



Sikh community observes Vaisakhi with poignance

Prayers and thoughts dedicated to those affected by Myanmar quake and Putra Heights blaze at Gurdwara Sahib Seremban.

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Hospital security to be enhanced

Govt to review and tighten SOP at wards nationwide in light of alleged abduction of twins at Kuala Lipis Hospital.

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page 2



FESTIVE COLOURS ... Visitors to Brickfields in Kuala Lumpur yesterday browsing at the flower market ahead of the Tamil New Year, which is being celebrated today.
— AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

Air Kuning by-election candidates get to work

BN, PN and PSM hopefuls hit campaign trail with fervour to engage with party members and constituents.

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Free insurance coverage for 350 Islamic officials

Initiative made possible through RM165,000 contribution by Berjaya Corp founder and adviser.

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Security SOP to be stepped up at all govt hospitals

➤ Move follows allegations of pair of twins being abducted by impersonator posing as doctor at Kuala Lipis Hospital

PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry will enhance its security SOP at all hospitals to prevent any untoward incidents, said its minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

Referring to allegations of a pair of twins being abducted by an impersonator posing as a doctor, he said the ministry does not compromise on safety and is taking the matter seriously.

"We will continue to enhance our SOPs and security controls. We're not taking this lightly - it's a wake-up call for us to keep improving the effectiveness of our systems and regulatory measures."

He was speaking at a media conference after launching the World Physical Activity Day celebration held in conjunction with Car-Free Day in Putrajaya yesterday.

Also present was Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa.

On Saturday, the management of Kuala Lipis Hospital lodged a police report following allegations that a pair of twins, who had been there for nine months for treatment, were abducted by a fake doctor.

The Pahang Health Department said in a statement that investigations revealed that no such twins had received treatment for nine months in the hospital's paediatric ward, and that the mother in question last sought treatment at the hospital in July 2024.

As for the allegation involving a supposed doctor named "Dr Amalina Husna" who was said to have treated the "babies" for nine months, it was found that there was no record

of such a doctor having ever worked at Kuala Lipis Hospital.

On another matter, Dzulkefly said the ministry is planning to expand the Putrajaya Sihat Sejahtera initiative to civil servants in the states.

He said the initiative has received encouraging response following its implementation in 25 ministries and government agencies, involving more than 60,000 civil servants in Putrajaya.

Dzulkefly also said the condition of a man who was seriously injured in the gas pipeline fire in Putra Heights, Subang Jaya, on April 1 is improving.

He said the 21-year-old man, who is still dependent on a ventilator, has shown signs of progress at a private hospital, Bernama reported.

On the status of other victims receiving medical treatment, he said as of yesterday 30 people were still being treated at both public and private hospitals.

"There are currently 17 victims in private hospitals, 13 in Health Ministry hospitals and one in a private hospital's ICU."



Dzulkefly and Zaliha (second from right) taking part in the Syawal Fun Walk at Dataran Putrajaya yesterday. - BERNAMAPIC

'MA63 negotiations can be carried out amicably'

KUCHING: Negotiations between the federal and state governments on the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) can be carried out amicably without the need to bring the matter to court for legal interpretation, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

He said Sarawak has also guaranteed that it would not involve the courts in finalising the legal interpretation of MA63.

"As far as Sarawak is concerned, we will not bring this matter to court because we have two options. If it cannot be resolved at the highest leadership level, the final option is to take the matter to court for (legal) interpretation, not for dispute resolution."

"We are trying to avoid this. We are trying to reach an agreement at the federal and state

levels and agree to find a solution through negotiations without needing to refer to the courts," he said during an Executive Dialogue in conjunction with the *Jiwa Komuniti Madani dan Media* programme yesterday.

Fadillah, who also chairs the MA63 Implementation Action Council, expressed confidence that with strong cooperation between the Madani government and state administrations, the legal interpretation of the agreement could be finalised as outlined in the Federal Constitution.

He said there are currently five critical MA63-related claims that have yet to be resolved at the highest levels of the federal government as well as the Sabah and Sarawak governments, Bernama reported.

"These include the 35% parliamentary seat quota for Sabah and Sarawak, (oil) royalty and the formula for increasing development allocations for the two states as provided under Article 112D of the Federal Constitution."

The *Jiwa Komuniti Madani dan Media* programme, held at the Haji Kamaruddin Ahmad hall in Kampung Segedup, was aimed at boosting self-motivation and encouraging active participation among Madani Community members and media partners to strengthen communication networks.

Present were Sarawak Information Department director Helmy Hamid and Sarawak Utility and Telecommunications Deputy Minister Datuk Ibrahim Baki.

King, Queen extend festive greetings

KUALA LUMPUR: His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim and Her Majesty Raja Zarith Sofiah extended *Vaisakhi* and Tamil New Year greetings to the Malaysian Sikh and Tamil communities, respectively.

In a post on Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar's Facebook page, their Majesties emphasised that harmony among Malaysians, regardless of religion and race, has always been the pillar of the nation's prosperity.

"May this year bring joy, happiness and wellbeing to all who are celebrating."

The Tamil community is observing *Chittirai Puthandu*, the Tamil New Year today while the Malayalee community is celebrating *Vishu* and the Sikh community is commemorating *Vaisakhi*. - Bernama

M'sia to send medical officers to Myanmar

JOHOR BAHRU: Thirty-five medical officers from the Armed Forces will be sent on a humanitarian mission to earthquake-hit Myanmar, said Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

He said this follows the government's agreement in principle to set up a Malaysian field hospital in Myanmar which was devastated by an earthquake on March 28.

He added that the hospital's capacity and location would be determined later, pending approval from the Myanmar government.

"We'll determine the treatment capacity later, as there will also be collaboration with other Asean countries that plan to set up field hospitals."

"The hospital will provide orthopaedic and trauma care, and emergency surgery for victims with fractures and related injuries."

He said Malaysia would also take the opportunity to assist in training Myanmar's medical teams as part of capacity-building efforts in the health sector.

"We're ready, we're just waiting for approval and direction from Myanmar on where to deploy," he said after officiating at the opening of BHPetrol Bandar Seri Alam station and the Hari Raya celebration in Bandar Seri Alam yesterday.

Khaled said the government would request that Myanmar ensure the field hospital's location is secure and free from threats posed by armed groups. - Bernama

Cops prepare for visit of Chinese president

KUALA LUMPUR: Meticulous preparations are in full swing to ensure top-tier security for Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit from Tuesday to Thursday, according to police.

In a post on its official Facebook page, police said aerial surveillance was carried out on Saturday by Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Razarudin Husain aboard a helicopter piloted by Air Operations Force Commander Datuk Noor Sham Md Jani, with assistance from DSP Mohammad Firdaus Rosli.

"The hour-long flight covered strategic sites, including designated routes and venues for official events."

"This forms part of the force's efforts, through the Internal Security and Public Order Department and in coordination with multiple units, to ensure maximum security readiness throughout the visit."

Earlier, Razarudin received a briefing from Putrajaya district police chief ACP Aidi Sham Mohamed at a hotel in Putrajaya, before boarding the helicopter at the helipad in Precinct 6.

Also present was Kuala Lumpur Criminal Investigation Department chief SAC Khalid Saion. - Bernama

Strong turnout for PKR divisional polls

KUALA LUMPUR: The PKR divisional elections, which were held on Saturday in Selangor, Malacca, Perlis and Kedah, saw a 75% turnout.

According to a post on the official *Pemilihan Keadilan 2025* Facebook page, the polls were for the election of division, division Wanita (Women) and Youth leaders in three states, while in Kedah, only the divisional elections for Youth leaders were conducted, reported Bernama.

In Selangor, all divisional elections ended at 5pm, except for Hulu Langat where voting was extended until 7pm due to a relocation of the physical

polling centre.

Selangor PKR deputy chairman Datuk Borhan Aman Shah said following the relocation, both online and physical voting for Hulu Langat division members were extended by an additional two hours from the scheduled closing time of 5pm.

"Voting and election process today was orderly, smooth and more mature. We hope election results can be obtained earlier despite some technical issues."

Meanwhile, Malacca PKR Central Election Committee official Mohd Lokman Abdul Gani said 40 of the 94 members eligible to vote physically

cast their ballots at the Melaka International Trade Centre in Ayer Keroh, adding that 517 candidates are contesting for divisional level posts.

Perlis PKR Leadership Council chairman Noor Amin Ahmad said both the online and physical voting process for the Kangar, Padang Besar and Arau divisions went on smoothly and ended at 5pm.

He said the new system using blockchain technology in the party elections is a positive step towards enhancing transparency in the voting process.

On the low physical voter

turnout, Noor Amin said it could be because of the single polling centre located in Kangar. It was reported that only 15 out of the more than 40 voters turned up, involving 10 members for Kangar and five for Padang Besar divisions, while none was recorded for the Arau division.

The elections for PKR divisions, the Women's and Youth wings, which began yesterday, will be on until April 20.

Elections for the Central Leadership Council, Central Women's Leadership Council and Central Angkatan Muda Keadilan Leadership Council will be on May 24.

Candidates hit the ground running in Ayer Kuning

► Contenders are locals with strong educational and professional backgrounds but BN has advantage as it has held seat since 1986, says political analyst

TAPAH: The Ayer Kuning by-election campaign kicked off with all three candidates diving straight into voter engagement mode following the nomination process.

Barisan Nasional (BN) candidate Dr Mohamad Yusri Bakir, 54, and Perikatan Nasional's (PN) Abd Muhaimin Malek, 44, maintained packed schedules on their first day, meeting party members and constituents throughout the day

before wrapping up their campaigns around 11pm on Saturday.

Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) candidate Bawani KS, 40, focused on a grassroots approach, conducting a walkabout and hosting an online campaign session from 7pm to 9pm.

Political analyst Siti Noranizahhafizah Boyman said all three candidates bring solid credentials and local familiarity to the table. However, she believes BN

holds the advantage in retaining the seat it has controlled for nine consecutive terms since 1986.

"Each candidate has a strong educational and professional background and is well-known locally, but BN seems to have the upper hand," said the Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris senior lecturer and coordinator of the Humanities Cluster.

She said the collaboration

between BN and Pakatan Harapan (PH) machinery is a key advantage in BN's campaign strategy. Still, she warned that BN must not take voter support for granted, especially with local and national issues influencing voter sentiment, Bernama reported.

"One issue that's causing unease among voters is the temple controversy. BN needs to handle this sensitively and strategically."

In the 15th General Election, BN's Isham Shahrudin won the Ayer Kuning seat with 9,088 votes and a majority of 2,213. He defeated PH's Dr Mohd Nazri Hashim (6,875 votes), PN's Muhammad Noor Farid Zainal (6,812), PSM's Bawani (586) and Pejuang's Maziah Salim (105). The by-election was triggered by Isham's death due to a heart attack on Feb 22.

A total of 31,897 voters are registered in the Ayer Kuning constituency, including 31,315 ordinary voters and 582 police personnel and their spouses. Out of the total, 45.9 per cent are voters aged between 18 and 39.

Senior lecturer at Universiti Sultan Azlan Shah's Faculty of Islamic Studies and Social Sciences Dr Kamaruddin Yaakob said the federal government's recent pro-civil servant policies, particularly salary increases, may boost BN's appeal among public sector employees.

He also noted that PN's emphasis on 3R (race, religion, and royalty) issues and criticisms of UMNO-DAP cooperation are likely to resonate only with their hardcore base.

"The factors could push young and undecided voters towards BN. If voter turnout is favourable, BN is projected to retain the seat with over 10,000 votes," he said.

The Election Commission has scheduled early voting for April 22, while polling day is set for April 26.



Mohamad Yusri engaging with constituents during his campaign trail in Tapah yesterday. - BERNAMAPIC

'Avoid abusing social media in by-election campaigns'

KUALA LUMPUR: The Communications Ministry will continue to monitor the use of social media throughout the Ayer Kuning by-election campaign to ensure that it is not abused to spread fake news, defamatory material and content related to 3R (religion, race

and royalty).

Its minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil advised all parties to campaign responsibly by steering clear of sensitive issues.

"I am advising everyone to avoid slander or use 3R elements in the campaign, especially on social media because we have

the ability to track those who send messages and comments.

"With the amendment to the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 which came into effect on Feb 11, if a person is found guilty under Section 233, he can be fined up to

RM500,000, which is a very large amount. I hope this will serve as a reminder for us to avoid spreading slander throughout the campaign and at all times."

He told reporters that at the Lembah Pantai Parliamentary Constituency Aidilfitri Open House on Saturday. - Bernama

Fahmi eyes leadership council post in PKR elections

KUALA LUMPUR: PKR information chief Datuk Fahmi Fadzil has confirmed that he will contest a post in the party's Central Leadership Council in the party elections this May.

"I have visited several states, held discussions with many leaders and assessed the need to contest. After giving it serious thought, I've made my decision and would like to officially announce that I will be contesting a position in the leadership council to strengthen the party and inject fresh energy into the council."

"*Insha Allah*, I will healthily campaign alongside my colleagues and present a new leadership dynamic, as this is the team that will steer the party, together with our unity government partners, into the 16th General Election," he said.

The communications minister was speaking to reporters at the Lembah Pantai parliamentary constituency Hari Raya open house here last night.

The PKR divisional elections will run from April 11 to 20, while the central leadership polls, including for the Youth and Wanita wings, will be held on May 24. - Bernama

Student council backs call to review loan terms

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Student Consultative Council has welcomed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's proposal to review the loan rates and repayment terms of the National Higher Education Fund Corporation.

The council said the move reflects the government's concern for student welfare and its commitment in ensuring inclusive access to higher education.

"A review of the loan rates is necessary, especially with the rising cost of living. Improved loan rates would help students manage campus life more comfortably and allow them to focus on their studies without excessive financial stress," the council said in a statement.

The statement said the council also supports the proposal to revise repayment terms, hoping that more flexible and progressive options will benefit students in the long run and gradually improve repayment. It also commended the education fund's efforts to encourage and offer accessible payment channels.

The council also urged students facing financial hardship to reach out to it or their respective student representative councils, adding that it is ready to serve as a link between students, universities and the Higher Education Ministry. - Bernama

Insurance 'gift' brings joy, relief to religious officials

➤ Over 350 receive coverage as long-overdue recognition for dedicated services to Muslim community

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

SHAH ALAM: For many, it was long-overdue recognition, a powerful moment that honoured years of quiet dedication with a resounding message – you are seen and you matter.

In a heartening gesture, more than 350 *ulama*, *imam* and religious leaders were granted insurance coverage during the Majlis Makan Malam Mukmin Sempena Hari Raya event on Saturday.

Ustaz Faridul Rahman was among the recipients. Holding his insurance card, he said he was overwhelmed.

"It's not just about the recognition, it's about

being held in thoughts.

"This support brings real peace of mind. Now I know my family and I won't be left helpless if illness strikes," he said.

Faridul did not mince words about the realities many religious figures face.

"People think we've got it sorted out, but that couldn't be further from the truth. This gives us dignity, and a safety net we've never had."

The coverage – RM20,000 for hospitalisation, RM300 for outpatient care, and accident protection – came from a RM165,000 contribution by Berjaya Corporation founder and adviser Tan Sri Vincent Tan, who personally handed the insurance cards to recipients.

His gesture sent a strong signal – compassion does not check religion at the door.

Event chair Datuk Shahul Hameed Dawood said this was not just a Hari Raya celebration.

He said it was about honouring the invisible backbone of the community – those who keep the faith alive but often live without basic support.

"We are a community of 850,000 Indian Muslims. That's strength. But without unity, it's wasted.



(From left) Shahul, Tan and his wife Puan Sri Esther Tan at the event. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

"Our *ulama* are shaping the next generation with values and belief, yet many cannot afford to see a doctor."

He added that the insurance idea started within the community but only became reality with backing from Berjaya Corporation.

"I pray none of them ever need it. But if something happens, they'll have protection. Without it, some wouldn't even get through a

clinic's door."

Shahul, who is also Berjaya Land Berhad Group CEO, said Tan's involvement was a reminder that genuine compassion has no boundaries.

"We can pour millions into building grand mosques. But without people to teach, guide and serve, they're just empty halls. This is about protecting the soul of our faith."

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Seremban gurdwara marks *Vaisakhi* with prayer, service

➤ Celebration opens with focus on those affected by Myanmar earthquake and Putra Heights fire, reflecting unity and compassion

■ BY DEEPAKSHMI MANICKAM
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

SEREMBAN: This year's Vaisakhi celebrations at Gurdwara Sahib Seremban hits a poignant note, with a special *Ardaas* (Sikh prayer) dedicated to those impacted by the Putra Heights gas explosion and the Myanmar earthquake – offering blessings and hope across racial and religious lines.

"*Ardaas* is our way of appealing to the Almighty for the well-being of all humanity," said gurdwara president Arjan Singh Ranjit Singh.

"It reflects our guiding principle of *Sarbat Da Bhala*, which means goodwill for all. "As we celebrate the birth of the *Khalsa*, we also stand united in prayer for those facing pain and loss."

Vaisakhi, one of the most significant dates on the Sikh calendar, is being celebrated with renewed enthusiasm at gurdwaras worldwide this year.

The festival marks the founding of the *Khalsa* order by Guru Gobind Singh Ji and celebrates equality, community and spiritual strength.

Arjan also highlighted the deeper significance of the day.

"*Vaisakhi* marks the creation of the *Khalsa*, a pivotal moment when all Sikhs were given the names 'Singh' and 'Kaur', symbolising equality.

"It is also a harvest festival in Punjab, where farmers thank the Almighty for a bountiful season. Here in Malaysia, it is a time for our community to come together in reflection and celebration."

This year, the Seremban Gurdwara has lined up a variety of programmes for both devotees and the public, embodying Sikh values of selfless service.



Arjan said Vaisakhi marks the creation of the *Khalsa*, a pivotal moment when all Sikhs were given the names "Singh" and "Kaur".

A blood donation drive, in collaboration with the Tuanku Jaafar Hospital, will be held and is open to all races for the first time.

A free eye-screening programme was conducted on Saturday for senior citizens and the underprivileged, along with a youth "Amazing Race" and batik painting sessions for children.

Arjan noted a steady rise in turnout, thanks to growing awareness on the significance of the festival.

"Each year, our crowd grows as more Sikhs recognise the importance of *Vaisakhi*. With many employers granting unrecorded leave, more people are able to join us."

He added that the growing number of Sikhs relocating to Seremban has also contributed to larger gatherings.

Seremban's *Vaisakhi* celebration stands out for its strong focus on community service.

This year, Sikh youths are leading a charity drive to support orphanages and underprivileged families, raising funds to buy school supplies and daily essentials.

"It's vital that our younger generation learns the value of giving back. This initiative gives them a real opportunity to make a meaningful contribution," Arjan said.

The celebration also promotes interfaith harmony.

In collaboration with local religious and community groups, the gurdwara hosted *Pertubuhan Ikram Negeri Sembilan* for a vegetarian lunch yesterday, fostering goodwill and understanding across communities.

"We also work closely with organisations such as Ikram and the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism to maintain good ties with all races and faiths in Negeri Sembilan," he added.

Arjan's message to the Sikh community this *Vaisakhi* is rooted in unity and compassion.

"Our guiding principle, *Sarbat Da Bhala*, is all about goodwill for all. It's about respect, communication and love for everyone, no matter their background or belief.

"We are committed to the well-being of our nation and its people, reflecting the Sikh tenet of *Seva* – selfless service."

As the meaning of *Vaisakhi* continues to evolve in a rapidly changing world, Arjan stressed the enduring relevance of its teachings.

"Sikhism promotes humility, equality and the need to overcome ego, greed and anger. These values are more essential than ever in today's fast-paced world."

Tamil New Year celebrated with tradition, youthful spirit

PETALING JAYA: Tamil families across Malaysia today celebrate *Chithirai Puthandu* (Tamil New Year), a festival that stands as a vibrant expression of tradition, spiritual renewal and unity in diversity.

Speaking to *theSun*, Malaysia Hindu Sangam president Ganesan Thangavelu said Tamil New Year is more than just a date on the calendar – it is a time to reaffirm core Hindu values such as righteousness (*dharma*), gratitude and hope for the year ahead.

"It's a time to seek blessings from elders, visit temples and embark on new ventures with optimism," he said.

Traditionally marked by oil baths, *kolam* designs, temple visits and vegetarian feasts, Ganesan noted that Tamil New Year observances have evolved, especially among younger generations.

"Urbanisation and modern lifestyles have shifted the focus of celebrations from homes to temples and community centres.

"What's heartening is the growing interest among youth in expressing culture through music, dance and even digital storytelling on social media," he added.

To make this year's celebration more

inclusive and engaging for youths, Malaysia Hindu Sangam has introduced a variety of initiatives, including temple-based cultural performances, youth forums, *annadhanam* (free meals) and digital competitions aimed at promoting the Tamil language and heritage.

"We've encouraged all state and local councils to organise programmes that engage both the heart and mind. When young people take part in planning and leading events, it fosters a sense of ownership and ensures continuity," he said.

