toy that makes squeaky sounds is not the same as a proper walk or sunlight. If we choose to keep animals in unnatural environments, we owe them a little

extra – more stimulation, attention and freedom where possible.

Pet gadgets are having their moment – smart collars that track activity, cameras that toss treats, even buttons for your dog to “talk” to you (though most just seem to press “treat” repeatedly). While these can make life easier, they're not substitutes for actual time together.

A dog doesn't care if your feeder is smart; it wants you to throw the ball. A cat may

enjoy an automatic laser pointer but still prefers a warm lap. Technology can support pet care but can't replace your presence – not yet, anyway.

#### The fur baby syndrome

Then there's the “my pet is my child” mindset. It's understandable. Pets provide emotional support without the drama of human relationships. But things get murky when we start treating animals like mini humans rather than animals.

Feeding a dog a vegan diet because it aligns with your personal ethics may feel virtuous, but it may also leave the dog nutritionally deficient. Dressing cats in costumes for Instagram might bring you likes, but it might also make them deeply uncomfortable.

There's a line between affection and projection. It's lovely to love your pet, but part of that love should include understanding what makes them tick. And recognise that their needs and preferences might not always mirror ours.

#### Tough calls and quiet guilt

Pet ownership isn't all cuddles and paw prints. Eventually, it comes with tough decisions. When pets get sick or old, we face the dilemma of treatment versus quality of life. Modern veterinary care is incredible, but it's also expensive – and emotionally draining.

Prolonging life can sometimes mean prolonging suffering. Some people push for every treatment available, not out of cruelty, but because they can't imagine life without their pet. Others opt for early euthanasia, worried about pain and stress. There's no correct answer, but there is a proper question: Are we doing this for them or us?

Talking openly with vets, asking hard questions and listening to what our pets tell us can lighten these choices' weight. It's not about being perfect; it's about being honest.

#### Think before you adopt

Impulse adoptions are like impulse tattoos; they can be meaningful, but they can also leave a “mark” you weren't ready for. None of this is to say that pet ownership is wrong, far from it. For many people, a pet brings healing, connection and joy. The bond between humans and animals is ancient, beautiful and deeply real.

But if we take responsibility for another life, we owe it more than snacks and toys. We owe it awareness, effort and empathy. Our pets may not speak our language, but they show us what they need through every tail wag, purr and gentle nudge.





ON SUNDAY APRIL 6, 2025

theSunday Special

# Fresh faces: Spring beauty essentials

*From Ouessant honey to Japanese zinc, spring's skincare is all about timeless radiance and renewal*

**A**S March wraps up with its blustery winds, we're gearing up for the sunny April. Although Malaysia doesn't experience the charm of spring, international brands continue to present their latest offerings to embrace the refreshing air. For beauty enthusiasts, numerous brands have launched exciting new products to help us stay on trend for the changing season.



## Sol de Janeiro, Delicia Drench™ Body Care Collection

Your shower experience just got a whole lot more delicious with Sol de Janeiro's new Delicia Drench Body Care Collection. At the heart of the line is the luxurious Delicia Drench Shower Oil, which effortlessly transforms into a rich, oil-to-foam lather, leaving your skin irresistibly soft and subtly infused with the uplifting Cheirosa 59 fragrance.

Keep the freshness going with the Rio Deo Aluminium-Free Deodorant, which not only masks odour but eliminates it, leaving you smelling like vanilla bliss all day. For ultimate indulgence on the go, the Delicia Drench Jet Set is your travel must-have. It features 24-hour moisture-locking body butter and a chic Jet Set bag.



## Tatcha, Brightening Collection

Citrusy delights are a timeless go-to for radiant skin, especially when the weather is hot. Enter Tatcha's new Brightening Collection, a fusion of innovation and tradition. Inspired by the Japanese philosophy of kagayaki, this range enhances the skin's natural glow with a luxurious blend of Japanese plum (nanko ume), celebrated for its brightening benefits, alongside Ferulic Acid and the Pro-Glutathione Antioxidant Booster.

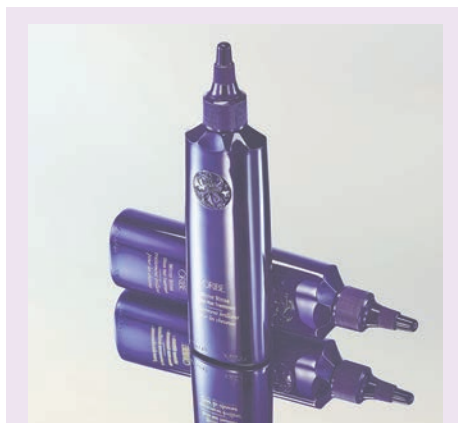
These powerhouse ingredients refine the skin's tone, fortify its barrier and restore youthful, radiant vitality. Developed by the Tatcha Institute in Tokyo, this cutting-edge formula features a 12-hour time-release vitamin C that ensures a gradual, long-lasting radiance.



## Ultra Violet, Future Fluid SPF 50+

While the future may be uncertain, Ultra Violet's Future Fluid SPF 50+ offers the perfect shield against surprises. This ultra-light mineral serum delivers broad-spectrum protection from harmful UV rays and premature ageing, leaving your skin with a flawless, natural finish.

This fragrance-free and non-greasy skincare gem infuses cutting-edge Zinc from Japan. It offers a silky, weightless texture and robust UVA and UVB defence. Enriched with Vitamin E, Squalane and Pentavitin®, it nourishes and strengthens your skin's barrier for a radiant complexion.



## Oribe, Mirror Rinse Glass Hair Treatment

Glossy hair is more coveted than ever, and the "glass hair" trend has officially taken centre stage. Oribe's Mirror Rinse Glass Hair Treatment is the ultimate solution, offering intense hydration that instantly boosts shine and leaves locks soft and luminous.

Its lightweight formula smooths the cuticle with Glass Hair Technology in just under a minute, delivering a flawless, mirror-like finish to even the duller strands. Inspired by high-end skincare, the salon-quality ingredients hydrate and enhance shine, while a plant-based hydration complex locks in moisture without weighing hair down.



## KraveBeauty, Plumptuous Lip Jelly

She plumps, she hydrates and she lasts. KraveBeauty has launched what's set to be every girl's next best friend: the Plumptuous Lip Jelly. This new product is packed with skin-mimicking ingredients that hydrate your lips and deliver a pop of colour for the perfect pout.

Even more interesting is that the lip jelly is made with upcycled plum oil to nourish, MaxiLip Peptide to firm and smooth and Triolein to help the ingredients penetrate deeper. It is available in four shades: Iced Persimmon (Coral), Guava Blush (Pink), Cherry Cola (Brown) and Acai Dream (Plum). The formula boasts a silky, feather-light texture that glides on effortlessly.



## Guerlain, Youth Water Oil Serum

Since 2010, Guerlain has meticulously studied over 300 honey samples from around the globe, solidifying its place as a leader in honey-based skincare. Guerlain's Abeille Royale Youth Watery Oil Serum celebrates honey's extraordinary reparative power. Guerlain has chosen three rare black bee honeys for this exceptional serum, each known for its unparalleled healing properties: Ouessant honey.

Brimming with over 100 potent phytochemical compounds, these kinds of honey provide anti-ageing benefits, while Guerlain's signature royal jelly enhances skin regeneration. The result? A silky-smooth, deeply nourished complexion that radiates timeless youth.

**L**AST year, fashion experts predicted that maximalism would take a backseat, giving way to minimalism, simplicity and the less-is-more philosophy. So, it's no surprise that most fashion brands have quickly adopted this shift, unveiling their latest collections with soft pastel hues that seamlessly embody the refined, pared-back aesthetic of the season.



#### CORPORATE IT-GIRL

G2000 and *Tudung Fazura*, the brainchild of celebrity entrepreneur Nur Fazura Sharifudin, have unveiled the *Sauve Black Label* collection, a stylish collaboration to enhance women's corporate fashion. Made from matte satin fabric, the collection showcases 10 unique scarf designs in gentle hues that embody the fusion of traditional and modern styles suitable for the workplace. Each piece, from striking yellow to soft pink, pays homage to female leaders. The *Sauve Black Label* collection is essential for any professional attire, whether worn for formal business meetings or as a chic neck scarf to elevate a power suit.



#### ACE OF SPADES

Kate Spade New York welcomes the season with soft pastels, florals and simplicity. This lineup adds a touch of magic and effortlessly elevates any outfit. The Deco collection returns with its clean, rectangular shape and signature K hardware, featuring unexpected fabrications like eyelet embroidery on leather and tweed in pastel shades.

The Grace bag, on the other hand, is reimagined with quilted leather in a Spring palette of neutrals and pastels. Meanwhile, the 1993 classic Sam returns as a mini tote made from 100% recycled nylon and a canvas shoulder bag inspired by the archives. The collection features subtle pastel shades like serenity blue, yellow sesame, blush cloud pink, white dove, black and the brand's signature green – timeless yet fresh.

#### LANDED IN JAPAN

Inspired by Japanese fashion traditions and its historical archives, Levi's introduces the Blue Tab collection. This collection seeks to transform the perception of denim by blending contemporary styles with ongoing trends.

The collection prominently features indigo-dyed denim, a nod to Japan's Edo-period aizome technique, which serves as a thematic foundation. The Marker loose jeans, made from lightweight denim, pair perfectly with the effortlessly designed Scout Jacket, created in collaboration with Japan's esteemed Kaihara Denim Mill. Classic dark-wash styles like the 511 and 502 jeans return, alongside standout items such as the Fishtail Parka and the cropped, tailored Blue Tab Type 1 Jacket.

In the women's segment, the collection combines denim tailoring with a feminine touch. A blazer and wide-leg trouser ensemble signals a new era of empowerment. The Type 1 Trucker Jacket and Seamed Skirt provide comfortable options for various occasions. While Americana looks to the future of Japanese culture, Levi's continues to be deeply influenced by the craftsmanship and artistry of the Land of the Rising Sun.



## Keep it minimal

*This season in fashion, expect everything in pastel and minimalist*



#### MAY THE FORCE BE WITH YOU

Luxury French jewellery brand FRED has entered a bold new chapter with the launch of *Force 10 Rise*, a collection that embodies the maison's creative spirit and the founder's profound connection to the sea.