Ganesan also highlighted less-known traditions such as the early morning viewing of the *Kanni* – a display of auspicious items such as gold, fruits and scriptures to usher in prosperity – and the recitation of *Panchangam* in temples, to set the tone for the year's spiritual and economic outlook.

"Whether among Tamil Nadu Tamils or Sri Lankan Tamils, this festival bridges communities through shared values of family and spirituality. Even WhatsApp groups come alive with festive greetings and cultural bonding," he added.

Ganesan said in Malaysia's multicultural

setting, *Chithirai Puthandu* offers a meaningful opportunity for intercultural learning.

"We've seen increasing curiosity among non-Tamil Malaysians about *kolam* art, traditional food and temple rituals. Open houses, school events and media coverage could deepen mutual appreciation," he said.

Malaysia Hindu Sangam also acknowledged *Vishu*, celebrated by the Malayalee community, as an equally significant Hindu New Year celebration.

Falling around the same time as *Puthandu*, *Vishu* shares themes of renewal, gratitude and abundance.

"Just like *Puthandu*, *Vishu* begins with the *Vishukkani* – a symbolic first sight at dawn representing divine vision and prosperity," said Ganesan.

"Temple prayers, family gatherings and *Vishu Kaineettam* all reflect the same core Hindu values."

As both New Year festivals are celebrated, he emphasised: "These are not just rituals, they are living traditions that connect generations through compassion, unity and joy." – by **Deepalakshmi Manickam**

MP to be quizzed over durian farm incident

KUANTAN: Police will summon five individuals, including Raub MP Chow Yu Hui, to assist in investigations into alleged obstruction of public servants during a recent enforcement operation at a durian farm in Raub.

Raub police chief Supt Mohd Shahril Abd Rahman said Chow, who also serves as an adviser to the Save Musang King Alliance, will be called in soon to assist with investigations under Section 186 of the Penal Code.

"So far, we have received three police reports related to the operation and investigations are ongoing," he told Bernama when contacted yesterday.

On Saturday, police confirmed that the reports were lodged by an officer from the state enforcement unit, police and an NGO.

Mohd Shahril said enforcement activities at the durian farms would proceed as scheduled by authorities.

According to media reports, farmers had allegedly blocked access routes and displayed banners in protest after enforcement personnel destroyed their decades-old crops.

The situation was eventually brought under control without any untoward incidents.

Previously, the Pahang government denied violating a court order when it felled about 200 Musang King durian trees during the enforcement operation in Sungai Klau, Raub, on April 8. – Bernama

Senior citizen loses RM2.6m in scam

KUANTAN: A 72-year-old woman has lost more than RM2.6 million to a fake gold investment scheme she joined through social media last year.

Pahang police chief Datuk Seri Yahaya Othman said the victim was introduced to the scheme on Facebook by an individual on Feb 20, 2024.

She was later added to a WhatsApp group called "Xausd Kelas Pertengahan Elit Malaysia 3", on which she received "training" on gold investment and was instructed to use three different mobile apps.

"She made 60 transactions, transferring over RM2.6 million to two bank accounts provided by the individual between April 18 and Dec 9, 2024," he said in a statement yesterday.

Yahaya added that the victim realised she had been scammed when the apps became inaccessible and she failed to receive the promised returns.

The funds were from her personal savings, inheritance from her late husband, proceeds from the sale of her house and a loan from her child living abroad. – Bernama

Close call for woman in house collapse

LAWAS: A woman narrowly escaped being buried alive after her leg was pinned under a fallen cabinet when her house in Kampung Banting collapsed early yesterday.

In a statement, a Sarawak Fire and Rescue Department Operations Centre spokesperson said five other family members in the house escaped with minor injuries.

"The department received a distress call at 3.10am, and an eight-member team along with a fire engine from the Lawas Fire and Rescue station were despatched to the scene.

"Upon arrival, the team confirmed that a non-permanent structure had completely collapsed, and firefighters successfully extricated the trapped woman using special equipment," the statement said.

Emergency Medical Rescue Services personnel provided first aid before the victim was taken to hospital. – Bernama

Impressive response to national carrier tribute book

► Publication chronicles golden era through personal stories, historical insights

SUBANG JAYA: *The Malaysia Airlines We Built*, a tribute to the legacy of Malaysian Airline System (MAS), reached an impressive milestone ahead of its official launch, with nearly 500 copies sold through pre-orders.

Authored by over 70 former staff who served the national carrier until 2015, the book chronicles its golden era through personal stories, historical insights and reflections on the collective mission to transform it into a world-class airline.

The official launch was held on Saturday at Kelab Golf Negara Subang in Kelana Jaya and officiated by former MAS deputy chairman Tan Sri Sulaiman Sujak, accompanied by its former managing director Datuk Kamaruddin Ahmad.

Also present were former executive

vice-president (Group Finance) S. Suppiah, along with many other former MAS staff and guests.

The book traces MAS's journey from its founding on Oct 1, 1972, highlighting the dedication, sacrifices and pioneering spirit of the individuals who helped build the airline.

The book offers firsthand insights into how Malaysia's homegrown aviation workforce built an airline that once flew across six continents and became an internationally acclaimed, award-winning national icon for many years.

According to the Malaysia Airlines Retirees Association (Masra), local talent formed the backbone of a dedicated team that supported the nation's aspiration to develop MAS into a world-class airline, surpassing the expectations of both Malaysians and the global aviation community.

"These homegrown professionals became highly sought by aviation-related organisations worldwide, with their experience at MAS widely recognised and respected," Masra said in a statement.

"This recognition is a fine testament to the airline's commitment to fulfilling Malaysia's national aspiration of developing a highly skilled workforce for heavy industries."

"This pioneering success was a catalyst for the subsequent establishment of other similar industries in the country."

The public may contact Masra directly for information on purchasing the book, Bernama reported.

Suppiah, who led the book project team, recounted the early years of MAS, describing them as challenging and filled with sacrifice but driven by the team's strong desire to learn, which led to their rapid success.

"Other airlines have openly acknowledged that MAS produced some of the best pilots, aircraft maintenance engineers and in-flight crew with the golden touch."

"Hopefully, the experiences shared in this book would inspire future generations, even as we recognise that changes are needed in several areas to keep pace with technological advances in aviation and related sectors."

Improvements planned for public field

■ BY P. CHANDRA SAGARAN
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IPOH: A once-vibrant community field in Buntong is set to get a new look after years of neglect, raising hopes among residents who are eager to see it restored as a hub for local sports and recreation.

The field, owned by the Ipoh City Council and overseen by the Indian Recreation Club, had fallen into disrepair, drawing complaints from locals who have been unable to use it for some time.

Their concerns prompted Ipoh Barat MP M. Kulasegaram, who is also deputy minister in the Prime Minister's Department, to inspect the site on Thursday.

During his visit, he was briefed by the council and officers from the Implementation Coordination Unit on the status of rehabilitation works.

He said several key improvements were discussed, with flood mitigation topping the list.

"The Drainage and Irrigation Department has approved RM500,000 to address the flooding issue. Whenever it rains, the field becomes waterlogged due to poor drainage."

"The upgrades include constructing and improving drains, as well as diverting water flow to prevent flooding."

Another concern involved the field level that had yet to be raised, despite this being part of the project.

"Further discussions will be held with the relevant authorities regarding this," he added.

Kulasegaram revealed that 90% of the overall works have been completed.

He also pointed out that the concrete benches along the edge of the field pose a safety risk and should be replaced.

"They are too close to the playing area and could cause injuries to footballers and joggers," he said.

Additionally, railings at the site are proving to be an obstacle, particularly for disabled visitors trying to access the field.

He revealed that he has applied for government funds for the project, which were channelled via the Implementation Coordination Unit to the council, that subsequently appointed a contractor.

The first phase of the project received an allocation of RM190,000.

The second phase will involve installing lighting to allow the public to play football at night.

The field has long had uneven patches, rendering it unsuitable for sports activities.

Earlier, Perak Gerakan Public Complaints and Services Bureau deputy chairman V. Subramaniam led a group to inspect the site.

"Residents are still in the dark about whether the project has been completed."

"Water continues to stagnate whenever it rains," he said.

Thai police guarantee safety during Songkran

KOTA BHARU: Thai police have assured tourists, including Malaysians, of their safety during the Maha Songkran World Water Festival.

Thai Tourist Police (Region Seven) deputy chief Lieutenant-Colonel Sakarin Anusamansakul said authorities have enhanced security measures to ensure there are no untoward incidents during this year's celebration.

"Tourists visiting southern Thailand need not worry as additional security measures have been taken, including by increasing monitoring."

"Government agencies, including the health office and district offices, have also been mobilised to assist tourists," he said on Saturday.

He said authorities, including military forces and volunteers, have been deployed to control traffic to reduce road collisions.

Thailand kicked off the festival with a parade in Bangkok on Saturday, marking the start of the traditional Thai New Year celebrations.

Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, along with cabinet ministers, attended the opening ceremony of this year's Songkran, which was officially inscribed on Unesco's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2023.

"This year's Maha Songkran World Water Festival aims to boost tourism, stimulate the economy and highlight Thailand's capability to host world-class events," she said in a statement.

Immigration Bureau commissioner Pol Lieutenant-General Panumas Boonyalak said immigration officers and airport authorities have been mobilised nationwide to ensure safety and provide convenience for foreign tourists and the public during the festivities.

He said Thailand is entering its peak tourist season, with a sharp rise in foreign arrivals



Revellers in Bangkok dousing water on one another as they celebrate the Songkran festival, which marks the Thai New Year. — REUTERSPIC

expected during the Songkran celebration and daily tourist numbers projected to reach 150,000.

"The Immigration Bureau has coordinated with other government agencies to carry out operations nationwide to ensure safety, enhance Thailand's image and maximise its tourism potential," he said.

Songkran, traditionally celebrated from April 13 to 15, includes family reunions, paying

respects to elders and ancestors, and the washing of sacred Buddha images.

This year, April 16 has been declared an additional public holiday to compensate for April 13 falling on a Sunday, Bernama reported.

The festival is widely known for its water-throwing activities, vibrant parades and colourful displays, which symbolise the start of the Thai New Year in a spirit of joy and renewal.

Surge in tourist arrivals recorded in January, February

SANDAKAN: Tourist arrivals to Malaysia in the first two months of the year surged by 31.3% to 6.7 million compared with the same period last year, said Tourism, Arts and Culture Deputy Minister Khairul Firdaus Akbar Khan.

He said this marked a 14.5% increase from the pre-pandemic levels in 2019, with Singapore accounting for the most arrivals at 3.1 million, followed by China, Indonesia, Thailand and Brunei.

"Last year, Malaysia recorded 38 million

tourist arrivals, a significant 31.1% increase compared with the 29 million recorded in 2023. It also surpassed by 8.3% the pre-pandemic record of 35 million arrivals in 2019.

"The top tourist-generating markets were Singapore, Indonesia, China, Thailand, Brunei, India, the Philippines, South Korea, Australia and Taiwan."

Khairul Firdaus, who is also Batu Sapi MP, said tourist receipts reached RM106.78 billion last year, reflecting a growth of 43.7% from 2023

and exceeding the 2019 level by 20%.

He said Tourism Malaysia, in collaboration with the Sandakan Tourism Association, has launched the latest brochure directory, "A Guide to Sandakan", as part of its efforts in promoting interstate travel to Sabah and in conjunction with the Visit Malaysia 2026 campaign.

He also said the directory offers a blend of natural landscapes, diverse flora and fauna, adventure activities, cultural experiences and local gastronomy experiences.

The directory is a promotional option aimed at encouraging domestic and international visitors to plan holidays or weekend getaways to Sandakan. It is available at the airport and distributed through travel agencies to ensure easy accessibility to tourists.

"Sandakan offers a unique blend of wildlife encounters and adventure."

"Combined with local delicacies and fresh seafood, it is the ideal gateway to explore Sabah." — Bernama

Direct entry into Australian units with ANIBT Malaysia 6-month foundation

THE Australian National Institute of Business & Technology (ANIBT) Malaysia campus is offering a six-month foundation programme equivalent to A-Level, STPM, UEC and Year 12.

Regulated by the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) (<https://www.asqa.gov.au>), the course aims to equip students with professional skills and knowledge applicable across various industries, develop practical abilities immediately applicable in workplace settings, and provide a pathway to diploma or bachelor's degree programmes at Australian universities.

Upon completion, students can directly enter degree programmes in Australia in fields such as Business, Hospitality Management, Design, Information Technology, Commerce, Accounting, Health Science, Zoology and Animal Science, Psychological Science and many more.

Founded in 2003 in Melbourne, Australia, ANIBT is a registered training organisation with 21 years of experience in vocational education and training. Its Malaysian campus was officially set up in 2019, with Rachel Lee (*pix, top*) as the managing director who has 28 years of experience in the Malaysian education sector and a background in international language training.

Lee says that the six-month programme differs from Malaysian foundation programmes by focusing on a hands-on, practice-based teaching model, making it more engaging. She also says that ANIBT prioritises English proficiency in admissions – students must have obtained at least a credit in English in either the SPM or IGCSE exams. The course is relatively low-stress, with no final exams; students simply need to complete assessments for 10 units to successfully progress to the first year of university.

"If a student does not have a credit in English in SPM or IGCSE, they must undergo a three-month IELTS preparation course. Once they pass and achieve a score of 6.0 or above, they can proceed."

"All ANIBT courses are accredited by the Australian government and are also recognised by the Malaysian Ministry of Education. To date, over 300 Malaysian graduates have successfully entered various universities in Australia, including Deakin University, RMIT University, Victoria University and Swinburne University."

In addition to Australia, ANIBT graduates can also opt to complete their diploma or bachelor's degree programmes at PSB Academy in Singapore and receive degrees awarded by universities from Australia, the UK or New Zealand.

1-year diploma + 2-year degree, or 3-year degree options

ANIBT graduates can choose between a "one-plus-two" and a full three-year bachelor's degree options. Lee explains that this flexibility helps make the academic pathway

▷ 'Relatively low-stress', with no final exams, with emphasis on hands-on learning



Lee says that the six-month foundation programme has helped many Malaysian students fast-track their entry into Australian degree programmes since ANIBT was established in Malaysia in 2019.



ANIBT CEO Jianming Chen says Malaysia's status as a Commonwealth country makes it a logical and strategic choice for establishing an ANIBT branch.

smoother for students. "The school usually encourages students to choose the one-plus-two path to avoid unnecessary detours."

She gives an example: a student studying accounting who selects the one-plus-two path will receive a diploma after one year. If they find the subject unsuitable, they still have a recognised qualification and can switch to a different degree in the remaining two years.

On the other hand, students who commit to a full three-year degree and later realise they are not interested will have to start over, wasting a year's time and money.

Additionally, ANIBT adopts a small class teaching model to enhance student-teacher interaction



Since ANIBT Malaysia's establishment in 2019, over 300 Malaysian students have graduated and continued their studies in Australia through the programme.

and create a more effective and engaging learning environment.

Lee adds that students who complete their degree in Australia can apply for a two-year post-study graduate work visa. This allows them to gain employment or pursue further studies in Australia, which is beneficial for those considering permanent residency applications in the future.

Part-time work to ease living costs, reduce parents' burden

When it comes to studying in Australia, many parents and students assume it requires a large financial investment. Lee says this is a misconception.

"Parents generally worry about the weak Malaysian ringgit and think tuition and living expenses in Australia will be too high. But in reality, that's not the case. The Australian government allows international students to work part-time up to 24 hours per week, with a minimum hourly wage of A\$24.10 (RM64.70). This means a weekly income of A\$578 (RM1,552) – enough to cover living expenses and significantly ease the financial

burden on parents. During school holidays, there are no hour restrictions, so students can legally earn more."

Students can work part-time while studying to build real-world experience. This not only enhances soft skills like problem-solving, communication and time management but also allows them to graduate with two to three years of work experience.

Compared to someone who only studied for three years without any experience, a candidate with practical experience will clearly have the upper hand in job interviews – even if both hold the same IT degree.

"Some universities in Australia charge around A\$20,000 – approximately RM55,000 per year,



In 2023, ANIBT received the prestigious "Best Training Provider – Entrepreneurship Programme" award at the Malaysia Education and TVET Awards, presented by Malaysia's Deputy Minister of Human Resources.

which is affordable even for middle-income families. Tuition payments can also be made in instalments every three months.

"On top of that, scholarships are available. With proper planning, the financial pressure on parents is manageable. ANIBT also partners with Affin Bank Malaysia to offer education loans of up to RM600,000, with repayment terms up to 20 years."

New campus, expanding to other Malaysia states

As student numbers continue to grow, ANIBT will relocate to a new five-storey building located outside the Subang Jaya Da Men Mall, where it is currently located at. Once completed, it will accommodate up to 750 students.

"In the next five years, I hope to set up more ANIBT offices across the country. We are currently exploring partnerships and scouting for locations. Right now, we're in discussions with colleges in Johor and Perak. If successful, these colleges will also be able to offer ANIBT programmes, benefiting students in other states," says Lee.

She acknowledges that ANIBT's success in Malaysia would not have been possible without the full support of ANIBT's CEO in Australia, Jianming Chen (*pix, at left*).

"We are grateful to Mr Jianming Chen for allowing me to bring ANIBT to Malaysia, which has enabled many Malaysian students to fulfil their dream of studying abroad."



Myanmar marks new year mourning quake losses

▶ No music or dance for five-day festival

MANDALAY: Thousands marked the start of Myanmar's water festival yesterday in the ruins of last month's earthquake, with the country's most raucous holiday muted by the tragedy of the tremor.

The "Thingyan" festival typically celebrates Myanmar's new year with water-splashing rituals symbolising cleansing and renewal, but the central cities of Mandalay and Sagaing lie devastated from the 7.7-magnitude quake.

Two weeks on from the disaster which killed more than 3,600, hundreds are still living in tent encampments peppered among pancaked apartment blocks, razed tea shops and demolished hotels.

Many still lack working latrines and need to queue for drinking water, and the weather forecast for heavy rains has them fretting over their makeshift homes.

Early yesterday families were buying clay pots and plant sprigs customarily placed inside homes to welcome the new year.

"Everyone is in trouble this year," said 55-year-old Ma Phyu, camping with nine family members north of Mandalay's quake-damaged Royal Palace.

"I have to prepare the pot with the flowers because it is our tradition. But my heart is heavy."

The children in her family had been ordered not to splash water in the street for fear their neighbours would criticise them for celebrating as the city mourns.

The government has commanded the five-day festival to have no music or dance.

Since the March 28 quake Mandalay temperatures have soared up to a parching 44° Celsius while at night tent-dwellers are needed by mosquitos before rising at dawn to line up for aid.

More than 5,200 buildings have been destroyed according to official figures, while more than two million people are in need as a result of the earthquake, the UN says.

It has issued an emergency plea for US\$275 million (RM1.2 billion), following US President Donald Trump's evisceration of Washington's aid budget which has already hobbled some UN operations in Myanmar.

The World Food Programme says it is being forced to cut off one million people from vital aid this month because donations have dried up.

Myanmar has been riven by a civil war following a 2021 coup which spurred mass poverty and displacement even before the quake.

The tremors were felt as far away as Bangkok, where a high-rise under construction collapsed and trapped dozens of workers.

Despite an announced ceasefire, monitors say Myanmar's military has continued air strikes, while the government has accused anti-coup guerillas and ethnic armed groups of maintaining their offensives.

"At a moment when the sole focus should be on ensuring humanitarian aid gets to disaster zones, the military is launching attacks," said UN Human Rights Office spokeswoman Ravina Shamdasani in a statement this week. – AFP

Dwindling vulture population could harm human health, environment

PHNOM PENH: The often-shunned vultures play a crucial role in disease prevention and ecological cleanup, but their declining population could impact the environment, caution conservationists.

Chris Bowden, advisor to SAVE (Saving Asia's Vultures from Extinction) group, says South Asia and Southeast Asia were once hotbeds for vultures. But they have been decimated over the decades.

"Vultures have important ecosystem services that they provide. With thousands of the vultures here, tonnes of millions of rotting meat were consumed by vultures," he said in an interview from his office in Bangalore, India.

These long-necked, stern-looking birds roam rural fields in search of food and remain the custodians of nature – cleaning up what others cannot and playing a critical role in sustaining biodiversity.

India is central to the vulture population, home to nine species found in the region – the Himalayan vulture, Indian vulture, slender-billed vulture, Egyptian vulture, red-headed vulture, white-rumped vulture, griffon vulture, cinereous vulture and the bearded vulture.

In Southeast Asia, a 2022 census recorded 134 vultures in Cambodia – 71 grey vultures, 44 brown vultures and 19 fire vultures.

The white-rumped vulture, slender-billed vulture and red-headed vulture are native to Cambodia and found in the north and northeastern parts of the country. All three are considered critically endangered species.

The Cambodia Vulture Action Plan 2016 to 2025 reported: "The populations of all three species have been declining throughout their range during the 20th century and have been at an extremely low level in Cambodia for more than 15 years."

Vultures are beneficial to human health because they help dispose of carrion, thereby preventing the spread of diseases such as anthrax and rabies, which can affect both wildlife and humans, according to conservationists.

Ironically, they are a dwindling species, like many other endangered birds in recent decades.

The scavenging birds are also suffering from habitat loss, victims of poison baits used to kill other animals, carcass shortages, destruction of nesting trees, and the dangers posed by power transmission lines.

These birds are also falling victim to pharmaceutical poisoning – particularly from diclofenac, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug commonly used to treat pain and inflammation in cattle, according to experts.

Bowden stressed that vultures are keystone species and that their population should be restored to benefit the ecology and human safety. – Bernama

World Expo opens in rocky times

OSAKA: World Expo opened yesterday with 160 countries and regions showcasing their technology, culture and food, with host Japan hoping to provide the world with some much-needed hope.

Highlights at the show in Osaka until mid-October include a Mars meteorite, a beating artificial heart grown from stem cells and Hello Kitty figures in algae form.

Surrounding most of the pavilions, a chance for architects' fancies to run wild, is the world's largest wooden structure, the "Grand Ring".

Its creator Sou Fujimoto said the Expo is a "precious opportunity where so many different cultures ... and countries come together in one place to create diversity and unity".

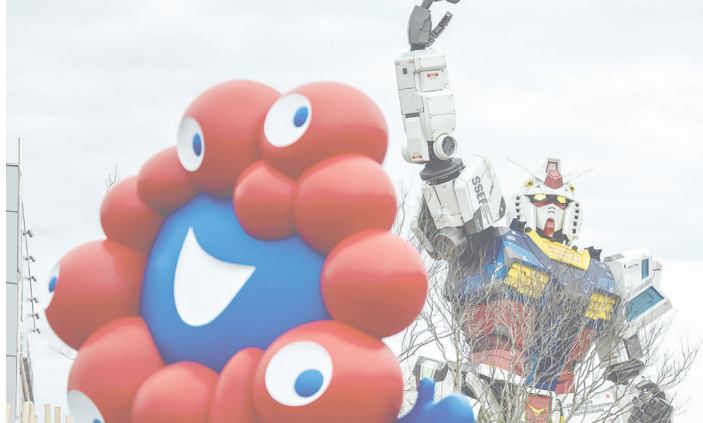
Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said the event would help bring a sense of unity in a "divided society".

"Through the Expo, we would like to restore a sense of unity in the world once again," Ishiba told reporters.

The US pavilion has the theme "America the Beautiful" and focuses on the country's landscapes, AI tech and space, including a simulated rocket launch where dry-ice blasters appear to ignite above visitors' heads.

The nearby Chinese pavilion, evoking a calligraphy scroll, focuses on green technology and lunar samples brought by the *Change-5* and *Change-6* probes.

After enjoying the view and sea breeze atop the Grand Ring's "skywalk", hungry visitors can stop by the world's longest sushi conveyor belt or meet many-eyed Expo 2025 mascot *Myaku-Myaku*.



Expo mascot *Myaku-Myaku* strolls past the Gundam pavilion. – AFP/PIC

Among the more bizarre displays are 32 sculptures of Hello Kitty dressed as different types of algae – to symbolise the plant's many uses – and a "human washing machine" that shows imagery based on the bather's heart rate.

Elsewhere are demonstrations of drone-like flying vehicles and the tiny artificial heart made from induced pluripotent stem cells shown in public for the first time.

"It has an actual pulse," said Byron Russel of Pasona Group, which runs the exhibit.

Themes of sustainability run through the Expo, including at the bauble-like Swiss pavilion, which aims to have the smallest ecological footprint.

Expo is also known as a World's Fair, and the phenomenon, which brought the Eiffel Tower to Paris, began with London's 1851 Crystal Palace exhibition and is held every five years.

Osaka last hosted the Expo in 1970 when Japan was booming and its technology the envy of the world. – AFP



Former president Yoon to face insurrection trial

SEOUL: Former South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol (*pic*) will face his first criminal trial today for insurrection after his short-lived imposition of martial law in December, which plunged the democratic country into political turmoil.

Yoon sought to impose military rule on the country when he ordered the suspension of political activity and the censorship of media on Dec 3. The decree lasted just six hours as it was voted down by opposition MPs.

The disastrous attempt led to Yoon's impeachment by the National Assembly shortly thereafter, with the Constitutional Court fully stripping him of his presidential duties on April 4.

Although he has lost all presidential privileges, Yoon still faces a criminal trial on insurrection charges, which will kick off today.

During a preliminary hearing in February, Yoon's lawyers argued that his detention had been procedurally

flawed, an argument accepted by the court, leading to his release 52 days after his arrest.

He was detained in January in a dawn raid after holding out against police and prosecutors for weeks, becoming the first sitting South Korean president to be arrested.

If convicted, Yoon could face life imprisonment or even the death penalty.

On Friday, the 64-year-old former leader vacated the presidential

residence and returned to his private home in Seoul, greeting supporters along the way.

"Now, I return to being an ordinary citizen of the Republic of Korea, and I will seek a new path in service of our country and our people," he said in a statement.

With Yoon's removal, South Korea is set to hold a snap election on June 3 to elect his successor. Until then, the country is governed by Acting President Han Duck-soo. – AFP

British MP denied entry to Hong Kong

Lawmaker had passport confiscated

LONDON: British Foreign Secretary David Lammy yesterday said he was deeply concerned after a UK lawmaker was denied entry to Hong Kong, and said he would be urgently raising the issue with the Chinese authorities.

Wera Hobhouse claimed she was the first British MP to be refused entry on arrival in Hong Kong since the former British colony was handed back to China in 1997.

Hobhouse is a member of the Inter-Parliamentary Alliance on China (IPAC).

"IPAC unites lawmakers worldwide, promoting democracy and addressing threats to the rules-based and human rights systems posed by the rise of China," the group says on its website.

The *Sunday Times* newspaper said Hobhouse, 65, flew to Hong Kong on Thursday on a personal trip to visit her newborn grandson.

It said she had her passport confiscated, was asked about her job and the purpose of her visit, had her luggage searched and was then taken to the boarding gate.

"When I was given the decision my voice was shaking and I was just saying: 'Why, please explain to me?'" the British weekly quoted her as saying.

"Authorities gave me no explanation for this cruel and upsetting blow. I hope the foreign secretary will recognise that this is an insult to all parliamentarians and seek answers."

AFP has contacted the Hong Kong government for comment.

It comes a week after two British MPs from the governing Labour Party were blocked from entering Israel and deported.

Hobhouse has been a member of

parliament for the smaller opposition Liberal Democrats since 2017.

"It is deeply concerning to hear that an MP on a personal trip has been refused entry to Hong Kong," Lammy said.

"We will urgently raise this with the authorities in Hong Kong and Beijing to demand an explanation."

"As I made clear earlier this week, it would be unacceptable for an MP to be denied entry for simply expressing their views as a parliamentarian."

In Hong Kong, members of its Democratic Party voted yesterday to move forward with plans to dissolve the party as its leaders first proposed

in February, the party's chair said.

The party is the latest Hong Kong civil society group to meet its end amid a years-long political crackdown, with scores of activists arrested, jailed or in exile.

The vote "means most of our members are willing to allow the Central Committee to take steps to dissolve the party," said Lo Kin-hei, chair of the 30-year-old party that was once the city's stalwart opposition force.

"This is not the final decision. In the coming few months, I hope there would be another general meeting (at which) we will get that motion into debate and vote." – AFP

Brothers aim for record-breaking Pacific crossing

LIMA: Three Scottish brothers have embarked on a mammoth journey from Peru hoping to set a record time for rowing across the Pacific Ocean.

Ewan, Jamie and Lachlan MacLean set off in a carbon fibre dinghy from Lima, aiming to reach Sydney in Australia 14,500km away in about four months.

The trio from Edinburgh, who previously rowed across the Atlantic Ocean, are hoping to raise more than US\$1 million (RM4.42 million) for clean water projects in Madagascar.

"We're going to be rowing non-stop with no outside support, so we'll be on our own," Lachlan said.

They left on Saturday after a brief ceremony during which youngest brother Jamie played the bagpipes accompanied by the Peruvian Navy band.

"One of the real challenges is sleep deprivation. You're rowing through the day and through the night continuously and shifts."

"It's absolutely relentless," eldest brother Ewan said.

The brothers plan to sleep five to six hours every 24 hours and row 12 to 14 hours a day for 120 to 150 days.

"This project is all to raise money for clean water projects in Madagascar" through their charity,

the MacLean Foundation, Lachlan said.

"Clean water is the most basic human need on the planet but 10% of people worldwide don't have access to it," they said on their website.

Only 14% of Madagascar's rural population has access to a clean water source, they said.

"Ocean conservation and keeping our oceans clean, it's all part of the same parcel," Lachlan said.

The brothers broke three world records crossing the Atlantic Ocean in 2020, without ever having rowed professionally, raising more than US\$260,000 for charity. – AFP



Ewan (left), Jamie (playing the bagpipe) and Lachlan set sail for Australia from Callao. – AFPIC

'New Zealand needs US as active partner'

SYDNEY: New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters said yesterday his country needed the United States as an "active" partner in the Indo-Pacific region, after a trip to Washington last month to bolster ties with the Trump administration.

New Zealand and the US have worked together in the Pacific to offset the growing influence of China, but there are concerns among some lawmakers in New Zealand about what the change in administration in

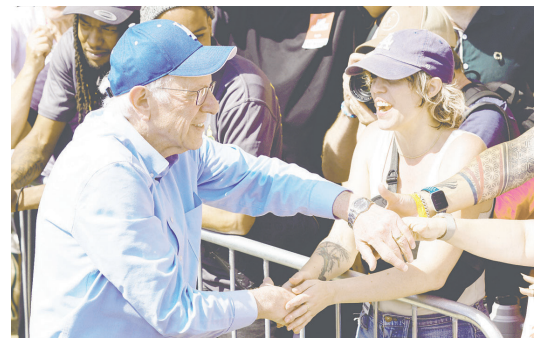
Washington and its suspension of aid funding will mean for the region.

Speaking in Honolulu, Hawaii, on a week-long Pacific trip by a group of New Zealand politicians, Peters said the message he took to the US was that "New Zealand wants, indeed needs, for the United States to remain an active, engaged and constructive partner in the Indo-Pacific."

"We look forward to more constructive dialogue in the days ahead," Winston said.

In Washington, Peters met Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Adviser Mike Waltz, director of the US Office of Foreign Assistance Peter Marocco, and other administration and Congressional representatives.

After the meetings, Peters said New Zealand's relationship with the US was on a "strong footing" amid what he called "the most challenging strategic environment in at least half a century". – Reuters



Sanders greeting supporters at the rally in Los Angeles. – REUTERS/PIC

Sanders fights apathy on American left

LOS ANGELES: Bernie Sanders is emerging as one of the most vocal opponents to US President Donald Trump, with the 83-year-old senator drawing tens of thousands of people to his "fighting oligarchy" rallies around the country.

Supporters packed the Gloria Molina Grand Park in Los Angeles on Saturday as guests including politicians, union representatives and musical acts took to the stage before speeches by Sanders and Democrat representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

"There are some 36,000 of you, the largest rally that we have ever had," Sanders told the cheering crowd.

"Your presence here today is making Donald Trump and Elon Musk very nervous."

The self-described socialist, an independent who has never been a member of the Democratic Party, has been attracting crowds over the past two months on his "fighting oligarchy" tour.

His progressive, leftist rhetoric has resonated with people opposed to Trump's policies and with those disappointed in established Democrats' lack of political resistance to Trump.

Folk rock legend Neil Young led the LA crowd on Saturday in chanting "Take America Back!" while he played the electric guitar.

Sanders addressed a litany of grievances, including Trump's massive cuts to government funding and threats to healthcare and research.

Sanders was "right the whole time," said 27-year-old Vera Loh.

"The collusion of money and politics has had terrible effects."

Loh, a housekeeper, said she was stunned by the apathy of many Democrat leaders since Trump's defeat of presidential candidate Kamala Harris in November.

"The party put too much focus on minorities," Loh said.

"If people don't see it as a class war, then we just get lost with the identity politics."

She said she wanted politicians to remember "we want higher pay, we want housing, we want to be able to afford things".

"We are living in a moment in which a handful of billionaires control the economic and political life of our country," Sanders said on Saturday.

Trump is moving the United States "rapidly toward an authoritarian form of society," he said.

The senator from Vermont hopes to encourage new independents to run for office without the Democrat label, at a time when the party is at an all-time low in the polls.

Sanders has no plans to run for president in 2028, but has taken rising progressive Ocasio-Cortez under his wing.

"No matter your race, religion, gender, identity or status, no matter if you disagree with me on some things."

"I hope you see that this movement is not about partisan labels or purity tests, but it's about class solidarity," the 35-year-old congresswoman told the crowd on Saturday. – AFP



Israeli missiles hit Gaza hospital

Church building damaged on Palm Sunday

CAIRO: Two Israeli missiles hit a building inside a main Gaza hospital yesterday, destroying the emergency and reception department and damaging other structures, medics said, in a strike which Israel said was against Hamas fighters using the facility.

Health officials at the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital evacuated the patients from the building after one person said he received a call from someone who identified himself with the Israeli security shortly before the attack took place.

No casualties were reported, according to the civil emergency service.

The Israeli military said in a statement it had taken steps to reduce harm to civilians before it struck the compound, which was being used by gunmen to plan attacks.

The hospital, an institution of the Anglican Church, was a major medical facility in Gaza City, according to the Gaza Health Ministry, which is now out of operation because of the attack.

"Hundreds of patients and injured people had to be evacuated in the middle of the night, and many of them are now out in the streets without medical care, which puts their lives at risk," said ministry spokesperson Khalil Al-Deqran.

Images circulating on social media, which Reuters could not immediately verify, showed dozens of people leaving the premises, with some appearing to be dragging sick relatives on hospital beds.

The Palestinian Foreign Ministry and Hamas condemned the attack at Al-Ahli, and said in a



The damaged St Philip's church at the Al-Ahli Arab Baptist Hospital. — REUTERS/SPIC

statement that Israel was destroying Gaza's healthcare system.

Israel says Hamas systematically exploits civilian structures, including hospitals, which

the group denies. Israeli forces have carried out numerous raids in medical facilities in the enclave.

In October 2023, a deadly blast at a parking

lot in the compound of Al-Ahli hospital was blamed by Hamas on an Israeli air strike. Israel said a failed rocket launch by the Islamic Jihad group had caused the blast.

The group denied it was responsible. An investigation by Human Rights Watch later concluded the 2023 explosion was most likely caused by a failed rocket launch.

Yesterday's strikes came hours after Hamas leaders visited Cairo to hold talks with Egyptian mediators over ways to salvage the stalled ceasefire agreement.

Egypt, Qatar and the United States have stepped up efforts to bridge the gaps between Hamas and Israel.

The Baptist Church in Jerusalem and the Middle East said in a statement that 20 minutes before the attack on the hospital, the Israeli military ordered all patients, employees and displaced people to evacuate the premises.

It said the two strikes destroyed the two-storey Genetic Laboratory, damaged the Pharmacy and Emergency Department buildings, and caused collateral damage to surrounding structures, including the St Philip's church building.

"The Diocese of Jerusalem is appalled but the bombing of the hospital is now for the fifth time since the beginning of the war in 2023 – and this time was on the morning of Palm Sunday and the beginning of Holy Week," the Baptist Church said.

"We call upon all governments and people of goodwill to intervene to stop all kinds of attacks on medical and humanitarian institutions," it said in a statement.

Separate strikes in the enclave yesterday killed at least 10 Palestinians, including the head of a police station in Khan Younis, in the southern part of the Hamas-run enclave, according to Hamas media and local health authorities. — Reuters

Russian strike on Sumy kills 21

KYIV: At least 21 people were killed and 83 others were wounded by a Russian ballistic missile strike in the heart of the northern Ukrainian city of Sumy yesterday, Ukraine's Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy condemned the attack – one of the deadliest strikes on Ukraine this year – and called for a tough international reaction against Moscow.

"Only scoundrels can act like this," he wrote on social media.

Reuters was seeking comment from Russian authorities.

Andriy Kovalenko, a security official who runs Ukraine's Centre for Countering Disinformation, noted that the strike came after

a visit to Moscow by US envoy Steve Witkoff.

"Russia is building all this so-called diplomacy ... around strikes on civilians," he wrote on Telegram.

Witkoff, US President Donald Trump's special envoy for Ukraine, held talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday in St Petersburg on the search for a Ukraine peace deal, as Trump told Russia to "get moving".

In the aftermath of yesterday's strike, Zelenskyy called on the US and Europe to get tough on Russia in response to what he described as terrorism.

"Russia wants this kind of terror and is dragging out this war. Without pressure on the aggressor, peace is impossible. Talks have never

stopped ballistic missiles and bombs," he wrote.

Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and holds about 20% of the country's territory in the east and south. Russian forces have been slowly advancing in the east of late, though missile and drone strikes now dominate the war.

Russia's Defence Ministry said on Saturday that Ukraine had carried out five attacks on Russian energy infrastructure over the previous day in what it called a violation of a US-brokered moratorium on such strikes.

Ukraine and Russia agreed to pause strikes on energy facilities last month but have accused each other of breaking the moratorium. — Reuters

Canada Tory leader takes on hatemongering

OTTAWA: Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre on the campaign trail on Saturday vowed to deport foreigners from Canada for criminal hatemongering, accusing pro-Palestinian protesters "hate marches" for contributing to a spike in anti-Semitism.

Poilievre was campaigning in an Ottawa electoral district contested by Liberal leader and Prime Minister Mark Carney, who this week drew the ire of his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu over remarks on the war in Gaza.

"We will bring in tougher laws to target vandalism, hate marches that break laws (and) violent attacks based on ethnicity and religion," Poilievre told reporters.

"Anyone who is here on a visitor visa who carries out law-breaking will be deported from this country," he said, words echoing messaging from the administration of US President Donald Trump, which has deported pro-Palestinian student protesters.

Poilievre has in the past sought to distance himself from Trump, whose economic attacks and threats to annex the United States' northern neighbour have outraged the Canadian electorate.

The Canadian conservative decried pro-Palestinian protests, saying they were contributing to a worsening situation with regard to hate crimes.

He condemned "the targeting of synagogues and Jewish schools with hate, vandalism, violence (and) firebombings".

The Jewish organisation B'nai Brith said in a report that the number of anti-Semitic acts more than doubled over the past two years. — AFP

Iran, US hold 'positive' talks in Oman

DUBAI: Iran and the US said they held "positive" and "constructive" talks in Oman on Saturday and agreed to reconvene next week in a dialogue meant to address Tehran's escalating nuclear programme, with President Donald Trump threatening military action if there is no deal.

"I think we are very close to a basis for negotiations and if we can conclude this basis next week, we'll have gone a long way and will be able to start real discussions based on that," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi told state television.

Araqchi said the talks – the first between Iran and a Trump administration, including his 2017-2021 first term – took place in a "productive, calm and positive atmosphere".

"Both sides have agreed to continue the talks ... probably Saturday. Iran and the US side want an agreement in the short term. We do

not want talks for (the sake of) talks," he said.

The White House called the talks involving Trump's Middle East envoy Steven Witkoff, US Ambassador to Oman Ana Escrogi and Araqchi "very positive and constructive".

"These issues are very complicated, and Special Envoy Witkoff's direct communication today was a step forward in achieving a mutually beneficial outcome. The sides agreed to meet again next Saturday," it said in a statement.

Asked about the talks, Trump told reporters on Saturday night: "I think they're going OK."

"Nothing matters until you get it done, so I don't like talking about it, but it's going OK. The Iran situation is going pretty good, I think," he said on Air Force One.

Saturday's exchanges were indirect and mediated by Oman, as Iran had wanted, rather than face-to-face, as Trump had demanded.

Each delegation had its separate room and exchanged messages via Oman's foreign minister, according to Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Esmail Baghaei.

Araqchi said his delegation had a brief encounter with its US counterpart headed by Witkoff, after they exited the talks.

"After the end of more than 2-1/2 hours of indirect talks, the heads of the Iranian and American delegations spoke for a few minutes in the presence of the Omani foreign minister as they left the talks. It (the encounter) was based on our political etiquette," Araqchi said.

"The focus of the talks will be de-escalating regional tensions, prisoner exchanges and limited agreements to ease sanctions (against Iran) in exchange for controlling Iran's nuclear programme," said an Omani source.

Baghaei denied this account but did not specify what was false. — Reuters

Clinching Malaysia's AI moment

COMMENT
by Tan Wei Siang

AS artificial intelligence (AI) transforms global industries, redefining productivity, innovation and even geopolitics, one question looms large: Will Malaysia ride the wave or be swept aside?

Malaysia has made undeniable strides in AI. The recent establishment of a national AI office marks a critical step in consolidating efforts across the government, academia and industry.

Backed by partnerships with global tech giants like Microsoft, Google and Amazon, the country is building a formidable infrastructure to support its AI ambitions. The groundwork is being laid – but is it enough?

The answer hinges on one thing: talent.

Talent pipeline still under pressure

STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) education is slowly improving. In 2024, Malaysia's STEM enrolment hit 50.83%, up from 41.84% in 2019.