Building on the iconic Force 10 High Jewellery set, this collection takes a sophisticated leap forward. It fuses the emblematic cable and buckle, now elevated with a diamond pavé and a line of diamonds, offering a striking balance of organic curves and geometric precision. Crafted in pink or white gold, the three rows create a harmonious interplay of delicate strength.

The piece exudes undeniable charisma on the finger, while a new necklace adds versatility – it can be worn solo or layered for an added statement. Two pairs of earrings – half-moon or hoop designs – complement the collection and offer a contemporary twist. Whether worn alone or stacked, each piece bursts with modernity, making *Force 10 Rise* a joyful celebration of elegance and innovation.

#### STEP IT UP!

Carlo Rino's latest shoe collection offers the perfect finishing touch to complete your spring wardrobe ensemble. Inspired by the soft elegance of blooming gardens and a hint of vintage glamour, this season's designs invite you to embrace timeless femininity and classic beauty from the charming *Ribbonette Ballerinas*, which let you express your playful side, to the *Patrice Bow Pumps*, which elevate your everyday appeal, a design suits every personality.

For those who prioritise comfort alongside style, the *Roadline Snicker* offers exceptional ease with its modern cushioned sole. Whether preparing for a special event or wanting to elevate your everyday style, you'll find pieces that make your spring outfits stylish and comfortable!



I never planned on a career in advertising – I more or less sneaked in through the back door. In fact, I gatecrashed the industry thanks to a classic case of mistaken identity (and an opportunistic streak). One day, a friend of mine, Malkeet, mentioned that a big agency was interested in hiring him. Rather than remind them which turbaned Sikh they had actually approached, I decided to show up to the interview as if I were him. Gutsy? Yes. Ethical? Debatable. But sometimes, in advertising, you create your own luck – or in my case, your own identity!

To my surprise, the agency didn't bother checking my non-existent advertising credentials. Four years of tending bar and singing folk rock didn't exactly scream "future ad exec", but nobody asked – and I certainly didn't volunteer that information. I was hired on the spot as a "Creative Assistant" (a fancy title for coffee brewer and slide projector operator) for the princely sum of RM250 a month.

Once inside, I played the role with gusto. I lugged around the bulky 35mm slide projector for presentations, made excellent coffee (a vital skill in any office) and leaned in on every discussion I could. I began volunteering snappy headline ideas to any creative who would listen or even within earshot. Most importantly, I soaked up knowledge like a sponge at every opportunity. If I was going to bluff my way in, I needed to back it up with real skills – fast.

#### Rising to the occasion

Luck favours the bold (or the audacious impostor). A few months into my "undercover" gig, fate threw a curveball: a mass exodus of creative staff. Almost overnight, the creative department went from bustling to practically barren. Suddenly, it was just two harried art directors and yours truly left to hold down the fort. In the ad world, when you're thrown in the deep end, you either sink, swim, or learn to walk on water. I paddled like mad.

With too much work and not enough people, I had the chance to step up from coffee jockey to idea guy. I poured my energy into every brief, brainstorming as my job depended on it – because it did. When awards season rolled around, I found my name listed on over 20 creative awards. Not bad for a newbie who'd bluffed his way through the door!

Legend has it that my old friend Malkeet (remember him?) came over to congratulate the team's success on that awards night. Our managing director made a double-take – rumour has it that was the exact moment he realised I wasn't the guy they intended to hire. But it was too late to toss me out: I'd already made myself indispensable (and moderately famous in our small circle).

#### Opportunity makes the Rainmaker

That wild entrance into advertising taught me a lesson: sometimes, opportunity doesn't knock – it tricks someone else into opening the door, and you dash in behind them. Unorthodox as it was, my start in the industry proved that breaking the rules (or at least bending them) can pay off, provided you're ready to deliver results. In hindsight, I wouldn't recommend identity theft as a job-hunting strategy for everyone – but I have to admit, it gave me one heck of an origin story (and a career I wouldn't trade for anything).



## How a mistaken identity launched my career!

BY HARMANDAR SINGH

#### Key takeaways:

- Don't wait for permission to pursue your passion — be proactive to get your foot in the door. Waiting for the perfect opportunity or an official invitation can lead to stagnation. Instead, take the initiative to create your own opportunities. This might involve unconventional methods and bold actions that demonstrate your enthusiasm and determination, which are highly valued qualities in any industry.
- Once you're in, work like crazy to prove you deserve to be there. Hustle, learn and contribute beyond your job title. Securing a position is just the beginning. To truly excel, it's essential to go above and beyond the basic requirements of your role. This means continuously seeking new learning opportunities, volunteering for additional projects and consistently demonstrating a strong work ethic. By doing so, you not only enhance your skill set but also position yourself as an invaluable team member.
- Turn lucky breaks into lasting success by making yourself valuable. When opportunity lands in your lap, grab it and run. Luck can present unexpected opportunities, but it's up to you to capitalise on them. This involves recognising these moments and taking swift, decisive action. You can transform a fortunate break into sustained success by aligning your skills and passions with these opportunities. Moreover, maintaining a positive attitude and being open to new experiences can increase the likelihood of encountering such lucky breaks.



*This series is based on Harmandar Singh's Rainmaker book. A seasoned advertising veteran and marketing expert, he has spent decades making brands and people famous (and sometimes furious).*



# theSun Motoring

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## Korean splendour

New Sportage once again shows why it is a force to be reckoned with

BY KESHY DHILLON

**THE** advent of Chinese cars has claimed many victims, most of them from legacy brands.

But that is not necessarily a bad thing because every once in a while, the market needs a real shake-up and more often than not, it is the buyers that wins.

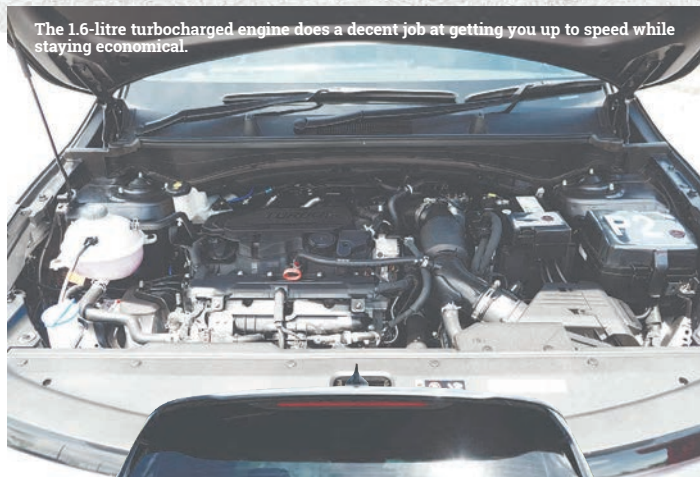
While there was a time when Korean cars did most of the market shake ups with their bold designs, futuristic interiors and technologies, now it is the Chinese that are doing the shaking.

But while the Chinese variants do have their strengths, particularly in terms of specifications and pricing, the Koreans have their own as well.

I remember a time when car buyers were skeptical about Korean cars. They had everything you would want in a car, and arguably drove pretty well, but the market sentiments were against them particularly the used value and reliability.

But times have changed, and though it is the Chinese that are dominating the headlines these days, cars like the latest generation Kia Sportage, which you see here, remind us of how far Kia has come, and what it has achieved over the years.

The 1.6-litre turbocharged engine does a decent job at getting you up to speed while staying economical.



### A little perspective

The Sportage was first introduced to the Malaysian market around 1998. It went up against the establishment, particularly the Honda CRV, Suzuki Vitara and the Toyota RAV4.

As you could probably imagine, the competition was fierce, but Kia and its local distributor stood by its guns.

The Sportage held its own with its spaciousness, ease of driving and creature comforts.

While the competition was tough and the early years was undoubtedly rough, the Sportage found a fanbase.

Fast forward a couple of years and the Kia Sportage is a staple model in its segment. Having survived global economic meltdowns, the Asian financial crisis and other turmoil, the Sportage is now one of the "regulars". The newcomers though have it squarely in its sights.

### Game changer

The Kia Sportage that arguably cemented Kia's reputation as a serious contender is the third-generation model.

This was the model designed by Peter

A spare wheel is a must and the Sportage has one.



LED lights all around are to be expected these days.





The dash is simple, elegant and well executed.



This screen doubles as your air-conditioning controls and audio controls, all at the touch of a button.



You get a collection of Type A and Type C USB ports.



Gears are selected by rotating the large dial.



There are rear air-conditioning vents and USB ports as well.

Schreyer; a legendary automotive designer who moved from Audi to Kia in 2006, and who has been credited for creating the car that some say changed automotive design forever with the original Audi TT.

The third-generation Sportage made people stand up and take notice. It had everything that more expensive cars had but at a fraction of the price. Sound familiar?

The Sportage changed the SUV C-segment and made life difficult for the established players. In fact, one would argue that the third-generation Sportage marked Kia's arrival from an also-ran to a force to be reckoned with – in Malaysia, at least.

#### Enter the latest Sportage

Dinamikjaya Motors Sdn Bhd introduced the fifth-generation Sportage in December of 2024 – at the Kuala Lumpur International Mobility Show, to be exact.

The new Sportage is available in four variants, all of which are locally assembled in Kulim.

The prices of the new Sportage range from RM147,218.60 for the entry level 2.0G 2WD variant to RM186,899 for the top of the line 1.6T AWD High.

We received the pre-facelift model, which is what all of our neighboring countries received as well. The newer facelifted model is only available in South Korea for now and will take time to reach all other markets.

We recently drove the top-of-the-line variant, and in typical Sportage fashion, it checks all the boxes.

#### So, how is it like?

Let's start by addressing the elephant in the room, its design. Kia is known for its outlandish designs, and it delivered once again.

It is my personal belief that a design is always subjective, a personal matter.

But I think we can all agree that the design

what buyers want these days.

So, any infotainment screen smaller than 10-inches puts the car at the shorter end of the stick.

Thankfully then, the Turbo variants of the Sportage (those powered by the 1.6-litre engine), come with massive 12.3-inch infotainment screen and another 12.3-inch instrument cluster.

This combined 24.6-inch curved screen is huge, and it is horizontally mounted rather than vertically.

manageable.

It is these simple things that make a world of difference, and that is what makes the new Sportage quite special.

#### How does it drive?

We drove the top of the line 1.6 Turbo High spec model. This variant is powered by a 1.6-litre, four-cylinder, turbocharged model which sends its power to all four wheels through a seven-speed dual-clutch transmission.

Power on the other hand is rated at 177hp @ 5,500rpm and 265Nm @ 1,500rpm.

And while this isn't exactly on par with some of the competition, it is good enough to get you well past cruising speed on the highway.

It is also worth noting right now that the instrument cluster also doubles up as a blind spot display. This is a technology that has been in the market for a while, but it is only available in Kias and Hyundais for now.

This is where the rpm dial on the digital cluster shows you what's on either the right or the left of the car when you turn on the indicator.

It corresponds to the direction of the signal, i.e., it shows you what's on the right when you indicate right and vice versa.

This works in conjunction with the blind spot monitoring and is a fantastic little detail that makes life simpler and safer behind the wheel.

And no, no other car maker has managed to replicate it, though that may just be a matter of time.

The other thing that is worth mentioning is the refinement of the Sportage.

The interior is a good place to be if you want to just sit in silence and gather your thoughts. It is quiet and remains so up until 120kph.

Suspension is great as well, with the MacPherson struts and multi-links soaking up everything yet providing you with good control of the car at high speed. In fact, there is little to complain about at all.

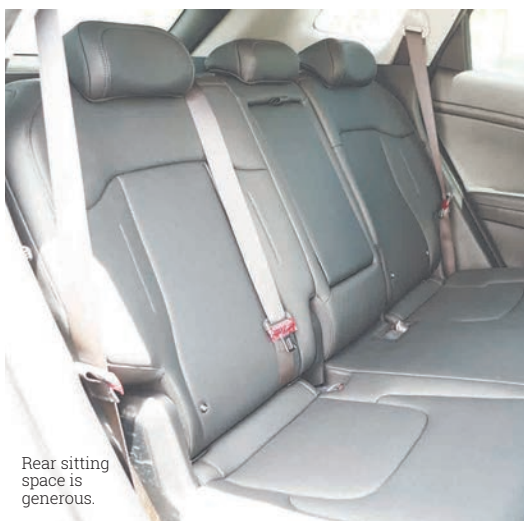
#### The verdict?

As good as the Sportage is, buyers will naturally compare it against the competition, and the price of the flagship variant is quite steep when you compare it against the Chinese offerings.

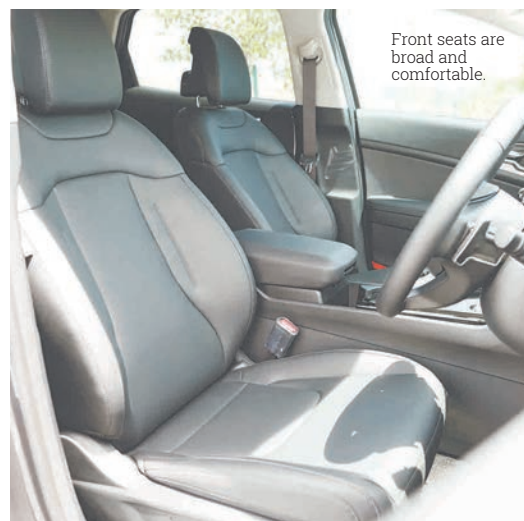
But the Sportage can hold its own if you can look past the skin-deep features of the competition. It looks good, drives well, has tech that is relevant in the real world, and is spacious, as well as refined too.

And the best part is the five-year warranty and five-year service package that actually lasts as long as they say it will, with nothing hidden away in the fine print.

For that alone, it should be up there in your consideration list.



Rear sitting space is generous.



Front seats are broad and comfortable.

of the Sportage is bound to turn heads, for good or bad. For me, it is for good as I quite like how it looks.

The interior on the other hand is up for debate. There is nothing particularly wrong with it, I don't mind it. In fact, I think the interior has everything you need in a modern SUV.

But the reason why it is up for debate is because of Chinese cars, and to a degree, Tesla.

You see, cars from Chinese makers as well as Tesla have normalised gigantic infotainment screens.

You may argue that big screens are distracting and inconvenient and such, but the fact is gargantuan screens sell. And that is

And the icing on this cake is that it comes with user friendly software (including Carplay and Android Auto), and this is something that a number of its competitors mentioned above are still grappling with.

In fact, it also has unique family-friendly features such as a Quiet Mode which turns off the speakers at the rear of the car so passengers can take a nap without music blaring.

This can be handy considering you get a premium eight-speaker Harmon Kardon sound system which can be quite fun on the road.

This is something you can expect from car makers who have been building cars for decades, they seem to understand human

ergonomics a lot better than the newer ones.

I also really appreciate the fact that it comes with physical buttons for all the important controls such as air-conditioning, audio volume and drive mode selector.

It is a little sad that we have come to a time where we glorify simple buttons, but these are important to have as they enhance safety by reducing distractions.

Interior spaciousness is great as well, typical of a SUV of this segment. And the other thing that I really appreciate about the Sportage is that they have louvers at the back of the headrests of the front seats.

This may not seem like a big deal, but if you have kids, these louvers are perfect to slot an iPad into, making long distance trips more

#### SPECIFICATIONS

Engine: Gamma II, 1.6-litre, 4-cylinder, D-CVVT  
Transmission: 7-speed, dual-clutch (e-shift)

Power: 177hp @ 5500rpm

Torque: 265Nm @ 1500rpm

**Price (as tested): RM186,899 (Flagship)**

We like: Design, interior features, spaciousness.

We don't like: Gloss back interior trim.

**JAECOO MALAYSIA** is reinforcing its presence as a challenger SUV brand with the preview of the Jaecoo J8, the fourth model to join its expanding portfolio.

The J8, a premium off-road SUV, is designed to offer a combination of style, luxury, and high-performance capabilities

seater layout.

Designed to handle both urban and off-road environments, the J8 AWD variant is equipped with Jaecoo's Continuous Damping Control (CDC) technology for enhanced suspension performance.

Additionally, it boasts a 450mm wading depth, making it well-suited for rugged terrains.

## Style, luxury & performance

Jaecoo J8 join expanding portfolio of premium off-road SUVs

tailored for the Malaysian market.

The Jaecoo J8 is powered by a 2.0-litre turbocharged direct-injection inline-four engine, producing 246hp and 385Nm of torque.

The engine is paired with an 8-speed automatic transmission and features twin exhaust pipes, delivering enhanced efficiency and performance.

The J8 will be available in two variants: the Two-Wheel Drive (2WD) model configured as a five-seater and the All-Wheel Drive (AWD) model, which offers a six-

The SUV offers a spacious and luxurious interior with advanced technological features.

The 2WD model provides a boot capacity of 738 liters, while the AWD variant offers 200 liters.

Both variants come equipped with a 12.3-inch media display and a 540° panoramic camera, along with variant-specific premium features.

The 2WD is fitted with a 12-speaker Sony sound system, six airbags, ambient lighting, and faux leather upholstery.

Meanwhile, the AWD variant

upgrades to a 14-speaker Sony sound system with headrest speakers, 10 airbags, power doors, and an automatic fragrance system.

The SUV incorporates NFC (Near Field Communication) technology for seamless keyless entry. The driver's seat is ventilated, ensuring greater comfort during long drives.

Additionally, driver visibility and safety are enhanced with a built-in digital video recorder (DVR) and auto-park capabilities.

To further elevate passenger comfort, both the front and second-

row seats in the J8 are electronically adjustable with massage functionality and curtain shades.

The AWD variant also features genuine leather upholstery and suede panel trimmings for a more refined experience.

The Jaecoo J8 2WD is estimated to be priced around RM195,000, while the AWD six-seater variant is expected to be available at approximately RM220,000.

The 2WD model is offered in single-tone colour options, including Carbon Crystal Black, Khaki White, and Olive Grey, while

the AWD variant features dual-tone versions of the same colours.

Jaecoo Malaysia is showcasing its latest technology, including its Plug-in Hybrid Vehicle (PHEV) advancements at the Jaecoo J8 preview roadshows which will allow visitors to explore the SUV firsthand.

With the introduction of the Jaecoo J8, the brand continues to solidify its position in Malaysia's competitive SUV market, offering consumers a sophisticated blend of off-road capability and premium comfort.



## Nissan's new models and tech for 2025/26

**NISSAN** Motor Co. Ltd. has announced an extensive lineup of new and refreshed models set to debut in the fiscal years (FY) 2025 and 2026, alongside the introduction of next-generation technologies.

These advancements aim to elevate the company's performance, strengthen customer loyalty, attract new buyers, enhance profitability, and promote sustainable growth.

### LEAF Crossover

A major highlight is the third-generation Nissan LEAF, which has been completely reimagined as a sleek and spacious family-friendly crossover. The redesigned model features improved aerodynamics and a more advanced EV architecture, ensuring greater efficiency and driving performance. For the first time, it will be available with 19-inch alloy wheels and a panoramic moonroof.

### Next-Gen e-POWER hybrid system

Nissan's third-generation e-POWER hybrid technology is set to make a significant impact with notable improvements in efficiency, economy, and refinement. Since its introduction in 2016, over 1.6 million units of e-POWER vehicles have been produced. At the core of this advancement is a new 1.5-litre engine, specifically designed for e-POWER, as well as a 5-in-1 system that shares core components with Nissan's latest EV powertrain.

### Regional Launches and expansions

**North America:** The US and Canada will see more than 10 new and refreshed models across key segments, including next-generation EVs, hybrids, and INFINITI luxury vehicles. The all-new Nissan LEAF will debut in FY25, joining the Ariya in Nissan's EV portfolio.

**Latin America:** Nissan will expand the availability of the Versa sedan across Latin America in FY25, alongside the launch of a new subcompact SUV. INFINITI will introduce the refreshed QX60 SUV to

the region. In FY26, a new Frontier/Navara midsize pickup will debut with an updated design, enhanced infotainment, and advanced driver-assist technologies. The X-Trail e-POWER model will also expand to more Latin American markets.

**Europe:** Nissan's European lineup will focus on electrification, with three key EV models arriving in FY25. The all-new Micra EV city car, developed in collaboration with Renault, will be launched as a stylish and compact electric vehicle. The Qashqai crossover will also adopt the third-generation e-POWER system. By FY26, Nissan will introduce a fourth electric vehicle to its European lineup, the all-



new Juke EV, inspired by the Hyper Punk concept.