It is progress but not a breakthrough. The reality? Many of our brightest students are opting out of STEM fields due to outdated teaching methods, limited industry exposure and a lingering belief that these subjects are "too hard" or "too risky".

Meanwhile, the demand for AI-related roles is exploding – with 500,000 AI-based jobs projected in Malaysia over the next six years. At our current pace, we are not just behind the curve – we are facing a severe talent drought. This is not just an education issue – it is a national competitiveness crisis.

What if we treated AI talent development the way we treat national security? Because that is what it is. The next generation of geopolitical influence will not be won with weapons – it will be won with algorithms, data and talent.

Chasing trends or leading them?

In the global AI race, the temptation is to play catch-up. To copy what others are doing.

However, that is not leadership – it is survival.

Malaysia should not aspire to be the Silicon Valley of Southeast Asia. It should aim to be something else entirely: a nation that builds ethical, inclusive and human-centric AI systems that serve industries and society.

The focus on ethical AI frameworks, currently being spearheaded by Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, is a powerful differentiator.

As the world grapples with deepfakes, surveillance capitalism and algorithmic bias, Malaysia has a rare opportunity: to be the moral compass of AI in the global south, but that window is closing fast.

Why not lead in Islamic AI governance or in AI for climate resilience, tailored to Southeast Asia's unique vulnerabilities or in multilingual AI, trained on Bahasa Malaysia and other regional languages? The tools are there. What we need is the ambition to think differently.

From assembly to intelligence lines

For decades, Malaysia thrived as a low-cost manufacturing hub but the game has changed. Global supply chains are moving upstream. If we do not evolve beyond assembly, we risk becoming irrelevant.

Industry4WRD, Malaysia's blueprint for smart manufacturing, has set a goal to raise productivity by 30% and increase the share of highly skilled workers in manufacturing from 18% to 35% by 2025. But it is more than a policy – it is a mindset shift.

Imagine Malaysian factories that self-diagnose their own malfunctions, predict supply chain disruptions and adapt in real time. Imagine small and medium enterprises using AI to design smarter products, not just produce them – this is upstream value and where the future is.

However, transformation will not happen with tax incentives alone. We need radical partnerships between industry and academia, on-site AI labs in factories and a national AI sandbox that allows local firms to test, fail, learn and win.

Asean 2025: Our moment to lead

Malaysia has now assumed the Asean



STEM education is slowly improving. In 2024, Malaysia's STEM enrolment hit 50.83%, up from 41.84% in 2019. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

chairmanship for 2025. This is no longer a theoretical opportunity – it is a live geopolitical platform. And in a year where AI will define not just economies but alliances, Malaysia must act boldly.

Why not launch an Asean AI and cloud computing hub, anchored in Malaysia and powered by regional talent or initiate an Asean charter on AI ethics, grounded in Southeast Asian values of balance, community and consent? Why not push for an Asean startup passport, streamlining cross-border growth for AI entrepreneurs and tech innovators?

The US and China are locked in an AI arms race. Europe is busy regulating.

What about Asean? It can become the bridge – a middle path that blends cutting-edge innovation with ethical pluralism and cultural diversity. Malaysia, now holding the gavel, has the rare opportunity to script that story. However, this window will not stay open for long. If we do not define the regional

AI agenda now, someone else will – on their terms, not ours.

The clock is ticking

AI is not just a tool – it is a tectonic force. It will redefine how we work, learn, govern and live. The only question is whether Malaysia wants to shape that future or be shaped by it.

We are at a tipping point. The infrastructure is forming. The talent is emerging. The global stage is within reach. What remains is the political will – and the collective imagination – to turn potential into leadership. Because in the age of AI, playing it safe is the most dangerous move of all.

Tan Wei Siang is an alumnus of Digital Parliament Malaysia (P050-Jelutong) and Youth Parliament (P122-Seputeh), former secretary of MPKK Taman Free School and alumnus of the Penang Youth Assembly. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Minding the mind to keep negativity at bay

COMMENT
by Dr Nahrizul Adib Kadri

IN 1982, social scientists James Wilson and George Kelling first proposed the broken window theory while studying criminology in New York City.

They observed something fascinating in Brooklyn neighbourhoods: when a single broken window in a building went unrepaired, vandals would soon break more windows. Trash would accumulate. Graffiti would appear. Eventually, entire blocks would descend into lawlessness.

The researchers concluded that small signs of disorder – like that first broken window – send a powerful message: no one cares here. This psychological signal invites more serious crimes and antisocial behaviour.

The theory was put to the test when New York implemented its zero-tolerance policy in the 1990s, aggressively fixing small problems like graffiti and turnstile jumping. Crime rates plummeted, proving that addressing minor issues prevents major ones.

Now consider this: What if our minds operate on the same principle?

We need a broken window theory for our mental landscape too. Just as neglected environments breed more neglect, our thought patterns follow

similar rules.

Allow one negative thought to linger, and soon it will be joined by others. However, maintain a clean, positive mental space, and life will begin to reflect that order back to you.

The 11th-century Persian polymath Omar Khayyam hinted at this truth in his *Rubaiyat*:

"The moving finger writes; and, having writ,

Moves on: nor all thy piety nor wit Shall lure it back to cancel half a line, Nor all thy tears wash out a word of it."

Khayyam's verse reminds us that our thoughts, once formed, create ripples in our reality. Like that first broken window, one negative thought leads to another, accumulating until they shape our entire outlook.

Modern neuroscience confirms what these traditions understood. A report from the University of Queensland in Australia pointed out that a number of research on depressive disorders highlights that the amygdala, part of our brain that processes emotions, becomes more active during negative emotional experiences.

This heightened activity can lead to chronic stress and depression, demonstrating how negative thoughts influence brain function and perception of threats.

In other words, negative thoughts

"Allow one negative thought to linger, and soon it will be joined by others. However, maintain a clean, positive mental space, and life will begin to reflect that order back to you."

activate the amygdala, putting us in a heightened stress state where we are more likely to perceive threats. It becomes a self-reinforcing cycle – psychologists call it "negative attentional bias". One anxious thought makes us notice more reasons to be anxious. One self-doubt invites more doubts.

This is not about naive positivity but about understanding the psychological environment we create for ourselves. Just as New York's subway system transformed when authorities stopped tolerating small crimes, our mental space can transform when we stop tolerating destructive thoughts.

The implications are profound. Every mental "broken window" we repair – every negative thought we reframe, every anxious spiral we interrupt – changes the entire neighbourhood of our mind. It sends a message to our subconscious: this is a well-kept space. Disorder is not welcome here.

To maintain this mental order, we must become vigilant caretakers of our minds. The moment a negative thought arises, such as "I'll never finish this project", we must repair it instantly by reframing it as "this feels overwhelming now, but I'll tackle it step by step".

Just as communities organise neighbourhood watch programmes (Rukun Tetangga) to maintain order, we can establish daily rituals that reinforce

positivity. Five minutes of gratitude journaling, for example, can serve as a mental neighbourhood watch that prevents negativity from taking root.

Beyond maintenance, we should also renovate our mental architecture by surrounding ourselves with positive influences – books, media and people (aka "influencers") who uplift rather than drain.

The Prophet Muhammad (Peace be upon Him) once likened good company to a musk seller and bad company to a blacksmith's bellows. The former leaves you with a pleasant fragrance while the latter blackens your clothes.

The company we keep, both in our environment and in our thoughts, real and virtual, shapes the state of our mind.

The next time you notice that first "broken window" in your thoughts – that initial irritation, that nagging doubt, that creeping anxiety – remember the lesson from Brooklyn. Address it immediately, before it invites more trouble.

Your mind, like any neighbourhood, thrives on care and maintenance. Do not let it ripple itself into reality.

Dr Nahrizul Adib Kadri is a professor of biomedical engineering and the principal of Ibnu Sina Residential College, Universiti Malaya. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Allianz SheSecures empowers women to succeed, thrive in insurance industry

PETALING JAYA: In celebration of International Women's Day last month, Allianz Malaysia Bhd introduced Allianz SheSecures, a transformative programme designed to empower women in the country through professional development, leadership training and a strong support network.

Allianz SheSecures equips participants with tools and confidence to thrive in the dynamic world of insurance. Through specialised training, mentorship, self-development workshops and industry insights, the programme aims to foster a strong, supportive community that helps women discover and achieve their life goals, inspire the next generation of diverse female leaders and elevate female agents into leadership roles while driving greater inclusivity in the sector.

Allianz Malaysia CEO Sean Wang said, "At Allianz, we are not just building careers, we are shaping leaders who will drive positive change, regardless of gender. We recognise the immense potential of women leaders and the significant impact they bring to the economy and society."

"Allianz SheSecures reflects our commitment to empowering women by providing them with the resources, support, and opportunities needed to thrive. By fostering a strong community of like-minded women, we create an environment where they can inspire, grow, and succeed – both professionally and personally, driving long-term success and greater inclusivity."

Beyond supporting female employees and agents, Allianz SheSecures welcomes women from diverse backgrounds including fresh graduates, full-time mothers re-entering the workforce, corporate professionals seeking a second chance, or aspiring female entrepreneurs.

It provides a platform for them to rediscover themselves and explore opportunities in the insurance industry.

Aeon Bank unveils Personal Financing-i

PETALING JAYA: Aeon Bank (M) Bhd recently launched Personal Financing-i, a 100% digital, syariah-compliant, collateral-free financing facility.

Personal Financing-i is open to all Malaysian citizens aged between 18 and 55 years old with a monthly gross income of RM3,000 or more. This includes gig economy workers, families of multi-generational households managing multiple financial commitments and Malaysians seeking a flexible financial facility.

Qualified applicants would be eligible for Personal Financing-i within the range of RM1,000 to RM10,000 with a flexible repayment tenure ranging from three to 24 months. The financing offers a flat profit rate of 6.88% per annum, with an effective profit rate ranging from 10.29% to 12.70% per annum. This cost-effective option, combined with a minimal RM1 Wakalah Fee upon acceptance, makes financing more accessible.

The application process for Aeon Bank's Personal Financing-i is fully online, allowing applicants to apply via the Aeon Bank mobile app.

Hong Leong Islamic Bank strengthens VBI initiatives

PETALING JAYA: Hong Leong Islamic Bank (HLISB) recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with GoBarakah, with plans to build a financial technology (fintech) ecosystem that channels donations and funds to underserved communities.

The partnership, formed under the PayNet Cambah programme by Payments Network Malaysia Sdn Bhd (PayNet), underscores the bank's commitment to enhance and strengthen its value-based intermediation (VBI) initiatives, as it consistently embeds VBI principles into its syariah propositions and business strategies.

GoBarakah is a fintech platform that enables corporate and public donations, or "funds for good", to be converted into e-vouchers, ensuring that assets in charitable and philanthropic initiatives remain streamlined, traceable and transparent. With GoBarakah as a platform, HLISB is creating a fintech-powered ecosystem that allows it to deliver social financing more effectively to underserved communities, thus expanding and further digitalising its VBI and community investment initiatives.

Collaborates with GoBarakah, PayNet to build fintech ecosystem to channel donations and funds to underserved communities

HLISB CEO Dafinah Ahmed Hilmi said, "At HLISB, we believe in the power of strategic collaboration to generate collective impact. In line with our goal of being a digital-focused and community-centric bank, we are committed to partnering with key industry players to improve our banking solutions, widen our reach and engage better with the communities we serve. This new collaboration is a step in the right direction towards expanding our responsible banking endeavours and further enhancing our VBI ecosystem."

"To us, VBI is not only about community investment. It is also about building trust with our customers, the community, and other industry stakeholders. In line with this, a key component of our VBI philosophy is transparency and

responsible disclosures, ensuring that we adhere to industry standards and keep stakeholders updated on our progress. It is with this mindset that we constantly seek innovative ways to integrate social impact into our core business operations and strategies. Having GoBarakah on board is a valued addition to our VBI ecosystem, ensuring we conduct our social financing initiatives within a digital platform, ensuring consistency and transparency."

GoBarakah CEO Firdaus Mohamed said, "As a fintech platform, we strive to digitalise the social financing process, making it easier and more transparent for underserved communities to receive the funding they need. By creating a seamless, digital ecosystem, corporations can provide funding and

donations to social enterprises, welfare homes and communities while also tracking when, how and where the funds are being utilised, ensuring the financing remains transparent, responsible and, most importantly, addresses the exact needs of its beneficiaries. With this collaboration with HLISB, we hope to continue enabling and facilitating trusted transactions in empowering more communities in the future."

With the launch of the collaboration, HLISB has embarked on its pilot social financing programme with GoBarakah, with the first recipient being Suri Inspirasi, a social enterprise dedicated to promoting a zero waste lifestyle, empowering underprivileged families and single mothers to build sustainable businesses by upcycling discarded fabrics into unique fashion items.

Utilising partial funding from Bank Negara Malaysia's ITEKAD programme combined with its internal capabilities, HLISB will be supporting 100 families in Langkawi to upskill, grow their businesses and generate a stable income for their households, instilling the entrepreneurial spirit within the community while also preventing excess textile waste in Malaysia.

"The PayNet Cambah programme focuses on growing communities and creating the much-needed sustainable cycles of prosperity among underserved communities. This can only be achieved through collaboration with various stakeholders to meet different needs as these communities grow and mature from unbankable to financially self-sustainable, whilst delivering positive social and environmental impact," said PayNet Group CEO Farhan Ahmad.

"As the Langkawi community we nurtured takes on the next phase to financial independence, collaborators like HLISB who support their banking needs and GoBarakah providing traceability of benefit payments are essential to enable them to achieve a sustained growth trajectory. This will invariably result in shared prosperity," he added.



Firdaus (left) and Dafinah at the MoU signing ceremony between GoBarakah and Hong Leong Islamic Bank.

HLAM double winner at LSEG Lipper Fund Awards 2025

PETALING JAYA: Hong Leong Asset Management Bhd (HLAM) achieved a double win at the LSEG Lipper Fund Awards Malaysia 2025.

HLAM's Hong Leong Dividend Fund, a fund approved under the Employees Provident Fund Members Investment Scheme, was named Best Equity Malaysia Income – Malaysia Provident Fund Over 10 Years, marking its third win in this category over the past four years.

In addition, Hong Leong Consumer Products Sector Fund was awarded Best Equity Sector

Consumer Discretionary – Malaysia Fund Over 3 Years.

HLAM executive director and CEO Chue Kwok Yan said these accolades reaffirm their investment philosophy, disciplined approach, and commitment to delivering strong and sustainable returns for investors.

"As we navigate an evolving financial landscape, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide investors with resilient and forward-looking investment solutions. While global markets continue to adjust to shifting economic conditions – including fluctuating inflation

outlook and ongoing geopolitical uncertainties – we are committed to staying agile, refining our strategies, and leveraging market opportunities. The trust and support from investors drive us to continuously evolve, ensuring that we stay ahead of trends and deliver the best outcomes."

"This achievement is not just ours – it also belongs to all our investors who have been part of our journey," he added.

LSEG Data & Analytics head of lipper research Otto Christian Kober said the 2025 LSEG Lipper Fund Awards are recognising perhaps the

most dramatic three-year period that the markets have seen in decades.

"Fund managers being recognised have steered their investors through a pandemic, a mild recession, rising geopolitical risks, skyrocketing inflation and dramatic central bank intervention."

"We applaud the 2025 LSEG Lipper Fund Award winners such as HLAM for delivering outperformance and the accompanying comfort of consistency to investors' portfolios through a cross-current of global market disruptions," he added.



Pastry World eyes expansion, listing

► Company aims to enter Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Macau this year, go public by 2030

■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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SHAH ALAM: Pastry World Sdn Bhd, a supplier of cakes, bread and pastries, is stepping up its regional expansion this year and aiming for a public listing by 2030.

Pastry World managing director Clement Lim (pic) said the company already has branches in Hong Kong and Singapore, and will be expanding to Indonesia, Vietnam, the Philippines and Macau this year to meet growing demand.

"We aim to lead the frozen pastry and bakery industry in exports to other countries. During Covid, we set up branches in Hong Kong and Singapore. This year, we're expanding to Indonesia, Vietnam, the



Philippines and Macau. Our clients want to grow in those regions and need our help. So as they grow, we grow," he told *SunBiz* in an interview.

Lim aims to take Pastry World public in 2028-2030 on the local stock exchange.

Right now, he said, the company is looking for monitoring and evaluation partners and banks to help with compliance and standards.

"We're exploring which advisers can best support our IPO (initial public offering) journey. At first, listing the company sounded impossible. But after learning about the requirements – the terms, compliance and standards – we now believe it's possible."

Lim said he plans to earmark the listing proceeds for further expansion,

automation and staff development.

"The IPO proceeds will support factory expansion across new markets. We'll also use them to attract talent and improve staff benefits. Another big focus is investing in automation and high-tech manufacturing lines," he said, adding that they are currently operating too many small facilities, and they need to be consolidated.

"By 2027, we plan to shift operations to a larger, centralised, fully automated factory that will be AI- and robot-powered."

Lim said Pastry World's current market share in Malaysia's food and beverage (F&B) distribution space is about 60%. "That leaves 40% room for expansion. I believe there's still a lot of opportunity."

He disclosed that the company currently records RM50 million in annual revenue and has seen year-on-year growth of 30%.

"Our internal target is to grow from RM50 million to RM100 million in three years. That's 30-50% annual growth. It's aggressive, but we believe we can achieve it through close collaboration between our sales, marketing, and research and development teams, all

aligned with customer needs."

Pastry World operates fully on a business-to-business model with clients including many high-profile names.

"We supply over 800 different variations of frozen bakery products to cafes, restaurants, hotels and F&B chains across Malaysia. Many F&B outlets don't have enough manpower to produce these items themselves, so they rely on us."

Lim said the challenge for the industry now is talent as the younger generation is not entering the pastry profession.

"Fewer young people are entering the pastry and baking profession. They're looking for easier work with better work-life balance. So we face a shortage of skilled professionals. That's why we want to elevate this industry and make it more attractive for the younger generation. We need to rebuild the talent pipeline for F&B."

Lim, who comes from a humble family background in Jitra, Kedah, even went overseas and worked illegally in his 20s just to gain industry experience.

"I have been in the industry for almost three decades. Earlier in my

career, I worked as an apprentice."

Lim started Pastry World in 2010 after a previous venture failed and eventually shut down in 2007.

"I lost everything. Pastry World was my restart. Now, it's been almost 15 years. When I restarted, it was just four of us. Today, we have almost 100 staff."

He said it has not been easy. During the Covid-19 pandemic, his second business venture nearly closed down due to cash flow issues. "But our employees were very supportive. They volunteered to take a 50% pay cut."

Lim said everyone pitched in – they helped with sales and did everything they could.

"I was so touched. I realised business is not about one person. It's about the whole team. That experience changed me."

Since then, Lim has made it his mission to do something bigger.

First, for his team, to create a better life for them.

"Second, to support Pastry World's customers. Because when they grow, we grow. And third, to contribute to society through corporate social responsibility, by training more pastry talent and giving back," he said.



Lim (centre) speaking at a press conference following HI Mobility's debut on Bursa Malaysia's Main Market in late March.

HI Mobility welcomes Prasarana's electric buses move

■ BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
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KUALA LUMPUR: HI Mobility Bhd has welcomed Prasarana Malaysia Bhd's move towards electric buses, saying the private sector can play a key role in supporting the transition to greener public transport.

HI Mobility executive director and CEO Lim Chern Chen said the company has built expertise not only in electric buses but also in hardware, software and infrastructure to optimise their use.

"We see this as a positive development and believe we can contribute to this effort. As a private player and one of the pioneers in EV (electric vehicle) adoption, we have developed capabilities beyond just buses to include the entire ecosystem needed to support them," he said following HI Mobility's listing on Bursa Malaysia's Main Market recently.

Lim said the company is targeting at least 30% of its fleet to be EVs within five years, depending on government policies on new vehicle procurement. "If government tenders

require internal combustion engine vehicles, we will comply. But given the option, we would prefer EVs as they offer long-term cost savings and lower carbon emissions."

Lim stressed that HI Mobility is not in competition with Prasarana or its Rapid KL service but instead sees itself as a complementary player in strengthening the country's public transport network.

"As a private company, our priority is to our shareholders, so we focus on cost efficiency and operational management. Meanwhile, government-linked companies like Prasarana have a different mandate, as their responsibility is to the public and expanding transport coverage. That is why we see ourselves as a supporting force in this effort," he said.

HI Mobility is working on expanding its urban bus routes, including increasing shuttle services and parking facilities to ease congestion, he added.

Lim said Malaysia's current EV charging infrastructure is sufficient, with most buses able to operate the entire day before being recharged at depots overnight. "In the future,

we will look into hybrid charging systems that combine depot charging with public charging stations to optimise efficiency."

He disclosed that the company is also expanding operations in Johor, driven by rising demand for cross-border and local bus services.

"Johor Bahru, Malacca and the Klang Valley are our main operational areas. With increasing demand in Johor, especially for cross-border and local transport, we see strong growth potential. We are also exploring opportunities in other regions, including East Malaysia," he said.