**Japan:** Nissan will introduce a range of new and refreshed models in Japan in FY25, including the all-new LEAF and an updated Kei car. In FY26, a next-gen large minivan featuring the third-generation e-POWER system will be launched.

### Other global markets

Nissan's expansion will extend to Oceania, where the much-anticipated Ariya EV will go on sale in Australia in FY25 and all-new Patrol SUV, 3rd-gen Nissan LEAF and the Qashqai by FY26. India will receive two new models: a MPV (FY25) and a five-seat compact SUV in FY26.



**PORSCHE** is introducing significant upgrades to its Porsche Communication Management (PCM) system across the 911, Taycan, Panamera, and Cayenne models as part of its latest model year updates.

The revised system boasts enhanced performance, expanded digital capabilities, and greater user convenience, reinforcing Porsche's commitment to innovation beyond just powertrains and chassis technology.

The improvements include the introduction of the Porsche App Centre, integration of Amazon Alexa as a digital assistant, and support for Dolby Atmos immersive audio technology.

Additionally, Porsche Connect will now be included as standard for 10 years, ensuring a seamless and reliable digital experience for owners.

The latest PCM update features new hardware that enhances system responsiveness and computing power, allowing for quicker access to infotainment functions.

A key addition is the Porsche App Centre, which provides direct access to a wide range of third-party applications, similar to app stores on smartphones and tablets.

Initially introduced with the all-electric Macan, the App Centre is now being rolled out to other Porsche models, offering users access to music, video, podcasts, news services, media libraries, and weather updates.

Other available apps include navigation tools for exploring scenic routes and locating EV charging stations, as well as gaming and karaoke apps.

For the first time, Porsche vehicles will feature Amazon Alexa alongside the Porsche Voice Pilot.

This enables drivers to control smart home devices as well as access to news updates, weather forecasts, to-do lists, and shopping lists.

With these updates, Porsche continues to push the boundaries of digital innovation, ensuring its sports cars offer not just exceptional driving dynamics but also a cutting-edge in-car experience.

**ASTON MARTIN** has a rich history of producing stunning convertibles that blend luxury, performance, and timeless design.

The marque introduced its first open-top model, the DB2 Drophead Coupé, in the early 1950s, setting the stage for a lineage of elegant and powerful roadsters.

Over the decades, Aston Martin has refined its convertible offerings, from the iconic DB5 Volante of the 1960s to modern masterpieces like the Vantage Roadster and DBS Volante.

Each model embodies the brand's commitment to craftsmanship and driving exhilaration, making Aston Martin convertibles a symbol of prestige and open-

## Aston Martin's ultimate GT

air motoring excellence.

Enter 2025, Aston Martin has officially revealed the highly anticipated Vanquish Volante, marking the latest evolution of the iconic Volante lineage.

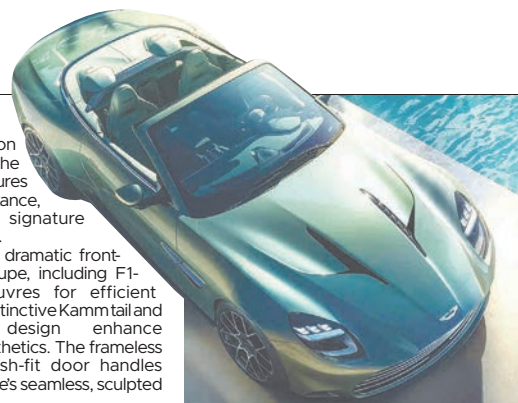
At the heart of the Vanquish Volante lies Aston Martin's new 5.2-litre twin-turbocharged V12 engine, delivering a staggering 835PS and 1000Nm of torque.

Despite its convertible form, the Vanquish Volante retains the coupe's dynamic precision and agility, offering uncompromising

performance.

Staying true to Aston Martin's design ethos, the Vanquish Volante features a sleek and muscular stance, accentuated by signature aerodynamic elements.

The car retains the dramatic front-end styling of the coupe, including F1-inspired thermos louvres for efficient cooling. At the rear, a distinctive Kamm tail and floating 'Shield' design enhance aerodynamics and aesthetics. The frameless door mirrors and flush-fit door handles contribute to the vehicle's seamless, sculpted profile.



# Triton pickup for AXCR 2025

Mitsubishi Ralliart gears up for rally with enhanced truck

**MITSUBISHI CORPORATION** has confirmed its participation in the upcoming 2025 Asia Cross Country Rally (AXCR), with Team Mitsubishi Ralliart set to compete in the gruelling event using a specially modified Triton pickup truck.

The rally, which will take place this August, will span across Thailand and Cambodia, marking the event's 30th anniversary with an extended course and tougher conditions.

The updated Triton rally car, built to T1 cross-country specifications, was unveiled this week at the 46th Bangkok International Motor Show. Featuring a striking new livery, the vehicle has been upgraded with improved engine durability, refined chassis tuning, and additional enhancements designed to boost its endurance and competitiveness. Team Mitsubishi Ralliart has set its sights on reclaiming the AXCR title, which it last won in 2022.

In the 2024 AXCR, Mitsubishi entered four Tritons, which showcased improved handling and performance to compete against high-displacement rivals.

Thai driver Chayapon Yotha had taken the overall lead by Leg 4, securing a significant 20-minute advantage. However, an engine failure forced him to retire, dashing

the team's championship hopes.

For the 2025 edition, the rally will be even more demanding, increasing from six to eight days and covering approximately 2,500km – an additional 500km compared to last year.

Mitsubishi has

focused on further refining the Triton's durability and overall performance to withstand the extended rally conditions, which will feature mountainous terrains, dense forests, and river crossings.

Team director Hiroshi Masuoka expressed confidence in the Triton's potential, reflecting on last year's strong performance before the unfortunate

mechanical failure.

He emphasised that the team has worked to enhance the truck's durability and reliability, ensuring it can sustain peak performance throughout the rally's increased distance and intensity. The team is determined to secure its first overall victory in three years.

The AXCR is the largest cross-country rally in the Asean region, and its 30th edition promises to be one of the most challenging yet.

The event will begin with a ceremonial start on Aug 8 in Pattaya, Thailand, before the competition officially commences on Aug 9.

The rally will take competitors north to Nakhon Ratchasima, then south to Chanthaburi, before crossing into Cambodia on Aug 14. The gruelling journey will conclude in Phnom Penh on Aug 16.

With an extended course featuring a mix of rough terrains, river crossings, and dense forests, AXCR 2025 will push both drivers and machines to their limits.

Mitsubishi Motors and Team Mitsubishi Ralliart are ready to take on the challenge, with their sights set firmly on reclaiming the championship title.



## Upgraded Supra RZ Grade, Limited A90 launched

**TOYOTA GAZOO RACING (TGR)** has officially launched a partially upgraded version of the Supra RZ Grade, now available at Toyota dealerships across Japan.

In addition, the company has opened the lottery for the highly anticipated special-edition Supra A90 Final Edition, limited to just 150 units in Japan. The lottery runs until April 13, with winners set to be announced on May 9.

### RZ Grade

The latest updates to the Supra RZ Grade focus on enhancing its driving experience, making it more integrated and enjoyable on city streets, winding roads, and racing circuits.

Toyota has improved braking

performance for greater safety, increased the body's rigidity, and refined the suspension and chassis tuning. Aerodynamic improvements have also been introduced to boost handling and stability.

The Supra returned to production in 2019 after a 17-year hiatus. Since its reintroduction, the car has undergone periodic updates, with enhancements in 2020 and 2022.

This latest iteration of the RZ Grade builds on that legacy, introducing a more refined driving experience while maintaining the car's signature performance characteristics.

### A90 Final Edition

The A90 Final Edition represents the pinnacle of the current-generation Supra, offering significant performance upgrades as a tribute to loyal fans.

This special-edition model features increased engine power and torque, upgraded braking components, a

strengthened body structure, and a KW suspension system – a favourite among racing enthusiasts.

The car is also equipped with high-performance tyres, further refining its high-speed stability and responsiveness.

The 3.0-litre turbocharged engine now delivers 441PS and 571Nm of torque, a significant increase from the standard model.

Enhancements to the intake system, including the removal of the resonator and optimised pipe routing, improve airflow.

Both the upgraded Supra RZ Grade and the exclusive A90 Final Edition will be showcased at the 2025 Autobacs Super GT Round 1, held at the Okayama International Circuit on April 12 and 13.



the PIX-ZLE by JayMen

**PIXAGRAM**  
Example

The picture shows a person in chains or manacles. Look for any answer which has the same letters as either CHAIN or MANACLE.



Pixagram is Picture Anagram. Find the words based on the pictures shown and match them with answers that have the same letters.

**PIXAGRAM 1**

Answers are to be chosen from A to F

**MEMES**

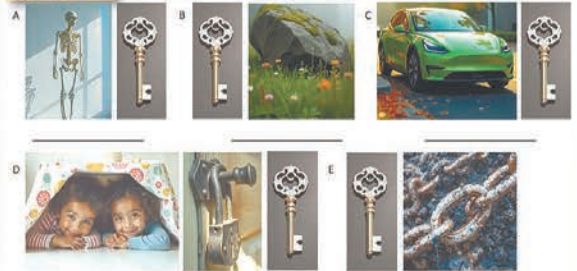
Memes ( popular and common phrases ) are shown as a series of pictures. In the following EXAMPLES there are 2 categories : Economics(1), Clothing (1). Write down the correct phrases .



A : Hand me down B : Invisible hand (term used in economics)

**MEMES: 1**

There are 2 categories : Expression (1), Item (4). Write the correct phrases .

**CHAIN LETTER 1**

The same couple of letters appear (in boxes) in the answers to the clues below. All answers are PROPER names.

- Q1. Citizen of Laos    \_ \_ \_ \_  
Q2. Big ship that sunk    \_ \_ \_ \_  
Q3. Caribbean country    \_ \_ \_ \_  
Q4. Russian president    \_ \_ \_ \_  
Q5. Sea in Europe    \_ \_ \_ \_

HINT : The 2 letters is represented by the note indicated by the arrow.