Lim said the company has no immediate plans to increase fares despite rising operational costs. "We understand that public transport is an essential service for social mobility, so we are committed to keeping fares affordable."

HI Mobility made its debut on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia on March 28, with its share opening at RM1.27, marking a 4.1% premium over its initial public offering price of RM1.22.

Palm oil sector must move away from traditional practices: Expert

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia must urgently prioritise industrial sustainability by embracing a bio-based economy to remain competitive and sustainable in the global market, particularly in the palm oil sector, according to an expert.

Research Institute for Sustainable Excellence and Leadership founder Hong Wai Onn emphasised the need for the palm oil sector to move away beyond traditional, commodity-based practices.

"The Malaysian palm oil sector must evolve. We need to rethink value creation through biomass valorisation, methane recovery, and circular business models that deliver environmental and economic benefits," he said in a statement on Saturday.

Hong highlighted practical examples already being piloted and commercialised, such as converting empty fruit bunches into biofuels and biochemicals, as well as capturing methane from palm oil mill effluent for renewable energy technologies.

"These innovations are reducing emissions while creating new revenue streams that can support Malaysia's shift towards a low-carbon economy," he noted.

Hong challenged the perception that circular economy is merely a buzzword, stressing instead that it is a powerful business strategy. "Circular thinking – designing for reuse, reducing waste, and cross-sector collaboration – enables industries to grow sustainably and profitably."

On the future of skills and leadership, Hong said there is growing demand for technically skilled professionals who can drive green innovation.

From carbon capture to biotech, he said, the industry need leaders who think in systems, embrace lifelong learning, and are willing to challenge the status quo. – Bernama



INDIVIDUALS not carrying on a business will need to file their personal tax returns latest by May 15. It must be done electronically as manual filing is no longer allowed. Missing this deadline will trigger penalties.

Under the Inland Revenue Board's (IRB) operational guidelines, the penalty rates could range from 15% of your tax payable if your tax return is filed within one year from the due date, and it will increase to 30% in the second year and to 45% thereafter. In practice, the late filing penalty starts at RM200. If there are any unpaid taxes after May 15, there will be an additional penalty of 10% on the outstanding taxes. Delaying the filing of your returns beyond May 15 is expensive.

TAX MATTERS



B.Y.S. M. THANNEERMALAI

Should everyone file tax returns?

Employees earning only employment income which have been subjected to monthly tax deduction need not submit any tax returns as their taxes deducted under the monthly tax deduction scheme will be regarded as the final tax. Although it is final tax, the IRB retains the right to review the assessments and issue additional

assessments in case there is an understatement of taxes. Although individuals who do not have any taxable income or are below the taxable income thresholds need not file tax returns, it is advisable to file the returns to safeguard your rights in case an amendment has to be made.

Retirees who have been filing tax returns in the past and perhaps currently they are receiving income that is not subject to tax, such as pension, can choose to cease filing their tax returns. In such circumstances, it will be advisable to write in to the IRB to close their tax files. Please ensure you get an acknowledgement or reply from the IRB to avoid any disputes with the

IRB in the future. This equally applies to taxpayers who are permanently leaving the country upon obtaining the tax clearance.

Take advantage of the tax reliefs

All reliefs are available in the e-filing system. Once you enter the e-filing system, the information on the tax reliefs is automatically displayed and it is easy to pick the ones that you are entitled to.

In addition to the existing reliefs, the new reliefs available for year of assessment 2024 is the expansion of relief for medical expenses for self, spouse and child for dental treatment (limited to RM1,000), expansion of scope of tax relief for medical treatment for parents to include complete medical examination (limited to RM1,000) including skills enhance-

ment courses to the existing lifestyle relief of RM2,500, increasing the lifestyle relief to purchase sport equipment and gym membership fees to RM1,000.

Keeping records

It is compulsory under the law to keep the relevant bills to support your relief claims for a period of seven years. In any tax audit, you will be asked to produce the underlying records supporting your claims, and in the event you are unable to produce this records, your relief claims will be denied and you will be subjected to penalties on the grounds that you have underpaid your taxes.

All donations you wish to claim tax deductions for should be supported with Section 44(6) receipts issued by the approved charitable

body or institutions.

Other matters to be declared

The tax return form requests you to declare any foreign bank accounts, and whether you have remitted any foreign sourced income into Malaysia. If you have foreign bank accounts, be prepared to explain the source of the funds in case you are requested to prepare a capital statement by the IRB.

If you have disposed of any real property, you need to disclose this in the return. Please ensure that the Real Property Gains Tax returns have been filed.

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

Manufacturing sector sales hit RM153b in February, 4.7% higher year-on-year

PETALING JAYA: The sales value of Malaysia's manufacturing sector reached RM153.1 billion in February 2025, a year-on-year improvement of 4.7% (January 2025: 3.5%).

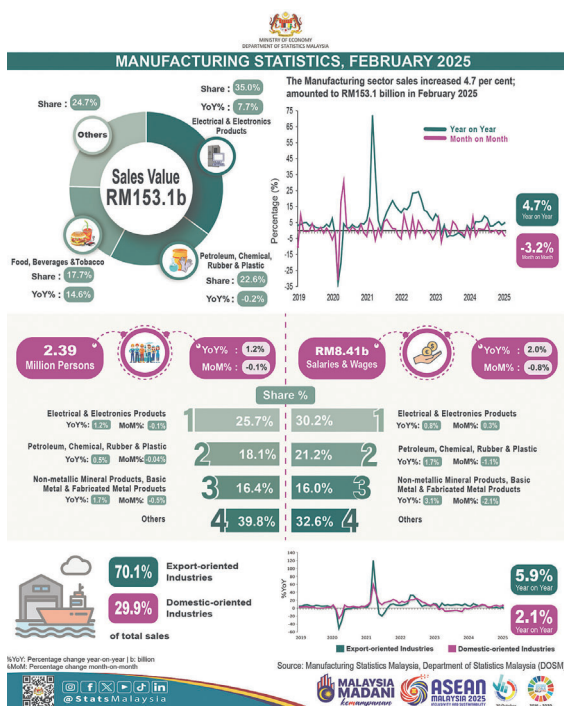
Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said, "The growth in sales value within the manufacturing sector was mainly driven by the food, beverages & tobacco sub-sector which recorded a favourable growth of 14.6% in February 2025 (January 2025: 10.6%). This was followed by the electrical & electronics products and non-metallic mineral products, basic metal & fabricated metal products sub-sectors at 7.7% (January: 7.3%) and 4.4% (January: 2.1%), respectively."

However, the manufacturing sector's February sales value was 3.2% lower than the RM158.1 billion recorded in the preceding month.

The sales value of export-oriented industries, representing 70.1% of total sales, expanded by 5.9% in February (January: 5.1%). The expansion was primarily due to the increase in the manufacture of vegetable & animal oils & fats by 18.3% (January: 11.1%). Furthermore, manufacture of computer, electronics & optical products rose by 7.8% (January: 7.7%), while manufacture of rubber products grew by 8.4% (January: 8.9%).

Similarly, domestic-oriented industries grew by 2.1% in February, after registering a marginal increase of 0.1% in January. The performance was due to the year-on-year increase in the manufacture of food processing products which continued to grow at 11.3% (January: 10.4%); followed by the manufacture of fabricated metal products industry except machinery & equipment (5.5%); and the manufacture of basic metals (5.2%).

On a month-on-month basis, both export and domestic-oriented industries dropped by 3.2% and 3.1%, respectively.



Gold futures expected to remain steady on US bond jitters, rate cut hopes

KUALA LUMPUR: Gold futures on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives are expected to remain supported this week, driven by expectations of US interest rate cuts and rising concerns over the stability of the US bond market.

SPI Asset Management managing director Stephen Innes said that while a weaker US dollar continues to support gold prices, the key driver

now is the diminishing appeal of US Treasuries as a safe-haven asset.

"US Treasuries, traditionally viewed as safe-haven instruments, are no longer offering the expected stability, prompting investors to shift towards gold," he told Bernama.

Innes added that China's decision to match the US with a 100% tariff hike highlights the risk

of a prolonged trade conflict between the world's two largest economies.

Although markets are starting to discount the direct economic impact, lingering uncertainty is expected to sustain demand for gold.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the April spot month rose to US\$3,224 per troy ounce from

US\$3,105.20 last week, while May 2025 increased to US\$3,234.40 from US\$3,126.80.

The June, July and August 2025 contracts each gained to US\$3,246.80 per troy ounce from US\$3,126.80 the previous week.

Volume surged to 2,738 lots from 340 lots previously, while open interest expanded to 1,232 contracts from 141.

YNH commits to stronger governance

➤ Group to form Investment Committee to strengthen investment oversight, enforce payment limits, and standardise policies for better control and compliance

KUALA LUMPUR: YNH Property Bhd has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening corporate governance and enhancing transparency, following the recently concluded Special Independent Review (SIR) by UHY Advisory (KL) Sdn Bhd.

The review, which examined the company's joint venture and turnkey construction arrangements, has highlighted areas requiring improvement in governance and internal controls.

In response, YNH said in a statement that it has taken proactive steps to address these findings. These include the establishment of an Investment Committee to strengthen oversight of investment activities, the implementation of defined authority limits for payment approvals, and the rollout of standardised policies and procedures to ensure greater control, accountability, and compliance across operations.

"The board of directors of YNH remains fully committed to refining governance frameworks and ensuring that all practices align with regulatory expectations and best practices in corporate stewardship," said chairman Datuk Yu Kuan Huat, adding that YNH's core fundamentals remain intact and continue to show resilience.

Moving forward, he said they are confident in their prospects and the group will continue to actively unlock value from its investment properties through strategic disposals so as to improve cash flows and reduce gearing.

The group recorded a significant turnaround in financial performance for the second quarter ended Dec 31, 2024, posting a revenue of RM300.3 million, up sharply from RM14.3 million in the same period last year – an increase of over 1,990%.

The group's operating profit improved to RM9 million from a loss of RM4.4 million previously. Although a net loss of RM684,931 was recorded, it marks a significant improvement from the RM18.4 million loss in the corresponding quarter the year before. This performance was primarily driven by the disposal of 163 Retail Park, ongoing contributions from Solasta Dutamas, and property sales from Manjung Point Seksyen II.

Solasta Dutamas, one of YNH's flagship joint venture projects, continues to progress and remains on track for completion in 2026. Located on a 3.52-acre freehold parcel in Mont Kiara, the project comprises three residential towers with a GDV of approximately RM771 million. The development has received strong market response and the unbilled sales are expected to contribute positively to YNH's future financial performance.

"YNH is committed to emerging from this matter with strengthened governance, improved financial discipline, and a continued focus on sustainable growth. The board wishes to thank all stakeholders for their continued trust and support as the group charts its next phase of growth," Yu concluded.

Expect another week of volatile trading on Bursa

KUALA LUMPUR: Heightened volatility in global markets is expected to weigh on investor sentiment, potentially leading Bursa Malaysia into an uncertain trend this week, as tariff-related tensions between the US and China remain unresolved.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng noted that the local bourse is likely to continue experiencing choppy trading, mirroring the fluctuations seen over the past week.

"US President Donald Trump's move to escalate his standoff with China is expected to heighten tensions and put further pressure on the global economic outlook," he told Bernama.

On Friday, China announced an increase in tariffs on US imports to 125%, retaliating against Trump's decision to raise duties on Chinese goods to 145%.

The retaliation measures have intensified fears of a prolonged trade war, raising concerns over potential disruptions to global supply chains.

Back home, Thong expects the FBM KLCI to trend within the 1,430 to 1,493 range this week.

"Based on technical analysis, the benchmark index needs to break back above the 1,493–1,500 level to regain momentum," he added.

Meanwhile, SPI Asset Management managing partner Stephen Innes said that despite the tariff walk-back, Malaysia's close economic ties to China – the primary target of US trade pressure – continue to expose the country to downside risk.

"Even with a 90-day tariff moratorium in place, we're entering a fog of uncertainty. Expect the market to remain range-bound and highly

sensitive to headlines," he said.

Bursa Malaysia traded in a yo-yo pattern last week, as tariff-related announcements kept market sentiment jittery, mirroring the volatility seen on Wall Street, where major indices swung between gains and losses throughout the week.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the key index declined 49.38 points to 1,454.76 from 1,504.14 a week earlier.

The FBM Emas Index dipped 385.57 points to 10,810.08, the FBMT 100 Index fell by 372.21 points to 10,601.67, and the FBM Emas Shariah Index decreased by 318.27 points to 10,604.91.

The FBM 70 Index shrank 585.24 points to 15,265.93 and the FBM ACE Index slipped 220.41 points to 4,412.19.

By sector, the Industrial Products and Services Index edged down 7.77 points to 139.43, the Financial Services Index tumbled 771.98 points to 17,534.53, the Plantation Index slumped 269.66 points to 7,062.53, and the Energy Index lost 70.53 points to 648.74.

Turnover surged to 19.65 billion units valued at RM17.56 billion from 6.7 billion units valued at RM5.74 billion in the preceding week.

The Main Market volume soared to 11.09 billion units worth RM14.08 billion against 3.98 billion units worth RM6.23 billion previously.

Warrants turnover swelled to 6.18 billion units worth RM524.37 million versus 1.95 billion units worth RM237.7 million in the prior week.

The ACE Market volume increased to 2.35 billion units valued at RM699.77 million from 769.81 million units valued at RM271.19 million previously.

EDUCATION

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Wholesale, retail trade sales rise to RM148.3b in February

► Increase of 5.1% compared with same month of 2024

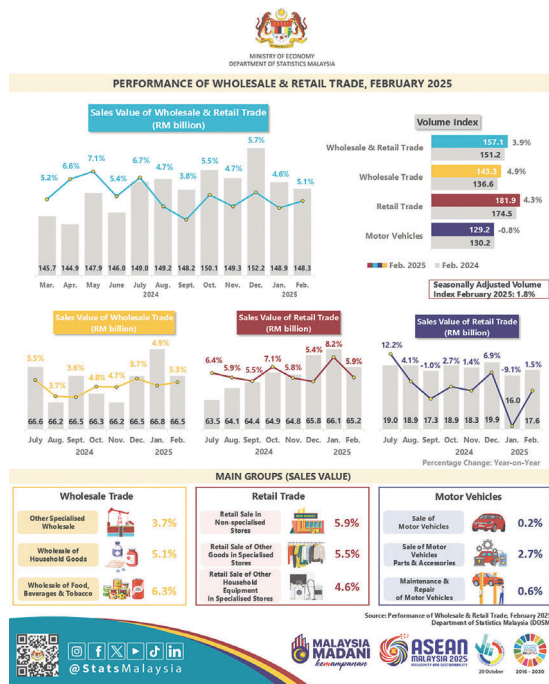
PETALING JAYA: The wholesale and retail trade recorded total sales of RM148.3 billion in February 2025, marking a year-on-year growth of 5.1%, said Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin.

"The increase in sales for February was mainly driven by the retail trade and the wholesale trade sub-sectors. Retail trade recorded total sales of RM65.2 billion, an increase of RM3.6 billion with a year-on-year growth of 5.9%. Wholesale trade registered total sales of RM65.5 billion, a rise of RM3.3 billion, with a year-on-year growth of 5.3%. During the same period, the motor vehicles sub-sector recorded sales amounting to RM17.6 billion, an increase of RM0.3 billion or 1.5% year-on-year."

Mohd Uzir highlighted that the growth in the retail trade sub-sector was primarily driven by robust performance across various categories. Retail sales in non-specialised stores increased by 5.9% to RM25 billion, while retail sales in specialised stores saw a growth of 5.5%, reaching RM13.8 billion in February.

Additionally, retail sales of household goods rose by 4.6% to RM7.4 billion, with the growth largely attributed to increased demand for building materials and hardware products. The surge in retail activities can be largely explained by pre-Ramadan and Hari Raya Aidilfitri purchases of essential items.

Moreover, retail sales of cultural and recreational goods increased by 8.6%, reaching RM2.9 billion. This growth was driven by heightened spending on school supplies ahead of the new academic session, which



began in mid-February.

In February, the wholesale trade sub-sector continued to display strong resilience, underpinned by sustained domestic demand for essential goods and household-related products.

According to Mohd Uzir, growth in the segment was particularly driven by other specialised wholesale trade, which increased by 3.7% to RM24.6 billion, mainly attributed to higher demand for hardware materials. These materials were

commonly used by households for furnishing and redecorating homes in anticipation of the upcoming festive season. Wholesale of food, beverages and tobacco also increased in this month with 6.3% year-on-year to RM13.3 billion.

This growth was largely supported by stronger consumer spending on food-related products in preparation for Ramadan and Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Meanwhile, wholesale of household goods expanded by 5.1% to RM13.7

billion, driven by increased demand for clothing, jewellery and pharmacy-related items, further reflecting positive consumer sentiment ahead of festive celebrations.

During the same period, motor vehicles sub-sector recorded an increase in sales compared to February last year, supported by sales of motor vehicle parts and accessories, which rose by 2.7% to RM5 billion. This was followed by sales, maintenance and repair of motorcycles, which grew by 8.2% to RM1.2 billion. Sales of motor vehicles also contributed to the rise in this group, with an increase of 0.2% to RM8.9 billion.

A similar trend was reported by the Road Transport Department, which recorded 67,327 vehicle registrations, a slight increase compared to 66,935 registrations in the same month of the previous year.

Online retail sales in February showed an increase, with the index rising by 8.5% year-on-year, driven by various festive promotions and back-to-school preparations. After seasonal adjustment, the index recorded a month-on-month decline of 2.1%.

In terms of volume index, wholesale and retail trade recorded a year-on-year increase of 3.9%. This growth was mainly driven by the wholesale trade sub-sector, which rose by 4.9%, followed by retail trade with a 4.3% increase. In contrast, the motor vehicles sub-sector recorded a decline of -0.8%. After seasonal adjustment, the volume index posted a month-on-month increase of 1.8% compared to January.

Looking ahead, the sector is expected to sustain its growth momentum, supported by stable domestic consumption and seasonal festive spending. Continued positive consumer sentiment is also anticipated to reinforce the sector's outlook in the near term.

Manufacturing sector bolsters Industrial Production Index

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) for February 2025 recorded a growth of 1.5%, driven by an increase in the manufacturing sector.

Chief Statistician of Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said, "The increase in the IPI to 1.5% in February 2025 was contributed by the growth in the manufacturing sector, which expanded by 4.8%. However, the output of the mining and electricity sectors declined by 8.9% and 2.8%, respectively. From a monthly comparison point of view, the IPI recorded a decrease of 6.8% (January 2025: -0.4%)."

The growth in the manufacturing sector for February was supported by output in export-oriented industries, which grew by 5.7%, compared to 5.6% in January.

Additionally, the manufacturing of chemicals and chemical products contributed to a growth rate of 5.7%.

However, export-oriented industries remained in the negative range, with a decline of 5.6% compared to January (-0.9%). Domestic-oriented industries showed growth of 2.9% in February compared to a modest growth of 0.2% in the previous month.

Mohd Uzir stated, "The contraction of 8.9% in the mining sector in February 2025 was driven by a decline in the output of natural gas and output of crude oil and condensate, which recorded a decline of 10.3% and 6.7% respectively. From a monthly comparison point of view, the mining index dropped to -12.5% from -0.5% recorded in January 2025."

Meanwhile, the electricity index fell by 2.8% in February, compared to a negative 0.2% recorded in the previous month. On a month-to-month comparison, the electricity index remained in the negative range, with a 6.6% decline.

Cumulatively, for January-February, the IPI increased by 1.8% compared to the same period in 2024, with the manufacturing sector index showing an expansion of 4.2%.

WARRANTS WATCH

Big swings in prices amid global market volatility

VOLATILITY surged on global markets as news on the US-China tariff standoff took over headlines last week.

Warrants turnover totalled RM524.2 million last week, more than double that of the previous week. Warrants over the Hang Seng Index (HSI) continued to dominate, comprising close to 80% of turnover, while warrants over the local benchmark FBM KLCI, Malaysian stocks, S&P 500 Index and Nikkei 225 saw increased interest.

The US market opened where it ended the week before last – down, as it posted further losses last Monday and Tuesday, before surging on record-setting volume on Wednesday, then see-sawing for the rest of the week. The turbulent week, marked by record level trading and swings, ended with the SP500 closing 5.7%

higher week-on-week (w-o-w), its best performance since November 2023 following its 9.1% decline last week.

Notably, on Wednesday, the surge in the SP500 (+9.5%) and the Nasdaq-100 (NDX) caused the bid price of call warrants SP500-C50 and NDX-CJ to surge 64.3% to RM0.115 and 116.7% to RM0.065, respectively, on Thursday, moving in larger percentages than their respective underlyings due to warrants' gearing effect.