PYRAMID 1

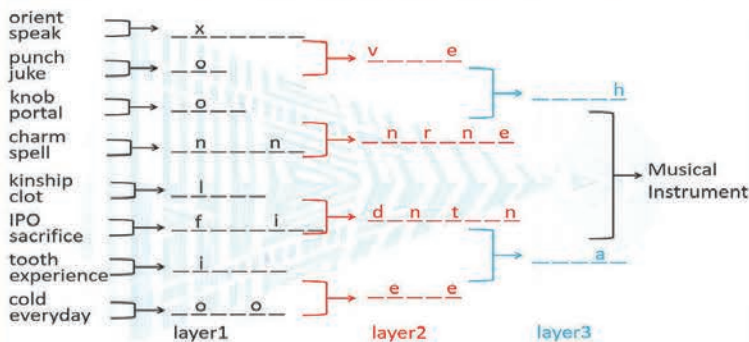
Each pair of words by Meaning or Association leads to another word ( indicated by → )

Example : satellite blue →

By meaning (synonym), MOON is a satellite of Earth.  
By association (phrase or idiom), "blue moon" describes a rare event.  
Hence the answer is MOON.

Find out the 8 words in layer 1,  
4 words in layer 2 and 2 words in layer 3.

The two words in layer 3 should match the definition given.

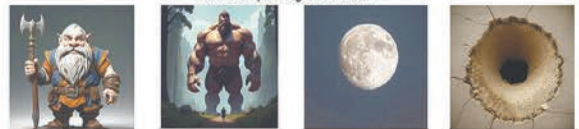
**TOPIX**

TOPIX is a two-step puzzle where you have to match the related topic.

Step 1 : Identify Words based on picture clues.

Step 2: Subject the Words to the Operation mentioned which will match the "topic".

An Example is given below



Step 1 Dwarf Giant Moon Hole

Step 2 Operation : Place suitable colours before the words to get "heavenly bodies"

Step 2 White Dwarf Red Giant Blue Moon Black Hole

**TOPIX 1**

STEP 1

Step 1 words are less than 8 letters long.

STEP 2 Operation : Place suitable colours before the words to get names of superheroes/villians

STEP 2

**STREET PIX 1**

Based on the pictures of shop signs seen on Malaysian streets, find the answers to the "treasure hunt" questions.

- Q1 : Q2 : Grandchild? \_\_\_\_\_  
Q3 : Unique kind of kick! \_\_\_\_\_  
Q4 : Japanese drink that Persia now sent back \_\_\_\_\_  
Q5 : Sounds like a place where humans are exhibited! \_\_\_\_\_



All puzzles are created by Jay Menon.

He runs RoadRunners MS

(TreasureHunts/TeamBuilding)

He is Past Chair of Malaysian Mensa

Interested in taking the mensa test?

(<https://mensa.my/test-info/>)

Co-founder of the Treasure Hunt Society

of Malaysia

(<https://www.facebook.com/thsmalaysia>)

He can be reached at [jaymen@gmail.com](mailto:jaymen@gmail.com)

**ARIES**

Mar 21 – Apr 19

A spark of tension is flickering with your partner, but you are listening to a wise inner voice guiding you towards calm. You are resisting the urge to rush decisions, finding clarity instead. Patience is shaping your choices this week. Balance is bringing harmony to your relationships.

**TAURUS**

Apr 20 – May 20

A team project is sparking your creativity, and you are embracing a fresh change to shine. You are discovering hidden talents that surprise even you. This change is pushing you to explore your limits. Growth is unfolding as you dive in fully. Do not be afraid to take a leap of faith.

**GEMINI**

May 21 – June 20

Standing firm in your choices, you are opening up to a new way of seeing things. You are releasing old habits that no longer fit, feeling lighter with each step. Control is coming from focusing on your own actions. A fresh perspective is guiding your week. Go into this new era doubt-free.

**CANCER**

June 22 – July 22

Excitement is bubbling as a travel opportunity knocks on your door. You are diving in, sensing there is more to gain than meets the eye. Connections are forming with new faces, promising future rewards. Networking is paving the way for bright prospects. Build your social circle as it may benefit you.

**LEO**

July 23 – Aug 22

Patience is becoming your strength, and you are finding power in staying calm. You are spreading love and healing your mind and soul with every kind act. Nourishing yourself is keeping you grounded amid busy thoughts. Balance is restoring your inner peace. Be patient and you will find light at the end of the tunnel.

**VIRGO**

Aug 23 – Sept 22

A fiery passion is igniting your dreams of leaving a lasting mark. Signs are guiding you, rekindling your drive to chase what once felt out of reach. You are welcoming help in all its forms with open arms. The universe is nudging you towards success. Be patient and soon it will be yours.

## Your weekend horoscope



An example of a qi-optimised living room. – ALL PICS FROM BON KIARA

## Living with good energy

### Maximising space for prosperity

THE living room is the heart of a home. In *feng shui*, this space plays a crucial role in accumulating and circulating *qi*, the vital energy that influences prosperity, harmony and relationships. A well-arranged living room allows energy to flow smoothly, creating an environment that supports financial stability and overall well-being.

The living room acts as an energy hub. It absorbs *qi* from the main entrance and distributes it throughout the household. If the energy in this space is vibrant and balanced, it can enhance opportunities, attract helpful people and foster good relationships among occupants.

However, if *qi* becomes stagnant or is disrupted, it may lead to financial struggles, miscommunication or disharmony.

#### Open and uncluttered space

A spacious and well-organised living room encourages smooth *qi* movement. Avoid excessive furniture or decorative items that create unnecessary blockages. A clutter-free space allows energy to circulate freely, promoting clarity in decision-making and financial growth.

#### Seating arrangement for harmony

The placement of sofas and chairs can influence the energy dynamics of the room. The main sofa should be positioned against a solid wall for stability and support.

A sofa floating in the middle of the room without proper backing may lead to insecurity and instability in life. Seating should be arranged in a way that encourages interaction, such as in a U-shaped or circular, to promote connection and harmony among family members and guests.

Avoid placing seats with their backs directly facing the entrance, as this creates a sense of vulnerability and weakens support from others.

#### Balanced air and light flow

Good ventilation and natural lighting are essential to maintain fresh and uplifting *qi*. Open windows regularly to let fresh air circulate,



A spacious, open-plan living room encourages effortless movement and seamless energy circulation.

reducing stagnant energy. If natural light is limited, ensure the room is well-lit with warm, comfortable lighting rather than harsh, glaring bulbs.

#### Avoiding sharp corners and harsh elements

Sharp edges from furniture or decor can create harsh energy (*sha qi*), leading to stress and tension in the household. Opt for rounded or curved furniture designs to promote a softer, more welcoming atmosphere.

#### Organised space

If the living room is directly connected to other areas, such as the dining room or home office, ensure each space has a clear function. Undefined spaces may scatter *qi*, leading to a lack of focus or direction in life.

This article is contributed by *feng shui* consultant Daniel Siew.

**LIBRA**

Sept 23 – Oct 22

Feeling torn between two worlds, you are learning each holds unique lessons worth treasuring. You are blending experiences without forcing them to fit together. Sharing your insights is restoring your confidence. Harmony is growing as you embrace both sides.

**SCORPIO**

Oct 23 – Nov 21

Rising above past shortcuts, you are discovering the beauty of raw creativity this week. A fresh perspective is opening your eyes to genuine success. You are appreciating the process with newfound respect. Inspiration is guiding you towards true achievement. Let your creative spirit be your guide.

**SAGITTARIUS**

Nov 22 – Dec 21

Shouldering big dreams, you are finding strength in an inner voice that keeps you steady. You are supporting yourself and others with quiet resilience. This calm is revealing the beauty in life's simple miracles. Stability is grounding your chaotic moments. Keep your ground steady!

**CAPRICORN**

Dec 22 – Jan 19

Your instincts are urging you to finish what you began, and you are seeing wishes unfold in surprising ways. You are building a solid system to fuel your ambitions. Time is becoming your ally as you work wisely. Progress is shaping up with every step. Remember, there is no shortcuts.

**AQUARIUS**

Jan 20 – Feb 18

Beneath a cheerful surface, you are sensing a shift and a big change, which are lifting your spirits. You are facing truths that refresh your outlook with clarity. Walls are opening up, giving you room to breathe. Growth is coming through this newfound honesty.

**PISCES**

Feb 19 – Mar 20

Peace is settling into your work, and aligning with years of hard-earned wisdom. You are showcasing your talents, standing out with ease. A like-minded mentor is sharing valuable business insights. Collaboration is sparking growth and inspiration.

This is contributed by  
Mystic Kali Tarot

# The challenge facing Tsunoda

**OUT** of all the drivers who have tried and failed to fulfil their promise at Red Bull, Alex Albon put it best – in a non-F1 spiel – in explaining the seismic challenge one faces with a car engineered to the demands of the team's leading driver, Max Verstappen.

Now forming one half of Williams's impressive driver line-up alongside Carlos Sainz after a difficult 18-month spell at Red Bull in 2019-20, Albon told *The High Performance Podcast* in 2023: "I would say my driving style is a bit more on the smooth side, but I like a car that has a good front-end, so quite sharp, quite direct."

"Max does too, but his level of sharp and direct is a whole different level – it's eye-wateringly sharp."

"To give people kind of maybe an explanation of what that might feel like: if you bump up the sensitivity (on a computer game) completely to the max, and you move that mouse, and it's just darting across the screen everywhere, that's kind of how it feels."

"It becomes so sharp that it makes you a little bit tense."

That sensitivity and haphazardness show

... to master a car built for world champion Verstappen

the scale of the task ahead for Yuki Tsunoda, ahead of his home race today in Japan.

Tsunoda received the call-up after a torrid first two races for Liam Lawson in Australia and China, which included a crash and two back-of-the-pack qualifying results.

Would Red Bull stay patient – or chop and change? The last decade has shown us that the axe Christian Horner and Helmut Marko wielded was no surprise, even after two races.

For Tsunoda, it is a terrific opportunity; of that, there is no doubt.

The 24-year-old is in his fifth season in F1 and, originally overlooked for Sergio Perez's seat in December, the Japanese

driver seemed somewhat stuck at the Red Bull junior team.

Yet now that time has arrived, appetisingly at his home event in Suzuka. Tsunoda was pictured saying goodbye to his friends at junior team Racing Bulls on Thursday, a day on from appearing in Red Bull colours for the first time publicly at a show-run in Tokyo. There's no doubt who the talk of the town is.

But can he really work at one with his machinery in a way former teammates of Verstappen, such as Albon (2019-20), Pierre Gasly (2019) and Sergio Perez (2021-24), ultimately could not? It is a daunting challenge.

Tsunoda spent much of last week in Red Bull's simulator in Milton Keynes and

admitted on Thursday he could already feel the "instability" of this year's unpredictable Red Bull car, the RB21.

"The simulator obviously is not fully correct in terms of the trickiness of the car, but at least it didn't feel crazy tricky," Tsunoda said.

"I know what kind of direction I want to start and it seems to be a good baseline in terms of overall performance. So yeah, it was a really good simulator session."

Even Verstappen acknowledges that the RB21 needs a lot of work to become a championship contender as the season progresses.

"It is a little bit more nervous, a little bit more unstable in different corner phases," Verstappen explained.

Tsunoda insists he has "confidence" in his own driving ability and coupled with his new-found composure, there is little doubt that he is hitting his prime.

However, he'd be sensible to keep his feet on the ground. – The Independent



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- Manage employee benefits programmes and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Stay updated on current industry trends and best practices in HR management.
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## Max snatches pole in Suzuka

**FOUR-TIME** world champion Max Verstappen smashed the track record to snatch pole position for today's Japanese Grand Prix ahead of McLaren's Lando Norris, as Yuki Tsunoda qualified a lowly 15th in his Red Bull debut.

Verstappen clocked a blistering lap of 1min 26.983sec in his Red Bull, 0.012sec ahead of championship leader Norris, with McLaren's Oscar Piastri third.

Verstappen set a new Suzuka track record with his final lap in yesterday's qualifying, pipping Norris right at the death.

"Each session we kept making little improvements, then the last lap was flat out," said Verstappen, who has won the Japanese GP for the last three years.

"In a Formula One car around here is insane. This is a proper highlight for us to be back on pole here."

It was Verstappen's first pole position of the season.

The Dutchman is still looking for his first grand prix win of the new campaign.

Ferrari's Charles Leclerc was fourth ahead of Mercedes' George Russell, with Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli sixth and RB's Isack Hadjar seventh.

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton was eighth, followed by Williams's Alex Albon and Haas's Oliver Bearman.

Norris is looking for his second grand prix win of the season, after triumphing in the season opener in Australia.

He finished second behind Piastri in China a fortnight ago in a dominant start to the campaign for McLaren.

"I'm happy, congrats to Max, he did a good job," said Norris.

"You have to credit something when it is a lap that good that he must have done. I got everything out of the car today, the gaps are tiny."

"Good but not enough."

Tsunoda was eliminated in Q2 in a disappointing first qualifying drive for Red Bull after being promoted in place of Liam Lawson last week.

The Japanese driver finished one place behind Lawson, who returned to RB after just two races for Red Bull in a ruthless driver swap. – AFP



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Rory McIlroy.  
— REUTERS/SPIC

# If not now, when?

McIlroy's ideal preparation can lead to long-awaited Masters glory

**IF** Rory McIlroy had been asked to draw up the ideal preparation for his latest attempt to win the Masters, it would surely have looked identical to his 2025 season to date.

Not content with winning the AT&T Pebble Beach Pro-Am at what he called "one of the cathedrals of golf", McIlroy also claimed the Players Championship at another famous venue, defeating JJ Spaun in a playoff at Sawgrass.

Feeling the need for one more start before Augusta, McIlroy then recovered from a slow start to finish fifth in the Houston Open, improving his score in every round to achieve his goal of keeping the "confidence bucket" full.

It was perhaps only the fact that Scottie Scheffler also found form in Houston that ensured the world No. 1 and defending champion remained favourite to win his third Masters title ahead of McIlroy, but the Northern Irishman will rightly care little about that.

As it has been ever since he won the Open Championship in 2014 to secure the third leg of a career grand slam, McIlroy's sole focus will be on claiming a first green jacket to join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Tiger Woods in having

claimed all four major titles.

The 35-year-old has finished inside the top 10 in six of his last 10 starts at Augusta and was in the last group in the final round in 2018, only to struggle to a closing 74 and end up six shots behind playing partner Patrick Reed.

While McIlroy will be making his 17th consecutive Masters appearance, Scheffler will enjoy the fabled drive down Magnolia Lane for just the sixth time as he bids to defy the odds and retain his title.

Woods, Nicklaus and Nick Faldo are the only players to have won back-to-back Masters, with defending champions having a relatively poor record in recent times.

Scheffler was 10th when defending the green jacket in 2023, while Jon Rahm could only finish 45th last year. Dustin Johnson, Sergio Garcia and Danny Willett all missed the cut a year on from their Masters triumphs.

Given that he has finished no worse than 19th in his five starts to date it would be a massive surprise if Scheffler were to suffer the same fate, especially after his runners-up finish in Houston signalled a return to top form after some relatively underwhelming results.

Open champion and US PGA winner Xander Schauffele also recorded his best finish of an injury-hit season in his most recent start, while US Open champion Bryson DeChambeau – who carded an opening 65 at Augusta 12 months ago – has recorded just one top-10 finish in four LIV events this year. – The Independent

## Harman leaps in front in Texas

**BRIAN HARMAN** poured in eight birdies amid a 6-under 66 to take over first place halfway through the Valero Texas Open yesterday in San Antonio.

Harman's second straight 66 pushed him to 12-under 132 at TPC San Antonio Oaks Course, and by yesterday evening that was good for a four-shot lead over Keith Mitchell (72).

First-round leader Sam Ryder struggled to a 74 and sits in a tie for third at 7 under with Englishman Matt Wallace and Japan's Ryo Hisatsune (both 67).

Patrick Cantlay shot a 67 and shares sixth place at 6-under par with several other golfers. Two-time Texas Open winner

Zach Johnson, 49, posted a 68 and is hanging around at 5 under.

Harman, the 2023 Open Championship winner, is trying to take good form into next week's Masters Tournament, the first major of 2025. Harman is already slated for Augusta National, but if a player not already invited wins the Texas Open, he would qualify for the Masters.

Harman said of his play in San Antonio, "It's been pretty good, controlling my distances nicely. It's one of the demands this place makes on you."

"You have to really have control of your ball."

"Ball lands on the green, they're a lot

firmer than they seem, and if you're playing from out of position, it's really tough."

Through nine prior events this season, Harman has yet to register a top-10 finish. He missed the cut at The Players Championship in mid-March before taking a break from the tour.

"It has been a slow start, a little uncharacteristic," Harman said of his season. "I've been pretty frustrated."

"I haven't really been able to put my finger on what it is that's kind of holding me back."

"So nice to take a couple weeks off and regroup and at least have a couple nice days so far." – Field Level Media

## BRIEFS

### Galatasaray boss acted 'as if he'd been shot'

Fenerbahce have accused Galatasaray manager Okan Buruk of acting 'as if he'd been shot' after he fell to the floor following a clash with Jose Mourinho. Mourinho and Buruk clashed after the Portuguese's side exited the Turkish Cup with a 2-1 defeat in a heated tie against their rivals. The former Chelsea, Manchester United and Tottenham boss appeared to grab at Buruk's nose after the fulltime whistle at Sukru Saracoglu Stadium, with Buruk hitting the deck after Mourinho's action. Galatasaray accused the 62-year-old of "physically attacking" their coach after the game, and Fenerbahce have now hit back and suggested that Mourinho was deliberately provoked. "This was a planned provocation (by Buruk), he acted as if he had been 'shot' and fell to the ground in a professional manner, and his disrespectful words and actions are documented on video," Fenerbahce said in a statement.

### Kiwis hammer Pakistan to sweep series

Pakistan's brittle batting was exposed again as a Ben Sears-inspired New Zealand won the third and final one-day international by 43 runs yesterday to sweep the series 3-0. The tourists were dismissed for 221 off 40 overs in response to New Zealand's 264-8, in a match shortened to 42 overs after a delayed start at Mount Maunganui. Aggressive pace bowler Sears claimed 5-34 to follow his five-wicket bag in Hamilton, with four of his victims falling to short-pitched deliveries. Fellow seamer Jacob Duffy, who was a handful in both series, took 2-40, including the wicket of Mohammad Rizwan for 37 in the 33rd over to effectively end the tourists' hopes of victory. Babar Azam top-scored with 50 off 58 balls while opener Abdullah Shafique ground out a sluggish 33 off 56.

### Top seed Pegula oust Collins

World No. 4 Jessica Pegula rallied from a set and a break down to beat defending champion Danielle Collins 1-6, 6-3, 6-0 yesterday and reach the semifinals of the WTA clay court tournament in Charleston, South Carolina. "That was tough," said Pegula, who trailed 6-1, 2-0 but won 10 of the last 13 games – including the last nine to close out the contest. "Obviously she can play well here," Pegula said. "She's defending champion and she came out firing. I was not ready for that at all. Luckily I was able to dig my heels into that second set and play some good tennis."

### Marsh, Markram help Lucknow edge Mumbai

Openers Mitchell Marsh and Aiden Markram hit half-centuries to set up a tense 12-run victory for Lucknow Super Giants against IPL heavyweights Mumbai Indians yesterday. Five-time champions Mumbai suffered an early blow when former skipper Rohit Sharma missed the match due to an injury to his knee during training. Mumbai skipper Hardik Pandya claimed his maiden T20 five-wicket haul and then hit an unbeaten 28 off 16 balls but the effort went in vain as his team slipped to their third defeat in four matches. Lucknow posted 203-8 as Marsh, who hit 60, and Markram, who made 53, put on 76 runs for the opening wicket after being invited to bat first at their home ground. Bowlers combined to restrict Mumbai to 191-5 despite Suryakumar Yadav's 43-ball 67 and Hardik's late blitz as Lucknow bounced back from a loss for their second win in four matches. "When a player like Mitch Marsh gives us a start like that, it gives time to the middle-order," Lucknow skipper Rishabh Pant said. On restricting an attacking opposition, Pant said: "Mentally it was tough for all of us, they were not losing too many wickets, kudos to them, but we held our nerve and finished it off."