The HSI also saw a volatile week. As the Hong Kong market was shut on the Friday before, HSI April futures opened into a 13.2% or 3,000-point slump on Monday, though it closed the next four days in the green to end the week at 20,856, 8.5% lower w-o-w. With the steep decline on Monday, investors took positions in a range of HSI calls, notably causing call HSI-CWCE to be sold out as investors net

Top index warrants by volume traded

Warrant name	Volume (million)	Issuer	Exercise level	Expiry date
HSTECH-C24	24.5	Macquarie	7,000.00	30 Jul 2025
SP500-C50	13.1	Macquarie	6,500.00	23 Jun 2025
HSTECH-C22	11.6	Macquarie	7,500.00	30 Jun 2025
HSTECH-C20	6.9	Macquarie	6,500.00	30 Jun 2025
NIKKEI-CN	4.0	Macquarie	40,000.00	13 Jun 2025

bought over 100 million units. As the futures rebounded 5.4% on Tuesday through Friday, this call warrant's bid price doubled from RM0.015 to RM0.030, demonstrating the gearing effect that warrants provide. By volume, top traded calls include HSI-CWC4 and HSI-CWC7, while top traded puts are HSI-PWD3 and HSI-PWDT.

The Hang Seng Tech Index (HSTech) also made notable moves

last week, pulling investors' attention to HSTech warrants. Trading activity was largely in the call warrants as the HSTech June futures fell 8.0% w-o-w.

Further, investors also turned to warrants over the FBM KLCI, with trading largely in the puts e.g. FBMKLCI-CB3 and FBMKLCI-CB4, though there was some interest in calls such as FBMKLCI-CQR and FBMKLCI-CQY.

Top traded local stock underlyings last week were Supermax Corporation Bhd and Gamuda Bhd, as the shares rose 11.2% and fell 6.9% w-o-w, respectively. Tariffs imposed on Chinese exports are seen to bode well for Malaysian glove makers, as they enhance the competitiveness of Malaysian glove exports to the US compared to Chinese producers.

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

Provided for Malaysian residents' information only. It is not an offer or recommendation to trade and is not research material. You should make your own assessment and seek professional advice. The warrants will not be offered to any US persons.

Indonesia's palm oil firms seek new markets

➤ US tariff pause 'good' but diversification must still be done, industry association chairman says

JAKARTA: Indonesian palm oil companies are seeking new markets in Europe, Africa and the Middle East as they try to protect themselves from the impact of Donald Trump's trade war, a top industry executive told AFP.

Indonesia is the world's biggest producer of the edible oil – used in making foods such as cakes, chocolate and margarine as well as cosmetics, soap and shampoo – and accounts for more than half the global supply.

But the 32% tariffs imposed on the country make it one of Asia's hardest hit by the US president's sweeping measures that have sent shockwaves around the world.

Palm oil is one of Indonesia's biggest exports to the United States, and while Trump has announced a 90-day pause on implementing the levies, producers say the uncertainty is forcing them to look elsewhere to earn their keep.

"It actually gives time for us to negotiate ... so products can still enter there. I think this is very good," said Eddy Martono, chairman of the Indonesian Palm Oil Association (Gapki) on Thursday.

However, he warned that market diversification "must still be done" to avoid the impact of the tariffs if they come into force later in the year, adding that firms would look to Africa – specifically top importer Egypt – the Middle East, Central Asia and Eastern Europe.

"We should not just depend on traditional markets. We will continue to do it. We have to do that," he said.

Exports of palm oil products to the United States have steadily grown in recent years, with Indonesia shipping 2.5 million tons in 2023, compared with 1.5 million tons in 2020, according to Gapki data.

Eddy called on Jakarta to keep its dominance in that market through talks, particularly as rival palm oil producer Malaysia was hit with lower tariffs. "Indonesian palm oil market share in the United States is 89%, very high. This is what we must maintain," he said.

According to Indonesian government data, the United States was the fourth-largest



Workers transfer harvested palm fruits to a transport truck before being processing into crude palm oil at a palm plantation in Pekanbaru, Indonesia. Palm oil is one of Indonesia's biggest exports to the United States. – AFP/IC

importer of palm oil in 2023, behind China, India and Pakistan.

But Eddy remained confident the US would still need Indonesian palm oil if no deal was sealed when the 90 days are up.

"It is still a necessity for the food industry. I believe our exports to the US will slightly decline or at least stagnate," he said. "Those who are harmed first are consumers in America because their main food industry products need palm oil."

Indonesian Finance Minister Sri Mulyani said at an economic meeting on Tuesday that she would lower a crude palm oil export tax, alleviating some of the pain.

While Eddy welcomed the move, saying it would make Indonesia's palm oil exports more competitive, for the country's 2.5 million palm oil smallholder farmers, the threatened tariffs were worrying.

Mansuetus Darto, the national council chairman of the Palm Oil Farmers Union said the measures would have had a far-reaching impact if a deal was not struck.

"The raw material of the palm oil will pile up

and then farmers cannot harvest anymore because of overcapacity in existing plants," he said before the pause was announced.

President Prabowo Subianto opted for a path of negotiation with Washington instead of retaliation and will send a high-level delegation later this month.

While Trump took aim at Indonesia's billion-dollar trade surplus with the United States, Prabowo said his threatened levies may have done Indonesia a favour by "forcing" it to be more efficient.

Chief economic minister Airlangga Hartarto also said Jakarta would buy more products such as liquefied natural gas and liquefied petroleum gas to close the gap with the world's biggest economy.

That has given hope to the industry that a deal with Trump can be done, otherwise they will be forced to turn elsewhere.

"There is still time," said Mansuetus after the pause was announced.

"The government should prepare to negotiate as best as possible with the US government." – AFP

Australia's government pledges A\$10b for first-time home buyers

SYDNEY: Australia's government said yesterday it would spend A\$10 billion (RM27.4 billion) on grants and loans to build up to 100,000 homes to help would-be home buyers get on the property ladder, ahead of a May 3 general election that has housing affordability as a key issue.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's centre-left Labour government, neck-and-neck with the opposition Liberal-National coalition ahead of the national vote, has pledged to build 1.2 million homes by 2030 to ease cost pressures in Australia, where many are dissatisfied with a lack of affordable housing.

The government, ahead of its campaign launch in Western Australia state capital Perth on Sunday, said if re-elected it would partner with state developers and industry to roll out the home-building plan reserved for first home buyers "to give them a fair go at owning their own home".

Additionally, the government said it would guarantee a portion of a first home buyer's home loan, allowing them to buy a home with a 5% deposit.

"This will help people buy their first home faster, without paying the burden of Lenders Mortgage Insurance," Albanese said in a statement.

Liberal leader Peter Dutton, a former police officer and the defence minister in the last Liberal-National government, has also been campaigning on the nation's so-called housing crisis, which he says is putting home ownership out of reach for many in the country of around 26 million.

Dutton, at the coalition's campaign launch in New South Wales state capital Sydney yesterday, is set to launch a rival plan allowing first-time buyers of new homes to deduct mortgage payments from income taxes, the Australian Broadcasting Corp reported.

Dutton's personal approval ratings are now close to those of Albanese, a long-time Labour lawmaker who grew up in government housing. Albanese has suffered from waning popularity as living costs and interest rates rose steeply during his tenure. – Reuters

Britain expands export finance support by £20b

LONDON: Britain said yesterday it will expand financing support for exporters by £20 billion (RM115.8 billion), including those affected by US tariffs, in an effort to give them stability and certainty in what it described as a new era of global trade.

The tariffs, introduced by US President Donald Trump, have deepened uncertainty for UK businesses about their exposure to the new trade regime.

The United States has put tariffs of 25% on imports of steel, aluminium and cars, and a baseline tariff of 10% on most other imports from countries like Britain.

The government said the increase raises UK Export Finance's lending capacity to £80 billion, with up to £10 billion set aside to support those most affected by the tariffs in the short term.

"The world is changing, which is why it is more important than ever to back our world-leading businesses and support them to navigate the challenges ahead," Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves said.

"Today's announcement will do that just, with thousands of businesses right across the country set to benefit."

Small and medium-sized businesses will also have access to loans of up to £2 million as part of the package. – Reuters

Japan policymaker wants stronger yen

TOKYO: Japan must strengthen the yen, such as by helping boost the country's industrial competitiveness, as the currency's weakness has pushed up households' living costs, the ruling party's policy chief said yesterday.

Ahead of trade talks with the US, Itsunori Onodera, chair of the Liberal Democratic Party's Policy Research Council, also said Japan should not intentionally sell its US Treasury holdings, the largest outside the United States, in retaliation against tariffs levied by President Donald Trump.

"As a US ally, the government shouldn't think about intentionally using US Treasury holdings," Onodera told a programme on public broadcaster NHK, rejecting an opposition lawmaker's suggestion that Tokyo use its huge holdings of US government debt as a negotiating tool in bilateral trade talks.

By blaming the weak yen for accelerating inflation, Onodera could be signalling that Japanese policymakers consider the yen's downtrend, rather than its recent rebound, as the bigger problem for the economy.

"The weak yen has been among factors

pushing up prices," Onodera said. "To strengthen the yen, it's important to strengthen Japanese companies."

The bilateral trade negotiations this week will likely include the thorny topic of currency policy, with some officials privately bracing for Washington to call on Tokyo to prop up the yen.

The slow pace at which the Bank of Japan (BOJ) is raising interest rates from ultra-low levels could also come under fire, sources have told Reuters.

Tokyo's top trade negotiator Ryosei Akazawa, the minister for economic revitalisation, will meet Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent on Thursday, two people familiar with the negotiations told Reuters.

Japan has historically sought to prevent its currency from rising too much, as a strong yen would hurt its export-reliant economy. But in recent years as the BOJ continued its ultra-loose monetary policy while the Federal Reserve raised US interest rates, the yen slid to nearly three-decade lows.

Tokyo intervened to buy the yen in 2022 and

again last year, when the dollar had risen to nearly ¥160. The Japanese currency has recently rallied in a broad-based sell-off of the dollar, which fell on Friday as low as ¥142.895, its lowest since September.

The 10 trading days since Trump hit automakers with tariffs were the most convulsive since the pandemic panic of 2020, as prices of stocks, bonds, oil, gold and the dollar swung wildly.

Selling in Treasuries – the linchpin safe asset in global markets – was the heaviest for decades. A massive wave of selling that hit US government debt in Asia on Wednesday stoked market speculation China was among those unloading its holdings.

The Treasury sell-off was among the factors that led Trump to announce a 90-day pause on his "reciprocal" tariff plan, with Bessent likely playing a key role.

Japan held US\$1.079 trillion (RM4.77 trillion) in Treasuries in January, followed by China with US\$760.8 billion, according to Treasury Department data. – Reuters



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Trump spares China electronics from tariffs

► List covers 20 product categories, including a broad code for computers, laptops, disk drives, and data processing devices

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's administration granted exclusions from steep reciprocal tariffs to smartphones, computers and some other electronics imported largely from China, providing a big break to tech firms like Apple that rely on imported products.

In a notice to shippers, the US Customs and Border Protection agency published a list of tariff codes excluded from the import taxes, with retroactive effect from 12:01am EDT (0401 GMT) on April 5.

It featured 20 product categories, including the broad 8471 code for all computers, laptops, disc drives and automatic data processing. It also included semiconductor devices, equipment, memory chips and flat panel displays.

The notice gave no explanation for the move, but the late-night exclusion provides welcome relief to major technology firms such as Apple, Dell Technologies and many other importers.

Trump's action also excludes the specified electronics from his 10% "baseline" tariffs on goods from most countries other than China, easing import costs for semiconductors from Taiwan and Apple iPhones produced in India.

Asked on Saturday about his reasoning for the exemptions and

plans for semiconductors, Trump told reporters on Air Force One: "I'll give you that answer on Monday. We'll be very specific on Monday ... we're taking in a lot of money, as a country, we're taking in a lot of money."

Wedbush Securities analyst Dan Ives called the announcement "the most bullish news we could have heard this weekend."

"There is still clear uncertainty and volatility ahead with these China negotiations.... Big Tech firms like Apple, Nvidia, Microsoft and the broader tech industry can breathe a huge sigh of relief this weekend into Monday," Ives said in an industry note.

Many tech company CEOs have embraced Trump as he begins his second term, attending his Jan 20 inauguration in Washington and celebrating with him afterward. Apple CEO Tim Cook hosted a pre-inaugural ball and has visited Trump at his home in Florida.

For the Chinese imports, the exclusion only applies to Trump's reciprocal tariffs, which climbed to 125% this week, according to a White House official. Trump's prior 20% duties on all Chinese imports that he said were related to the US fentanyl crisis remain in place.

But the official said Trump would launch a new national security trade

investigation into semiconductors soon that could lead to other new tariffs.

White House spokesman Karoline Leavitt said in a statement that Trump has made clear the US cannot rely on China to manufacture critical technologies such as semiconductors, chips, smartphones and laptops. But she said that at Trump's direction, major tech firms including Apple and chipmakers Nvidia and Taiwan Semiconductor "are hustling to onshore their manufacturing in the US as soon as possible."

The exemptions suggest an increasing awareness within the Trump administration of the pain his tariffs could inflict on inflation-weary consumers.

Even at a lower 54% tariff rate on Chinese imports, analysts predicted the price of a top-end Apple iPhone could jump to US\$2,300 (RM10,200) from US\$1,599. At 125%, economists and analysts have said US-China trade could largely halt.

Smartphones were the top US import from China in 2024, totaling US\$41.7 billion, while Chinese-built laptops were second, at US\$33.1 billion, according to US Census Bureau data.

Apple recently chartered cargo flights to ferry 600 tons of iPhones, or as many as 1.5 million, to the US from

India, after it stepped up production there in an effort to beat Trump's tariffs, Reuters reported on Friday.

Trump campaigned to win back the White House last year largely on a promise to bring down prices that, fueled by inflation that tarnished the economic reputation of former president Joe Biden and his Democratic allies.

But Trump also promised to impose the tariffs that have become central to his economic agenda, and he has dismissed turbulence in financial markets and price increases from the levies as a disturbance necessary to realign the world trading order as he has envisioned.

His so-called "reciprocal tariffs," however, raised fears of a US recession and drew criticism from some Republicans, who do not want to lose control of Congress in next year's mid-term elections to Democrats, who have attacked Trump's policies.

Trump delayed higher duty rates for 57 trading partners and the European Union last week, leaving most countries with a 10% tariff as they seek to negotiate trade deals with Washington.

The US president, who is spending the weekend at his residence in Florida, told reporters on Friday he was comfortable with the high tariffs on China but had a good relationship with President Xi Jinping and believed something positive would come out of the trade conflict between them.

Financial markets were in turmoil again on Friday as China matched Trump's latest tariff increase on US imports to 125%, raising the stakes in a trade war threatening to upend global supply chains.

US stocks ended a volatile week higher, but the safe haven of gold hit a record high during the session and benchmark US 10-year government bond yields posted their biggest weekly increase since 2001 alongside a slump in the dollar, signaling a lack of confidence in the US. - Reuters

New Zealand urges US to stay active in Indo-Pacific

SYDNEY: New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters said yesterday his country needed the US as an "active" partner in the Indo-Pacific region, after a trip to Washington last month to bolster ties with the Trump administration.

New Zealand and the US have worked together in the Pacific to offset the growing influence of China, but there are concerns among some lawmakers in New Zealand about what the change in administration in Washington and its suspension of aid funding will mean for the region.

Speaking in Honolulu, Hawaii on a week-long Pacific trip by a group of New Zealand politicians, Peters said the message he took to the US was that "New Zealand wants, indeed needs, for the US to remain an active, engaged and constructive partner in the Indo-Pacific."

"We look forward to more constructive dialogue in the days ahead," Winston said, according to a transcript.

In Washington, Peters met with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Adviser Mike Waltz, director of the US Office of Foreign Assistance Peter Marocco, and a range of other administration and Congressional representatives.

After the meetings, Peters said New Zealand's relationship with the US was on a "strong footing" amid what he called "the most challenging strategic environment in at least half a century." - Reuters

UK govt takes over British Steel after emergency law passed

LONDON: The UK government said it was taking control of Chinese-owned British Steel on Saturday after rushing an emergency law through parliament to avert the shutdown of the country's last factory that can make steel from scratch.

The struggling plant in northern England had faced imminent closure and Prime Minister Keir Starmer said his government "stepped in to save British Steel" with legislation to prevent its blast furnaces going out.

At a rare weekend session, parliament approved the law without opposition to take over the running of the Scunthorpe site, which employs several thousand people and produces steel crucial for UK industries including construction and rail transport.

The government saw its possible closure as a risk to Britain's long-term economic security, given the decline of the UK's once robust steel industry.

Officials were poised to take over the site after the emergency bill passed into law on Saturday evening, according to UK media reports.

Following its approval Starmer said his administration was "turning the page on a decade of decline" and "acting to protect the jobs of thousands of workers."

He insisted "all options are on the table to secure the future of the industry," after a government minister



The Scunthorpe site employs thousands of workers and produces steel that is vital to UK industries like construction and rail transport. - UNSPLASH PIX

indicated nationalisation could be a likely next step.

Earlier, as MPs debated in parliament, the prime minister made a dash to the region where he told steelworkers gathered in a nearby village hall that the measure was "in the national interest."

He said the "pretty unprecedented" move meant the government could secure "a future for steel" in Britain.

"The most important thing is we've got control of the site, we can make the decisions about what happens, and that means that those blast furnaces will stay on," he said.

It came after protests at the plant

and reports that workers had stopped executives from the company's Chinese owners Jingye accessing key areas of the steelworks on Saturday morning.

The *Times* newspaper said British Steel workers had seen off a "delegation of Chinese executives" trying to enter critical parts of the works.

Police said officers attended the scene "following a suspected breach of the peace," but no arrests were made.

Facing questions about nationalisation in parliament, business and trade secretary Jonathan Reynolds said state ownership "remains on the

table" and may be the "likely option".

But he said the scope of Saturday's legislation was more limited - it "does not transfer ownership to the government," he explained, saying this would have to be dealt with at a later stage.

Ministers have said no private company has been willing to invest in the plant.

The Chinese owners have said it is no longer financially viable to run the two furnaces at the site, where up to 2,700 jobs have been at risk.

Jingye bought British Steel in 2020 and says it has invested more than £1.2 billion (RM6.6 billion) to maintain operations but is losing around £700,000 a day.

Reynolds said "the effective market value of this company is zero," and that Jingye had wanted to maintain the operation in the UK but supply it with slab steel from China to keep it going.

The Labour government came under fire from the opposition Conservative party for its handling of the negotiations and faced calls from some left-wing politicians to fully nationalise the plant, while unions also urged the government to go further.

Reynolds explained the government had sought to buy raw materials to keep the furnaces running with "no losses whatsoever for Jingye," but met with resistance.

Instead, Jingye demanded the UK "transfer hundreds of millions of pounds to them, without any conditions to stop that money and potentially other assets being immediately transferred to China," he said. "They also refused a condition to keep the blast furnaces maintained."

Saturday's legislation allowed for criminal sanctions and gave the government powers to take over assets if executives fail to comply with instructions to keep the blast furnaces open.

MPs had left for their Easter holidays on Tuesday and had not been due to return to parliament until April 22 when the rare session was called.

MPs last sat on a Saturday recall of parliament at the start of the Falklands War between Britain and Argentina in 1982.

Scunthorpe in northern England hosts Britain's last virgin steel plant - which produces steel from raw rather than recycled materials - after Indian firm Tata's Port Talbot site shuttered its blast furnace last year.

British Steel has said US President Donald Trump's recent tariffs on the sector were partly to blame for the Scunthorpe plant's difficulties.

However, fierce competition from cheaper Asian steel has heaped pressure on Europe's beleaguered industry in recent years. - AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: APRIL 11

Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

11 APRIL 2025

Participation

Retail (18.58%)

Net (in RM mil.)

-22.98

Bought (in RM mil.)

Sold (in RM mil.)

446.09 469.08

Institution (40.47%)

Net (in RM mil.)

+140.63

Bought (in RM mil.)

Sold (in RM mil.)

1067.02 926.39

Foreign (40.95%)

Net (in RM mil.)

-117.65

Bought (in RM mil.)

Sold (in RM mil.)

949.84 1067.49

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



Need Some Ideas?

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

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

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

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	10,810.08 -32.33
FBMKLCI	1,454.76 -8.37
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	477.81 +5.84
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	139.43 +0.63
CONSTRUCTION	244.18 -2.50
FINANCIAL SERVICES	17,534.53 -229.68
ENERGY	648.74 -11.20
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	462.04 +2.31
HEALTH CARE	1,876.33 -3.67
TRANSPORTATION	946.12 -4.47
PROPERTY	933.47 +6.58
PLANTATION	7,062.53 +16.64
FBMSHA	10,604.91 +36.09
FBMACE	4,412.19 +42.46
TECHNOLOGY	43.76 +0.13
TURNOVER: 2.775 bil	VALUE: RM2,458 bil

Bursa ends slightly lower after trimming earlier losses

THE FBM KLCI slipped into negative territory end of last week on a subdued note, weighed down by selling in banking blue chips as investors continued to assess the global trade outlook.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI fell 8.37 points, or 0.57%, to 1,454.76 from Thursday's close of 1,463.13.