# 'Every story comes to an end'

Pep and City say goodbye to arguably the Premier League's finest ever creator

**KEVIN DE BRUYNE** came to Manchester City as their record signing and will leave as their greatest ever player.

"Every story comes to an end," he said, announcing his summer departure. A coda to the last chapter has long seemed obvious. Manchester, he said, will forever be in his family's hearts and a version of him will surely forever be around the Etihad Stadium.

De Bruyne is likely to be immortalised in bronze, celebrated in a statue.

Opponents can admire him there, safe in the knowledge their defence will not be unlocked by an act of extraordinary brilliance.

As Pep Guardiola reacted to De Bruyne's decision, the City manager underlined how productive an artist has been.

"I read today that he's been involved in 280 goals and assists," said Guardiola.

Even more. In a decade, De Bruyne has scored 106 times for City, made a further 176 goals.

He predated Guardiola by a year but no one has ever made more goals for the Catalan's teams than the Belgian, with 161.

De Bruyne will go as arguably the Premier League's finest ever creator. He equalled Thierry Henry's record of 20 in a season and had four campaigns with at least 16.

He is second in the all-time assist charts to Ryan Giggs, but the Welshman played a further 12 seasons in the division.

De Bruyne reached a century of assists in 56 fewer games than anyone else. He was dynamic on the counter-attack, incisive in the inside-right channel.

He did not need to beat a man or reach the byline. He simply bent it like Beckham, whipping in passes and crosses, corners and free kicks, with a blend of pace, accuracy and menace that seemed to render them undefendable.

As Guardiola pointed out, De Bruyne allied remarkably quality with consistency, until injury intervened.

The 2023 Champions League final, which brought the crowning glory of the treble, was the beginning of the end, the hamstring injury he aggravated in Istanbul the first of a series of absences.

Yet that campaign produced 29 assists, a number that is every bit as much of an outlier as Erling

Haaland's 52 goals.

And if the two are connected – and, much as everyone else at City will miss De Bruyne, the Norwegian will most of all, given the brilliance of his supply line – the Belgian was arguably the decisive player in winning the Premier League title, given his colossal

performances in the two games against Arsenal.

"He gave all of us with his humility and his influence in our success in the last decade," said Guardiola. "That would have been impossible to imagine without him."

De Bruyne, though, was a throwback, a

team player but one lending the individual inspiration; part David Beckham, part Steven Gerrard.

He was the unassuming everyman with genius in his right boot. He didn't look an athlete – especially as he got older, redder of face – and, in some ways, was the antithesis of the Silvas, David and Bernardo, who rarely misplaced a pass but usually eschewed the spectacular. De Bruyne attempted it, and often succeeded.

There was many a masterpiece. One to illustrate his singular talent came in 2023, in a 7-0 rout of RB Leipzig that may be remembered most for Haaland amassing five goals.

Guardiola has previewed the game by saying De Bruyne was at his best when he stuck to the simple things. The Belgian's night began with an extraordinary pass, struck with the outside of his right foot, that took almost the whole Leipzig team out of the game.

Then he rattled the bar from 20 yards with his left foot, Haaland scoring from the rebound. He ended his night curling a shot from long range into the top corner. The simple things? Perhaps they were for Kevin De Bruyne.

He was the least Guardiola of Guardiola midfielders, uninterested in pass completion rates but the most likely to provide the killer ball. It made their alliance intriguing but the manager's tribute was heartfelt.

"His assists, his goals, his vision in the final third, it's so difficult to replace. What he's done here for the past decade has been outstanding," said Guardiola.

And the problem with unique players is that, by definition, they are irreplaceable. There is no point looking for the next Kevin De Bruyne. There isn't one.

"He's one of the greatest we've ever seen," said Guardiola, the man who will be charged with finding a future without him.

He has waved goodbye to City legends, to David Silva and Sergio Agüero and Yaya Touré and Vincent Kompany. There were earlier generations of favourites, particularly Colin Bell and Francis Lee.

There is Haaland, whose sheer weight of goals could yet mean he takes the premier place in the City pantheon.

But if he is a machine, De Bruyne has been a magician. And that made him still more special. – The Independent



Pep Guardiola (left) and Kevin De Bruyne. – AFP/IC

## Honours won by the Belgian international

**Club:**  
Champions League x1  
Premier League x6  
FA Cup x2  
League Cup x5  
Community Shield x2

**Personal:**  
PFA Player of the year x2  
EPL Player of the Season x2  
Fifpro Men's World XI x3

## De Bruyne's trophy-laden spell at City to end this year

**KEVIN DE BRUYNE** is to leave Manchester City at the end of the season after a glorious decade at the club.

The 33-year-old, who has won 16 trophies with City including six Premier League titles and the Champions League, is out of contract in the summer.

With speculation over his future having grown throughout the season, the Belgium playmaker confirmed the news in a statement on his social media accounts.

He wrote: "I'll get straight to it and let you all know that these will be my final months as a Manchester City player."

"Whether we like it or not, it's time to say goodbye. Every story comes to an end, but this has definitely been the best chapter."

De Bruyne has scored 106 goals in 413 appearances for City and made 174 assists. Further successes have included five League Cup triumphs and two FA Cups.

He joined the club under previous manager Manuel Pellegrini in a £55 million (£M248m) deal in 2015 and went on to thrive after Pep Guardiola took charge the following year.

He has cemented his place as one of the greatest players in City's history and has undoubtedly been one of the most influential of the Premier League era.

Guardiola, speaking at a press conference ahead of Sunday's derby at Manchester United, said: "His influence in our success in the last decade, that would be impossible to imagine without him."

"It's a sad day because, of course, he's part of us, he's leaving."

Three other greats of City's modern era – Vincent Kompany, David Silva and Sergio Agüero – have been honoured by the club with statues outside the Etihad Stadium and Guardiola expects a similar tribute for De

Bruyne.

He said: "I don't know but I will bet a lot of money that is going to happen, for sure. Come on, he deserves to be in this level."

"Kevin is a special person, a special player. He will be treated in a special way."

Despite his importance to the club, De Bruyne's announcement has not come as a big surprise.

His influence has decreased over the past two seasons as injuries have taken their toll and he has made just 19 starts this term.

Club and player seem to have come to an understanding that the time is right to part ways, with Guardiola confirming no new contract was offered.

He said: "It was not easy for me to tell him that we're not continuing."

A long lay-off last season also meant De Bruyne missed City's Club World Cup triumph in December 2023.

Guardiola is not sure yet if he will be involved in the revamped tournament in the United States this summer.

His contract is due to run out part way through the event, which takes place from mid-June to mid-July.

Guardiola said: "I don't know. I think he has to decide. The club has to talk to him and he has to say what he wants to do."

Manchester United boss Ruben Amorim paid tribute to De Bruyne's City career ahead of today's derby.

"He was one of the best midfielders in the Premier League," he said.

"The time passes for everyone, so it's a natural thing. He improved the League, he was on the wrong side of Manchester, so I wish him good luck."

"It was a pleasure to see him in Portugal a lot of times, so I hope he enjoys the rest of his life." – The Independent

BY RICHARD JOLLY

**RUBEN AMORIM** declared that he is in a rush to bring back the glory days to Manchester United but said he would not be crazy enough to think they will win the title next season.

United are 13th as they prepare for today's (11.30pm) Manchester derby but Amorim is adamant they will be much better next year as he insisted he is trading short-term pain for some gain.

Chief executive Omar Berrada launched "Project 150", United's plan to try and win the

# No pain, no gain

## Amorim 'in a rush' to restore United's glory days

Premier League title by their 150th anniversary in 2028, but while Amorim said he does not have a timetable, he will not ask for time and is putting pressure on himself to succeed soon.

"I am not naive, I don't want to think we need a lot of years to be competitive, I cannot think like that," said the Portuguese.

"I cannot manage that, it is not in me. That is why I am putting pressure on myself.

"I know that we are not going to be the biggest contender in the next year or two years. I know.

"We are changing a lot of things, changing a lot of stuff inside the club.

"I know it is going to take time but I will not think like that and I will not say I need a lot of years.

"We are preparing

something we have to change a lot next year.

"It is not that next year is our goal. I am not saying we are going to win the title next year, I am not crazy.

"What I am saying is that I don't want this conversation that we want a lot of years. No, we are in a rush.

"We are suffering a lot to be next year so much better and that is our goal and sometimes things can happen. I don't want to be that guy here saying we need a lot of time.

"If it will take four years like in the memo, I don't know. In my idea, I cannot manage this thing of 'in four years, I will try something'.

"I will start next season. We need to be so much better. This is a massive club. The pressure is that and I want to put that pressure on me and everybody here."

Sir Alex Ferguson won the first of his 13 league titles six-and-a-half years after his appointment and his first trophy in 1990,

following his arrival in November 1986 but Amorim believes he will not get so much time.

He believes the environment has changed since then, partly with the greater scrutiny and partly with the rise of clubs like Aston Villa and Newcastle, rivals for United even before they can pip clubs like Liverpool or Manchester City to the title.

"Not just Manchester City but other teams," he added. "The Premier League is so different, I have a lot of people saying Sir Alex Ferguson took three or four years to win something.

"It is not possible nowadays because you have to speak three times and give three interviews before every game so the pressure is completely different.

"We are Manchester United. No matter the context, we have to be there with the best ones. We will have to face a lot of adversity and a lot of big teams." — The Independent

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2ND	2 2 2 4 2			1 2 1		
3RD	7 8 9 8 0			2 1		

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2ND	4 5 5 5 5	or	5 5 5 5 4		
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Manchester United manager Ruben Amorim. — REUTERS/PIC

## Reds need six signings: Carra

BY CHRIS WILSON

**FORMER** Liverpool centre-back Jamie Carragher has claimed that the club may need to make six signings this summer if they want to build on the success of Arne Slot's opening season.

As the season nears an end, rumours persist over the future of key trio Trent Alexander-Arnold, Mo Salah and Virgil van Dijk, with the former reportedly set to leave for Real Madrid and the latter two still yet to agree new contracts.

And Carragher has claimed that the Reds squad may need several additions "to keep the juggernaut moving", suggesting that the squad need a left-back, centreback, defensive midfielder, attacking midfielder, left-winger and striker.

Writing in a column for the *Daily Telegraph*, the 47-year-old said: "In all honesty, when looking at Slot's squad, it feels like he may need as many as six before next summer.