The benchmark index opened 21.47 points lower at 1,441.66 and retreated to a low of 1,434.92 during the morning session, before recouping its losses to hit a high 1,462.15 in the early afternoon session.

Market breadth, however, was slightly positive with gainers surpassing decliners by 472 to 442. A total of 456 counters were unchanged, 993 untraded, and nine suspended.

Turnover slid to 2.8 billion units valued at RM2.46 billion against 4.41 billion units valued at RM3.81 billion on Thursday.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said the FBM KLCI closed lower as investor sentiment remained weighed down by renewed concerns over US President Donald Trump's proposed tariff hikes on China.

"Although there is currently a temporary pause on certain duties, broader fears of disrupted trade flows and slower global economic growth continue to overshadow an otherwise encouraging macroeconomic data," he told Bernama.

Among the heavyweights, Maybank dropped 17 sen to RM9.82, Public Bank fell one sen to RM4.24, Tenaga Nasional slipped eight sen to RM13.22, CIMB lost 26 sen to RM6.65, and IHH Healthcare was flat at RM6.80.

For active trades, MYEG added 6.5 sen to 90 sen, SumiSajana added half-a-sen to 19.5 sen, Gamuda trimmed eight sen to RM3.77, Top Glove eased half-a-sen to 90.5 sen, and Tanco shed two sen to 78 sen.

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWC4	0.080	-	-	2,036,484
HSI-CWEP	0.105	+0.020	+23.53	1,860,383
MYEG	0.900	+0.065	+7.78	923,664
HSI-PWD3	0.050	-0.005	-9.09	699,178
SUMI	0.195	+0.005	+2.63	624,205
HSI-PWDT	0.110	-0.015	-12.00	357,482
GAMUDA	3.770	-0.080	-2.08	280,225
TOPGLOV	0.905	-0.005	-0.55	277,346
CIMB	6.650	-0.260	-3.76	276,305
HSI-CWC6	0.200	+0.015	+8.11	271,710
TANCO	0.780	-0.020	-2.50	268,112
HSI-CWEQ	0.145	+0.025	+20.83	262,552
INARI	1.660	-0.060	-3.49	256,915
GENM	1.670	+0.120	+7.74	253,714
SUPERMX	0.845	-0.005	-0.59	251,217
TRIVE	0.035	-	-	250,549
YTL-CIF	0.020	+0.005	+33.33	249,742
TANCO-WC	0.645	-0.005	-0.77	245,522
BPURI	0.345	-0.005	-1.43	229,543
VELESTO	0.155	+0.010	+6.90	223,323



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
F&N	24.020	+0.480	1,809
NIKKEI-HM	2.660	+0.290	220
BLDPLNT	10.800	+0.280	1,312
HLND	13.200	+0.260	868
UTDPLT	21.500	+0.260	3,406
NIKKEI-HL	1.700	+0.250	12
PPB	11.200	+0.220	3,532
GASMSIA	4.060	+0.180	15,572
PCHEM	3.090	+0.170	83,547
MIXUE-C1	0.315	+0.165	8
GOLDET	4.490	+0.160	2,311
KESM	2.750	+0.150	50
NESTLE	79.120	+0.140	2,032
PANAMY	13.280	+0.140	106
SP500-H53	1.820	+0.140	3,443
BYD-C31	0.555	+0.130	1,349
NDX-HK	0.965	+0.130	2,702
GENM	1.670	+0.120	253,714
HEIM	26.300	+0.120	1,362
KLK	19.520	+0.120	3,905

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
MYEG-C7K	0.050	+900.00	642
ECOWLD-C32	0.030	+500.00	22,737
MSM-C3	0.030	+200.00	17,231
MIXUE-C1	0.315	+110.00	8
BAT-C36	0.010	+100.00	101
BJCORP-WC	0.010	+100.00	2,215
CTOS-C14	0.010	+100.00	3,001
EAH	0.010	+100.00	13,007
GENM-C3F	0.010	+100.00	10,248
GENTINGC3L	0.010	+100.00	42,526
GREATC-C15	0.010	+100.00	500
JADI-WB	0.010	+100.00	6,064
MAXLAND-WB	0.010	+100.00	9,020
MSM-C2	0.010	+100.00	14,465
BYD-C33	0.190	+90.00	541
MYEG-C7Q	0.065	+85.71	15,000
MYEG-C8G	0.055	+83.33	1,000
RHONEMA-WA	0.050	+66.67	6,781
99SMART-CH	0.065	+62.50	150
MSM-C5	0.065	+62.50	2,930

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	40,212.71	619.05	1.56
S&P 500 [US]	5,363.36	95.31	1.81
NASDAQ [US]	16,724.46	337.15	2.06
NYSE [US]	18,219.65	329.08	1.84
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	4,787.23	-31.69	-0.66
FTSE 100 [UK]	7,964.18	50.93	0.64
DAX [GER]	20,374.10	-188.63	-0.92
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	33,585.58	-1,023.42	-2.96
TOPIX [JPN]	2,466.91	-72.49	-2.85
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	20,914.69	232.91	1.13
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,750.52	15.41	0.41
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	173.29	-0.1	-0.06
SH SE COM [CHN]	3,238.23	14.59	0.45
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,432.72	-12.34	-0.5
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	75,157.26	1,310.11	1.77
ASX 200 [AUS]	7,646.46	-63.09	-0.82
ALL ORDINARIES INDEX [AUS]	7,853.68	-60.17	-0.76
FBM KLCI	1,454.76	-8.37	-0.57
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	3,512.53	-65.3	-1.83
WTI [US\$/BBL]	61.5	1.43	2.38
BRENT [US\$/BBL]	64.76	1.43	2.26
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	3,244.60	67.1	2.11
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	31.91	1.15	3.74
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	948.2	12.39	1.32
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	452.3	18.65	4.3
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,154.50	166.5	1.85
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	497	8.25	1.69
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	570.25	16.75	3.03
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	47.84	1.12	2.4
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	8,440.00	366	4.53
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	169.8	3.5	2.1

As at 5pm, April 11

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
PETDAG	18.960	-0.320	1,215
MPI	14.800	-0.280	4,857
CIMB	6.650	-0.260	276,305
DLADY	27.860	-0.260	167
AMBANK	5.030	-0.240	154,692
KLUANG	5.420	-0.210	40
YINSON	1.760	-0.190	73,568
APOLLO	5.810	-0.170	20
MAYBANK	9.820	-0.170	103,739
ATECH	2.720	-0.140	4,603
DUFU-CZ	0.015	-0.135	4,000
NIKKEI-CO	0.305	-0.130	9,480
EKOVEST-C69	0.035	-0.115	2,000
DAYANG	1.650	-0.100	92,951
FRONTKN	3.100	-0.100	81,493
KEINHIN	1.170	-0.100	21
SURIA	1.560	-0.100	146
KGB	3.020	-0.090	33,813
ORNA	0.710	-0.090	102
COASTAL	1.330	-0.080	1,049

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
DUFU-CZ	0.015	-90.00	4,000
HIAPTEK-CH	0.010	-77.78	7,500
EKOVEST-C69	0.035	-76.67	2,000
AFFIN-C20	0.010	-66.67	667
HENGYUANC61	0.015	-62.50	280
EVD-PA	0.010	-60.00	1
MYEG-C7W	0.040	-55.56	195
MAHSING-C79	0.070	-53.33	250
KEYFIELD-CC	0.040	-52.94	1,000
CIMB-C1W	0.005	-50.00	14,680
FBMKLCI-CQW	0.005	-50.00	3,000
GAMUDA-C2V	0.010	-50.00	60
HARTA-C2K	0.005	-50.00	30
HARTA-C2L	0.005	-50.00	11,455
IOIPG-C31	0.010	-50.00	200
PCHEM-C1E	0.005	-50.00	100
PHB	0.005	-50.00	47,818
SUPERMX-C4J	0.005	-50.00	700
UWC-C9	0.005	-50.00	300
WCT-C28	0.035	-50.00	500

MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

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

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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Rubber to move sideways, tracking regional futures and oil

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's rubber market is expected to stay flat this week, following regional rubber futures and oil prices, amid US-China trade tensions, says Malaysian Rubber Glove Manufacturers Association (Margma).

The association noted that last week has been a tumultuous period marked by a series of tariff announcements, which have weighed on the regional rubber market and crude oil prices, coupled with the ringgit strengthening against the US dollar.

Nonetheless, the market may see some positive momentum this week, supported by the anticipated visit of Chinese President Xi Jinping to Southeast Asian countries, including Malaysia.

"Natural rubber (NR) supply remains tight in major producing countries due to weather conditions and crop damage in Thailand.

"While rubber prices may rebound upwards due to these factors, escalating concerns of a global economic downturn prevails," the association told Bernama.

Echoing Margma, a dealer told Bernama the rubber market is expected to continue tracking regional rubber futures performance, the ringgit's strength against the US dollar, benchmark crude oil prices, and US tariff developments, amid a limited NR supply in major producing countries.

"Market players are also monitoring the US economic indicators, especially those that provide cues on US monetary policy, Chinese economic stimulus amid escalating concerns of a global economic slowdown," the dealer said.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the Malaysian Rubber Board's reference price for Standard Malaysian Rubber 20 decreased by 74 sen to 762.5 sen per kilogramme (kg), while latex in bulk declined by 11 sen to 657 sen per kg.

Ringgit up as US-China trade war weighs on dollar

THE ringgit ended last week firmer against the US dollar, supported by weaker sentiment towards the greenback amid escalating US-China trade tensions.

At 6pm, the local currency rose to 4.4200/4265 against the US dollar, up from Thursday's close of 4.4670/4730. Year to date, the ringgit has strengthened by 1.09%.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the ringgit's appreciation aligned with the decline in the US Dollar Index (DXY), which fell to 99.758 points.

He said mounting concerns over a US-China trade war continued to weigh on the greenback.

"Higher tariffs could lead to increased prices and rising inflation, which in turn may slow down overall economic growth – especially if consumers begin to reduce their spending in response to the higher costs," he told Bernama.

Meanwhile, the ringgit traded lower against major currencies.

It depreciated against the Japanese yen to 3.0952/1000 from 3.0594/0639, eased against the euro to 5.0207/0281 from 4.9401/9467, and fell against the British pound to 5.7849/7934 from 5.7566/7644.

The local note traded mixed against Asean currencies. It inched up against the Indonesian rupiah to 263.1/263.6 from 265.5/265.9, and gained against the Philippine peso to 7.75/7.77 from 7.79/7.81.

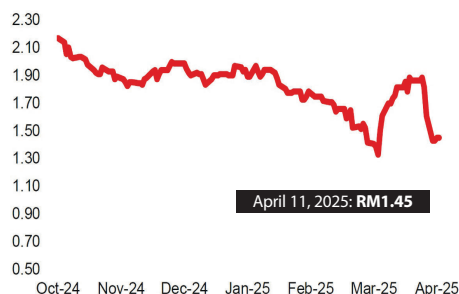
However, it slid versus the Thai baht to 13.1599/1902 from 13.0618/0866, and was weaker against the Singapore dollar at 3.3495/3549 from 3.3361/3411 previously.

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.5065	4.3735	4.3635
1 Australian Dollar	2.8300	2.7170	2.7010
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3910	3.2920	3.2840
1 Canadian Dollar	3.2300	3.1440	3.1320
1 Euro	5.0970	4.9350	4.9150
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6160	2.5200	2.5040
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3910	3.2920	3.2840
1 Sterling Pound	5.8720	5.6860	5.6660
1 Swiss Franc	5.5250	5.2910	5.2760
100 UAE Dirham	124.1200	117.7300	117.5300
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7860	3.5270	3.3270
100 Chinese Renminbi	61.9900	59.3900	59.3900
100 Danish Krone	69.9800	64.4100	64.2100
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.7100	55.8100	55.6100
100 Indian Rupee	5.3100	4.9900	4.7900
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0277	0.0251	0.0201
100 Japanese Yen	3.1420	3.0430	3.0330
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.8000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	43.0200	39.5300	39.3300
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6300	1.5300	1.3300
100 Philippine Peso	8.0100	7.5500	7.3500
100 Qatar Riyal	125.0100	118.6800	118.4800
100 Saudi Riyal	121.4000	115.2400	115.0400
100 South Africa Rand	24.1100	21.7700	21.5700
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5600	1.4300	1.2300
100 Swedish Krona	47.4700	43.2000	43.0000
100 Thai Baht	13.9400	12.3700	11.9700

Source: **Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama**

Hibiscus Petroleum Bhd Outperform. Target price: RM2.30



Source: **PublicInvest Research**

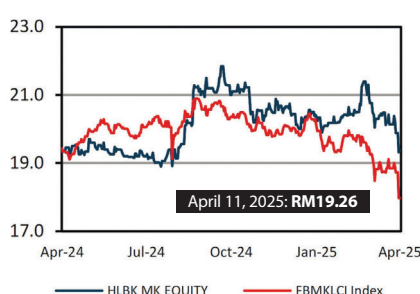
TO recap, Hibiscus completed the acquisition of PM3 CAA in January 2022 as part of a broader transaction with Repsol. The field is in the northeast Malay Basin, spans overlapping area between Malaysia and Vietnam. The group holds operatorship role with 35% of equity interest, while the remaining are held by PetroVietnam (30%) and Petronas Carigali (35%). The field is the largest producing asset for the Group, given its current production is about 11,000 boe/d, accounting for 42% of the Group's total output. In FY2024, the field generated RM600.6 million in Ebitda, representing 45.5% of the group's total Ebitda.

We view that the 20-year extension of the PM3 CAA PSC provides Hibiscus with the stability and long-term commitment needed to focus on sustaining production levels while increasing 2P reserves. This clarity enables the group to implement field development plans, including drilling new well beyond the existing Bunga Aster appraisal well, ensuring sustainable output over the extended period.

The existing gas processing infrastructure at the PM3 CAA offers a significant advantage for the PKNB development due to its proximity within tie-back distance. This reduces the required capex while enhancing efficiency by enabling higher gas volume to be processed using the existing facilities during production phase. PKNB is projected to achieve its first gas production by CY2028, with the PSC lifespan until 2048, slightly longer than PM3 CAA extension expiry in 2047. Similar synergies could potentially be replicated with the PM327 PSC in the future, although it currently remains in the exploration stage.

OUTPERFORM with RM2.30 TP. – **PublicInvest Research, April 11**

Hong Leong Bank Bhd Buy. Target price: RM24.30



Source: **Bloomberg**

HLB's shift to a daily liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) calculation partly resulted in a modest 2bps QoQ decline in NIM to 1.9%, due to increased funding costs. We project NIM to remain broadly stable in Q3'25, with some spillover impact from higher-cost deposits from the previous quarter. Management is closely monitoring the implications and may consider reverting to quarter-end LCR reporting should peers not adopt a similar approach, potentially easing pressure on funding costs.

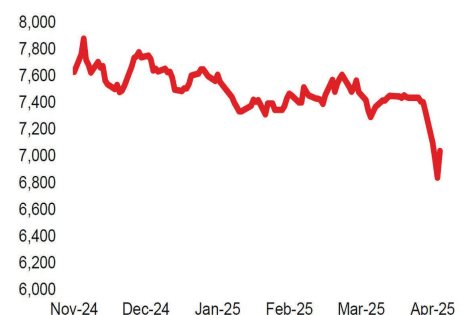
Meanwhile, loan growth remains healthy, with HLB outperforming in key segments, such as hire purchase and mortgages, which supports its full-year 2025 loan growth target of 6-7%. Despite persistent competition for deposits, HLB maintains a sound loan-to-deposit ratio (LDR) of 87%, providing flexibility to defend NIM. Its CET1 ratio stands comfortably at 13%, suggesting the potential to raise its dividend payout ratio above the 33% recorded in FY24.

HLB's PATAMI is well cushioned against a potential 25bps OPR cut in FY26, with an estimated impact of 1%. Contribution from its associate, Bank of Chengdu (BOCD), continues to offset NIM pressure, reinforcing HLB's defensive earnings profile. The resilient particularly stands out amid heightened macroeconomic uncertainty, particularly following the introduction of reciprocal tariffs under the Trump administration. Management is comfortable with maintaining its 17.78% stake in BOCD.

Key risks include extended compression in NIM, inflating cost base, rapidly deteriorating asset quality, and intense competition in deposits, leading to the high cost of funds.

BUY with RM24.30 TP. – **Phillip Capital Research, April 11**

Plantations Neutral



Source: **PublicInvest Research**

PALM oil inventories registered a positive growth of 3.5% MoM to 1.56 million mt as production picked up while exports remained lacklustre. It was also the first inventory gain since Sept 2024. Meanwhile, stock-to-usage ratio softened from 9.5% to 8.9%.

Palm oil exports registered a marginal gain to 1 million mt, underpinned by China (+24.5%), the EU (+36.3%), India (+4.2%) and the Middle East (+59%), partially offset by weaker demand from the US (-22%).

CPO production gained 16.8% MoM to 1.38 million mt, closing at the highest level in 3 months. The rise was boosted by higher production from Peninsular Malaysia (+18.8%) and East Malaysia (+14.4%) as yields recovered from floods that affected harvesting activities in East Malaysia's plantations.

Despite a 90-day pause on the reciprocal tariffs, Malaysian palm oil exports are still subject to the universal 10% tariff. In our view, these tariffs are likely to translate into higher costs for US consumers. The tariff-driven CPO products are likely to cause the US food manufacturers to replace CPO with more competitively priced domestic alternatives, namely, soybean oil- which is subject to a massive 84% tariff in China (China accounted for 52% exports) starting April 10. On a positive note, the US is a relatively small market for CPO products (mostly in specialty fats), accounting for only 2.4% of global palm oil usage. In 2024, Malaysia exported only 191,000 mt of CPO to the US, making up only 10% of the US CPO imports and 1.1% of Malaysia's total palm oil exports. – **PublicInvest Research, April 11**

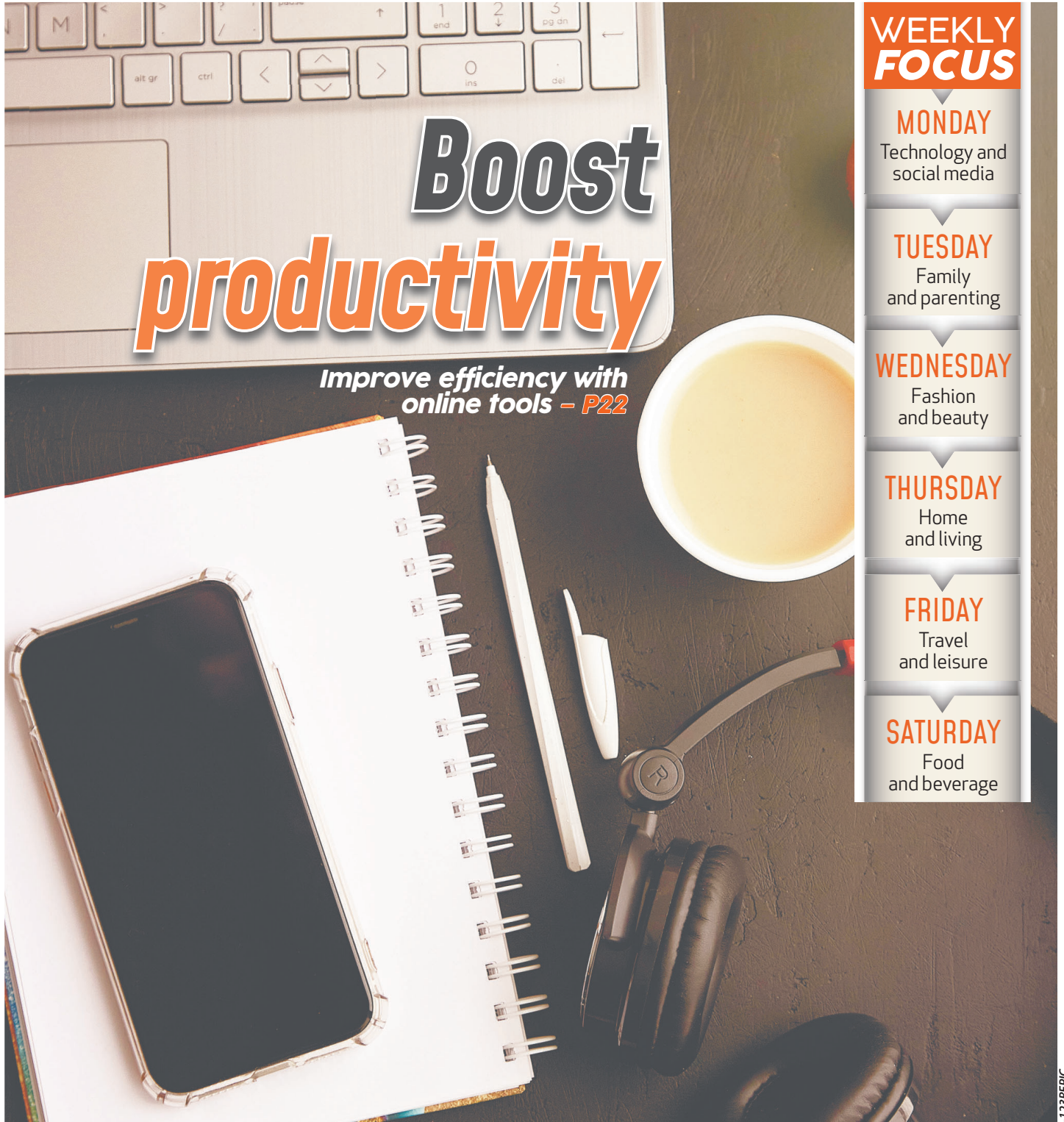


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TUESDAY

Family and parenting

WEDNESDAY

Fashion and beauty

THURSDAY

Home and living

FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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Hot prequels, sequels in movie franchise pipeline

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

IT is paramount to be productive in this age of digital efficiency, particularly for those seeking to streamline their work, school and personal organisation. A vast catalogue of free online tools exists to help users achieve precisely that.