"Reinforcements are required independent of whether the big three out-of-contract stars stay," he said,

adding that "such additions would enhance rather than replace those who have inspired Liverpool to the top".

"Slot's Liverpool have been more efficient than consistently brilliant," claimed Carragher, before pointing out that the Dutchman needs time to form his own squad after not making a single first-team signing last summer.

Carragher called Slot's achievements so far "remarkable", emphasising that his "broader vision and idea of what Liverpool can become has yet to fully form".

"Let us not forget it took Klopp three years and a complete rebuild from back to front to perfect his ideas," added the former Reds centreback.

Liverpool have been linked to several big-money signings already as the transfer window approaches, with the club reportedly interested in Newcastle striker Alexander Isak, Bayer Leverkusen full-back Jeremie Frimpong and Bournemouth defensive duo Dean Huijsen and Milos Kerkez, among others. — The Independent

### WINNING NUMBERS damacai

Draw Date: 05/04/25 (Sat) Draw No: 5955/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

#### 1+3D SUPER 1+3D

1st Prize	6834
2nd Prize	8930
3rd Prize	5959

Starters	Consolation
4644 2580	9597 9689
4506 6996	1092 5000
1295 8455	3913 6728
8390 9691	6687 2829
9531 6484	7157 5702

#### 1+3D Jackpot 1 RM13,926,264.60

6834 + 8930	8930 + 6834
6834 + 5959	5959 + 6834
8930 + 5959	5959 + 8930

#### Jackpot 2 RM487,739.70

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

#### 3+3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
826 834 + SNAKE		RM440,000.00
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
818 930 + ROOSTER		RM862,611.00
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
145 959 + SNAKE		RM1,931,506.00

Starters	Consolation
064 644 862 580	289 597 659 689
894 506 326 996	841 092 405 000
661 295 538 455	543 913 416 728
708 390 959 691	246 687 712 829
479 531 136 484	987 157 985 702

3D	1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
	834	930	959

#### Jackpot RM1,007,232.80

834 + 930 + 959	930 + 959 + 834
834 + 959 + 930	959 + 834 + 930
930 + 834 + 959	959 + 930 + 834

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

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**RESULTS & STANDINGS**

**ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP:** Blackburn 0 Middlesbrough 2.

Top 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sheff Utd	39	26	7	6	56	29	83
Leeds	39	23	12	4	78	27	81
Burnley	39	22	15	2	53	11	81
Sunderland	39	20	12	7	56	37	72
Middlesbrough	40	17	9	14	61	49	60
Coventry	39	17	8	14	56	51	59

**BUNDESLIGA:** Augsburg 1 Bayern Munich 3.

Top 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	28	21	5	2	81	27	68
B. Leverkusen	27	17	8	2	62	34	59
E. Frankfurt	27	14	6	7	55	40	48
Mainz	27	13	6	8	45	33	45
B. M'gladbach	27	13	4	10	44	40	43
RB Leipzig	27	11	9	7	41	34	42

**FRENCH LIGUE 1:** Nice 1 Nantes 2.

Top 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	27	22	5	0	79	26	71
Monaco	27	15	5	7	53	33	50
Marseille	27	15	4	8	54	36	49
Nice	28	13	8	7	52	35	47
Lille	27	13	8	6	41	28	47
Strasbourg	27	13	7	7	45	35	46

## No joy for diver Maccartney Harold

**NATIONAL** diver Enrique Maccartney Harold narrowly missed out on a place in the men's 10m individual final at the 2025 Diving World Cup qualifier in Guadalajara, Mexico, yesterday morning.

He posted a total score of 372.05 points to finish 13th in the preliminary round, just 7.30 points behind Italy's Riccardo Giovannini, who claimed the final qualifying spot in 12th with 379.35 points.

Mexico's Randal Willars Valdez topped the leaderboard with an impressive 518.45 points, followed by China's Cheng Zilong (474.15) and Zhu Zifeng (462.25) in second and third spots, respectively.

Only the top 12 divers advanced to the final, scheduled for tomorrow. On Friday, national diving queen Datuk Pandelega Rinong

missed out on a place in the women's 10m platform final, finishing 13th in the qualifying round.

She finished with a total score of 267.85 points, thus missing out on a spot among the top 12 divers to advance to the final scheduled on today.

This marked Pandelega's first appearance since her last competitive outing at the 2024 Malaysia Open in November.

Spanish diver Valeria Antolino secured the 12th and final qualifying spot with a score of 275.15 points.

China's Quan Hongchan and Chen Yuxi dominated the event, claiming the top two spots.

Quan, the 2020 Tokyo and 2024 Paris Olympics 10m platform gold medalist amassed 390.40 points to finish first.

Meanwhile, Chen, who partnered with Quan to clinch the women's synchro 10m platform gold in Paris 2024, secured second place with 373.65 points.

The 2025 Diving World Cup series continues in Windsor, Canada, from April 10-13, before heading to Beijing, China, from May 2-4.

# No fairytale ending

**MALAYSIA'S** hopes of a golden double were dashed when both the men's and women's rugby 7s teams lost in their respective finals of the Southeast Asia 7s (SEA 7s) at the Singapore National Stadium yesterday.

The national men's team, under the guidance of coach Nik Safuan Ismade Nik Man, came into this tournament as defending champions but were outdone by Thailand 10-5 in the final, with Malaysia scoring a try through Muhammad Safiy Md Said while the Thais went one better by scoring two tries.

"We accept the defeat as our team lacked fitness, having only had 19 training sessions during Ramadan, compared to the Thais who have been preparing non-stop since 2023.

"Anyway, I consider this a very good

M'sia men's, women's rugby teams finish runners-up in SEA 7s

start for the team as they gear up for the SEA Games (in Thailand) at the end of this year," Nik Safuan said in a statement shared by Malaysia Rugby (MR).

The Hibiscus, as the national rugby team is called, lived up to expectations by overpowering Indonesia 31-0 and the Philippines 26-0 to advance to the final as Group A champions.

Meanwhile, there was no fairytale ending for the national women's team after they were beaten 12-5 by hosts Singapore.

The national women's 7s team created

history on Friday when they made the final for the first time after six editions by stunning defending champions Thailand 17-12 in the semifinals.

Nurin Hannan Abd Hadi was the star of the show when, with the score tied at 12-12, she skipped past five players to score the winning try.

Malaysia advanced to the semifinals as Group B runners-up after losing 28-5 to Singapore before bouncing back to beat Indonesia 15-5.



The Malaysia Women's Rugby 7s team. - FB/MALAYSIA RUGBY

## Rosmadi committed to elevating futsal, beach football

**FOOTBALL** Association of Malaysia (FAM) vice-president Datuk Seri Rosmadi Ismail is determined to take the country's futsal and beach football to a higher level in his third term heading the committee in the governing body.

Rosmadi, the FAM Futsal and Beach Football Committee chairman, said the committee held its first meeting last month and he described the group of members as being authoritative, particularly in the aspects of sports development and management.

He said the presence of these competent individuals on the committee would facilitate strategic planning to elevate the performance of futsal and beach football comprehensively.

"I feel this is the best term to further raise the standards of futsal and beach football. I am grateful that the committee members are among those with a strong foundation when it comes to futsal development in Malaysia and who also possess a solid background in sports management.

"So, I believe that with this new committee, it will be easier for me to achieve my mission to elevate futsal and

beach football to a higher level," he told *Bernama*.

Rosmadi was appointed chairman of the FAM Futsal and Beach Football Committee after winning the FAM vice-president's post in the FAM Executive Committee elections for the 2017-2021 term.

In his first term as committee chairman, Rosmadi said he had laid out his mission to organise a higher-quality league as well as provide systematic planning for the national team.

However, he said the positive progress achieved then had to be cut short due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in all sports activities being suspended for about two and three years.

"Despite that, after CovidD-19, *Alhamdulillah*, we managed to hold a better league. A better and more competitive league will produce more players at the national level, who can then give a better fight at the international level," he added.

Rosmadi said financial constraints faced by teams at the state level remained the key factor that has stunted the growth of futsal and beach football in

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Draw No: 185/25 Date: 05/04/2025

**4D Classic**

1st Prize **8186**

2nd Prize **6563**

3rd Prize **1599**

SPECIAL		CONSOLATION	
9840	8010	1438	9033
0222	9703	8274	5051
3457	9792	8315	6285
0240	9180	9006	3930
9802	0247	3204	7863

**4D Jackpot**

Jackpot 1 **RM12,042,923.90**

**WON**

8186 + 6563	8186 + 1599
6563 + 8186	6563 + 1599
1599 + 8186	1599 + 6563

Jackpot 2 **RM315,145.42**

**WON**

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2 4 12 14 18 19 20 32

+ 5 34

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**2nd Prize**  
RM1,000 EVERY DAY for 100 days

**Jackpot Gold**

Jackpot 1 **RM12,442,301.14**

Jackpot 1 - Group 1 + Golden Number

Jackpot 2 **RM161,131.57** **PARTIALLY WON**

Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

GROUP 1	8 6 6 3 9 9
GROUP 2	86639 OR 66399
GROUP 3	8663 OR 6399
GROUP 4	866 OR 399
GROUP 5	86 OR 99
	OR 63
GOLDEN NUMBER	11

All jackpot amounts stated above are for this Draw. Subject to T&Cs of the Scheme. Please visit to [www.magnum4d.my](http://www.magnum4d.my) for more info. THE BIGGER PLAY IS TO PLAY RESPONSIBLY



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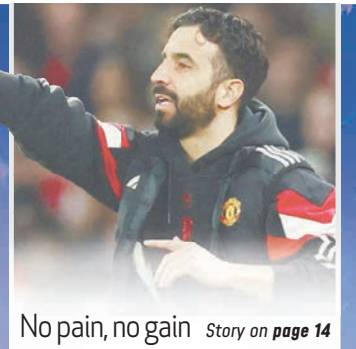
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SCAN ME



The challenge facing Tsunoda Story on page 12



No pain, no gain Story on page 14

## Kevin the magnificent

De Bruyne was the magician who brought personality to the Man City machine. He did not need to beat a man or reach the byline, he simply bent it like Beckham, whipping in passes and crosses, corners and free kicks, with a blend of pace, accuracy and menace that seemed to render them undefendable.

Story on page 13