Those seeking to manage tasks, collaborate with teams or improve focus, these platforms offer powerful solutions at no cost.

Task management and organisation

➔ Trello

A visual task management tool based on the Kanban system, Trello allows users to create boards, lists and cards to organise projects. With its intuitive drag-and-drop interface, it is particularly useful for teams and individuals who need a structured workflow.

➔ Todoist

A sleek, efficient to-do list app, Todoist works by helping users to prioritise and track tasks with due dates, project categorisation and collaborative features. The free version includes basic task management and productivity tracking.

➔ Notion

Notion is a versatile productivity tool that combines note-taking, project management and database functions. Its free version allows individuals to create personal dashboards, plan projects and take detailed notes, making it an all-in-one solution for students and professionals.

Time management and focus

➔ RescueTime

Running in the background, RescueTime tracks the time that users have spent on various activities. It provides detailed reports and productivity scores, allowing users to optimise how they allocate their time.

➔ Forest

Forest helps users stay focused by gamifying the Pomodoro Technique. Users plant a virtual tree that grows when they remain productive. If they leave the app, the tree dies, encouraging them to stay

on task.

Collaboration and communication

➔ Slack

A widely used team communication platform, Slack offers channels for group discussions, direct messaging

and

file sharing. The free version supports integrations with other productivity apps and up to 10,000 searchable messages.

➔ Google Workspace

Google's suite of productivity tools – Docs, Sheets, Drive and Meet – provides seamless collaboration in real time. Google Docs and Sheets allow teams to work on documents simultaneously, while Google Drive stores and organises files securely. Google Meet enables free video conferencing with up to 100 participants.

➔ Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams provides free team collaboration tools, including video meetings, chat and document sharing. While the premium version offers additional features, the free tier is sufficient for many remote teams and students.

File storage and organisation

➔ Dropbox Basic

Dropbox provides 2GB of free cloud storage, allowing users to store and share files easily. It also integrates with many third-party productivity apps.

➔ Evernote

This note-taking application helps users organise thoughts, tasks and research. With features like text recognition in images and voice memo recording, it is a powerful tool for personal and professional use.

➔ Google Keep

Google Keep is a lightweight note-taking app that syncs across devices. It allows users to create color-coded notes, set reminders and share ideas easily.

Writing and editing

➔ Grammarly

Grammarly is an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered writing assistant that checks grammar, spelling and clarity. The free version offers essential corrections and suggestions to improve writing quality.

➔ Hemingway Editor

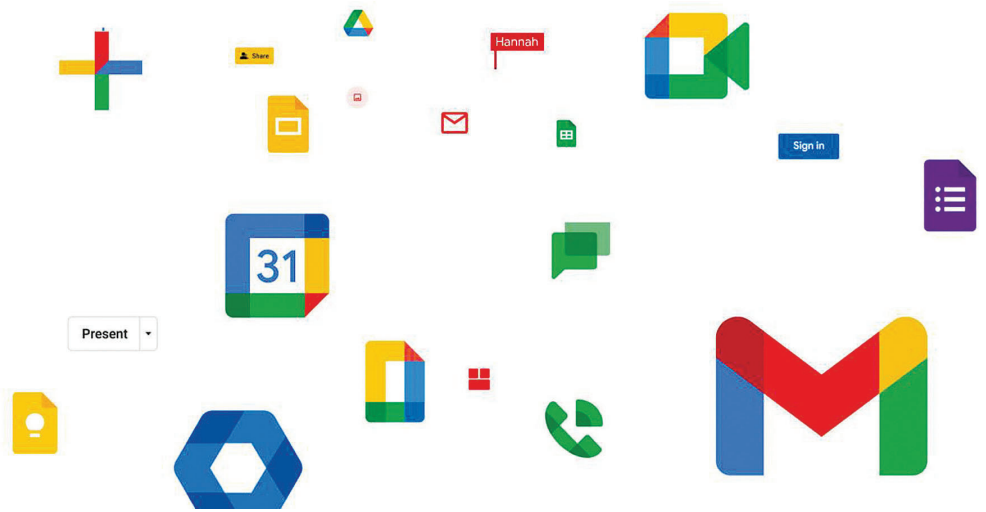
Aimed at improving writing readability, Hemingway Editor highlights complex sentences and suggests simpler alternatives. It is ideal for students, professionals and content creators.

➔ Zoho Writer

Zoho Writer is a free cloud-based word processor with collaborative features, document templates and AI-powered editing suggestions. It is an excellent alternative to Google Docs.

With so many free productivity tools available, finding the right combination depends on individual needs. Whether managing projects, improving focus or collaborating remotely, these tools empower users to work smarter, not harder.

As remote work and digital learning continue to evolve, leveraging these resources can make a significant difference in efficiency and success. By combining multiple tools, users can create a personalised productivity system that enhances their workflow and organisation.



Google Workspace has an entire suite catered to every demand. – G-WORKPLACEPIC

Free productivity tools

➔ Discover best free online apps, websites to boost efficiency in work, school, personal organisation



Though gamified, Forest is still primarily a productivity tool. – FORESTAPPPIC



BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

MISINFORMATION spreads fast, especially when it comes to technology and social media. Whether it is advice on charging your phone or staying safe online, myths can persist long after they have been disproven.

Let us clear up some of the most common misconceptions about battery life, cybersecurity and other everyday tech topics.

Myth 1: Closing background apps saves battery life

A widely believed myth is that closing apps running in the background saves battery life. However, on modern smartphones, this practice can actually do more harm than good. Both iOS and Android devices are designed to manage background apps efficiently and force-closing them may lead to higher energy consumption when reopening them.

Instead of frequently closing apps, adjust settings like screen brightness and background refresh rates to optimise battery performance.

Myth 2: Charging your phone overnight ruins the battery

Leaving your phone plugged in overnight will not destroy its battery, largely in part thanks to smart charging technology. Modern smartphones are equipped with lithium-ion batteries and feature built-in safeguards that stop charging once the battery reaches 100%.

However, keeping your phone plugged in for extended periods in high temperatures may cause gradual wear. To extend battery lifespan, try keeping the charge in between 20% and 80% whenever possible.

Myth 3: Macs do not get viruses

While it is true that macOS is less targeted than Windows, Macs are not immune to malware. Cybercriminals develop malicious software even for MacOS users and often trick them into downloading infected files or visiting compromised websites.

However, installing reliable security software, keeping the operating system updated and practicing safe browsing habits remain essential for all computer users – Mac or otherwise.

Myth 4: Public Wi-Fi is safe if it requires a password

Many assume that password-protected public Wi-Fi networks are safe, but this is not always the case. Even with a password, these networks are often shared by multiple users, making them vulnerable to cyberattacks like man-in-the-middle attacks or packet sniffing (also known as network sniffing, which refers to the process of intercepting and analysing data packets or network traffic as they travel across a network).

If you must use public Wi-Fi, avoid accessing sensitive accounts, enable HTTPS and use a virtual private network (VPN) for additional security.



Public Wi-Fi is never safe. – FREEPIKPIK



You've gone Incognito

Others who use this device won't see your activity, so you can browse more privately. This won't change how data is collected by websites you visit and the services they use, including Google. Downloads, bookmarks and reading list items will be saved. [Learn more](#)

Chrome won't save:

- Your browsing history
- Cookies and site data
- Information entered in forms

Your activity might still be visible to:

- Websites you visit
- Your employer or school
- Your internet service provider

Block third-party cookies

When on, sites can't use cookies that track you across the web. Features on some sites may break.



Incognito mode only hides one aspect of internet browsing. – GOOGLEPIC

Tech myths: Truth vs fiction

Common technology misconceptions debunked for smarter digital habits

Myth 5: Incognito mode keeps you anonymous

Many people believe that browsing in incognito or private mode makes them completely anonymous online. While incognito mode prevents the browser from saving history, cookies and temporary data, it does not hide your activity from the internet service provider, employer or the websites you visit. To truly enhance online privacy, use VPNs, encrypted browsers or privacy-focused search engines.

Myth 6: More megapixels mean a better camera

Smartphone manufacturers often advertise high megapixel counts, leading many to believe that more megapixels will equal to better image quality. In reality, factors such as sensor size, aperture, lens quality and software processing

play a more significant role in mobile photography.

A camera with fewer megapixels but a larger sensor can produce clearer and more detailed images than one with a higher megapixel count and a smaller sensor.

Myth 7: You should fully drain your battery before charging

Older nickel-based batteries have a “memory effect” that required full discharges before recharging to maintain performance. However, today's lithium-ion batteries do not suffer from this issue. In fact, frequent full discharges can degrade battery life faster. Similar to the second myth, keeping the battery charged between 20% and 80% is the best way to prolong its longevity.

Myth 8: More bars mean better call quality

Seeing full signal bars on your phone does not necessarily mean you will experience crystal-clear calls. The number of bars indicates signal strength but not network congestion. In a crowded area, even with full bars, call quality may suffer due to heavy network traffic.

Other factors, such as interference from buildings materials or weather conditions, can also impact call clarity.

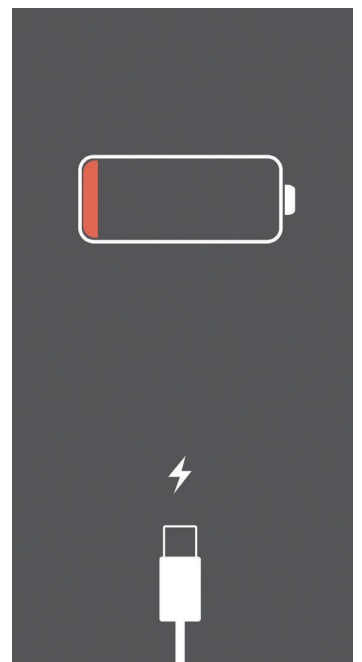
Myth 9: Private social media accounts are completely secure

Setting your social media accounts to private does provide an extra layer of security, but it does not make them entirely safe. Hackers, phishing scams and data leaks can still expose personal information.

Always be cautious about the information you share, use strong passwords (a mixture of alphabets, numbers and symbols) and enable two-factor authentication for added protection.

Myth 10: You must let your laptop fully discharge before charging it

Like smartphones, laptops use lithium-ion batteries that do not require full discharges to maintain health. Regularly letting your battery drain to 0% can actually shorten its lifespan.



There are several myths about device batteries that have been debunked by studies – FREEPIKPIK

Instead, aim to keep the laptop battery charged between 40% and 80% for optimal performance over time.

As technology constantly evolves, so will the misinformation surrounding it. Understanding how devices truly work can help you make smarter choices, along with avoid unnecessary concerns.

ACER Malaysia has unveiled the latest additions to its Swift thin and light series, with the Swift 16 AI and Swift Lite 14 that were designed from the ground up to seamlessly integrate into each users' dynamic and on-the-go lifestyles.

Powered by the Intel Core Ultra processors, these laptops are developed to enhance productivity, creativity and connectivity for professionals, creators and everyday users alike to unlock their potential.

The latest Swift lineup offers a compelling combination of performance, battery life and advanced features, with a focus on next-generation artificial intelligence (AI) capabilities to deliver an efficient computing experience.

Powerfully sleek, effortlessly portable

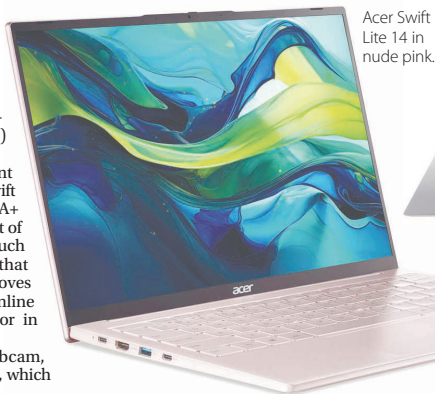
Featuring a premium sleek aluminium design that is elegant and durable for everyday adventures, the Acer Swift 16 AI is equipped with an Intel Core Ultra 7 (Series 2) processor to deliver more than 120 total Tera-Operations Per Second (TOPS) and up to 20 hours of usage.

Injecting more vibrant colours and details into the Swift 16 AI is the 16-inch WQXGA+ OLED display, along with a host of AI-powered functionalities, such as the Acer PurifiedVoice that automatically removes background noise during online meetings whether at home or in public settings.

For the 1440p QHD webcam, there is the Acer PurifiedView, which

uses AI to deliver crystal-clear visuals with portrait background blur for polished video conferencing. Acer User Sensing 2.0 further enhances convenience and security by automatically locking the laptop when users step away and waking it when they return.

Other features include the Smart Reminder that nudges users to take breaks between long viewing hours and Multi Screen Assistance, which detects head movements and automatically moves the cursor following your gaze for



Acer Swift 16.

Acer Swift Lite 14 in nude pink.

Acer unleashes Swift power

Next-gen AI laptops blend sleek design, productivity, portability

256GB
DualDrive
RM199.

SanDisk
worth

Unleashing potential

Weighing just 999g, the Acer Swift Lite 14 offers up to 10 hours battery life making it perfect for students, commuters and travellers. Its 180° hinge allows users to lay the screen flat, making it simple to share the display with others for discussions, presentations or casual viewing, while the Intel Core Ultra 7 and Core Ultra 5 processors provide necessary computing performance.

Available in light silver and nude pink colour options and priced

a seamless work experience.

The Acer Swift 16 AI is available immediately for RM5,699 at the Acer eStore, official stores on Shopee and Lazada and authorised Acer resellers nationwide.

Customers who purchase an Acer Swift 16 before April 23 will receive a

from RM3,799, the Acer Swift Lite 14 will be available from mid-April at the Acer eStore, official stores on Shopee and Lazada and authorised Acer resellers nationwide. Customers who purchase an Acer Swift Lite 14 before April 30 will receive an Acer Wireless Bubble Mouse worth RM79.

Music industry battling artificial intelligence with limited success

THE music industry is fighting on platforms, through the courts and with legislators in a bid to prevent the theft and misuse of art from generative artificial intelligence (AI) – but it remains an uphill battle.

Sony Music said recently it has already demanded that 75,000 deepfakes – simulated images, tunes or videos that can easily be mistaken for real – be rooted out, a figure reflecting the magnitude of the issue.

Information security company Pindrop says AI-generated music has “tell-tale signs” and is easy to detect, yet such music seems to be everywhere. “Even when it sounds realistic, AI-generated songs often have subtle irregularities in frequency variation, rhythm and digital patterns that aren't present in human performances,” said Pindrop, which specialises in voice analysis.

But it takes mere minutes on YouTube or Spotify – two top music-streaming platforms – to spot a fake rap from 2Pac about pizzas, or an Ariana Grande cover of a K-pop track that she never performed. “We take that really seriously, and we are trying to work on new tools in that space to make that even better,” said Sam Duboff, Spotify's lead on policy organisation.

YouTube said it is “refining” its own ability to spot AI dupes and could announce results in the coming weeks.

“The bad actors were a little bit more aware sooner,” leaving artists, labels and others in the music business “operating from a position of reactivity,” said Jeremy Goldman, an analyst at the company Emarketer.

“YouTube, with a multiple of billions of dollars per year, has a strong vested interest to solve this,” Goldman said, adding that he trusts they are working seriously to fix it.

“You don't want the platform itself, if

you are at YouTube, to devolve into, like, an AI nightmare,” he said.

Litigation

But beyond deepfakes, the music industry is particularly concerned about unauthorised use of its content to train generative AI models like Suno, Udio or Mubert. Several major labels filed a lawsuit last year at a federal court in New York against the parent company of Udio, accusing it of developing its technology with “copyrighted sound recordings for the ultimate purpose of poaching the listeners, fans and potential licensees of the sound recordings it copied.”

More than nine months later, proceedings have yet to begin in earnest. The same is true for a similar case against Suno, filed in Massachusetts. At the centre of the litigation is the principle of fair use, allowing limited use of some copyrighted material without advance permission. It could limit the application of intellectual property rights.

“It is an area of genuine uncertainty,” said Joseph Fishman, a law professor at Vanderbilt University.

Any initial rulings would not necessarily prove decisive, as varying opinions from different courts could punt the issue to the Supreme Court.

In the meantime, the major players involved in AI-generated music continue to train their models on copyrighted work – raising the question of whether the battle is not already lost.

Fishman said it may be too soon to say that: although many models are already training on protected material, new versions of those models are released continuously, and it is unclear whether any court decisions would create licensing

issues for those models going forward.

Deregulation

When it comes to the legislative arena, labels, artists and producers have found little success. Several bills have been introduced in the US Congress, but nothing concrete has resulted. A few states – notably Tennessee, home to much of the powerful country music industry – have adopted protective legislation, notably when it comes to deepfakes. US President Donald Trump poses another potential roadblock: the Republican president has postured himself as a champion of deregulation, particularly of AI.

Several giants in AI have jumped into the ring, notably Meta, which has urged the administration to “clarify that the use of publicly available data to train models is unequivocally fair use.” If Trump's White House takes that advice, it could push the balance against music professionals, even if the courts theoretically have the last word.

The landscape is hardly better in Britain, where the Labor government is considering overhauling the law to allow AI companies to use creators' content on the internet to help develop their models, unless rights holders opt out.

More than a thousand musicians, including Kate Bush and Annie Lennox, released an album in February entitled *Is This What We Want?* – featuring the sound of silence recorded in several studios – to protest those efforts.

For analyst Goldman, AI is likely to continue plaguing the music industry – as long as it remains unorganised.

“The music industry is so fragmented. I think that that winds up doing it a disservice in terms of solving this thing,” he said. – AFP



AI is responsible for thousands of fake tunes disguised as the real thing. – PEXELS/SPIC

THESE cult hits are far from bowing out. Indeed, studios have hit the jackpot and have no intention of giving up on their golden geese any time soon. *John Wick*, *The Hunger Games* and *The Handmaid's Tale* are all keeping their universe alive with prequels, sequels and new projects already in the works. The franchise machine is in full swing and nothing seems to be able to stop it.

The news broke at the latest edition of CinemaCon. While the end of the fourth instalment and Keanu Reeves's comments in the press had left fans doubtful, it is now official – the Hollywood star will reprise his iconic role in a fifth *John Wick* movie. The plot has not yet been revealed, but director Chad Stahelski and original producers Basil Iwanyk and Erica Lee have already been confirmed.

The franchise has already expanded beyond the original story with the spinoff *Ballerina*, starring Ana de Armas as a hit-woman in the midst of learning her trade. The film, in US theatres June 6, will be an opportunity to see Reeves, Ian McShane and Anjelica Huston reprise their iconic roles, as well as Lance Riddick, who passed away on March 17, 2023. Norman Reedus from *The Walking Dead* also joins the vengeful world of *John Wick*. This world had already expanded in 2023 with the miniseries *The Continental: From the World of John Wick* on Prime Video, exploring the younger years of the character Winston, played by McShane, before he meets the hitman.

The world of *John Wick* will also

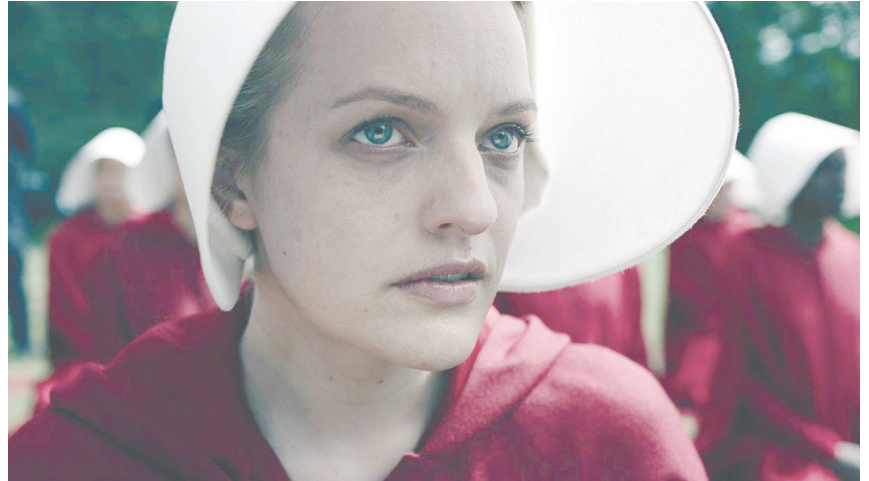
Continuing sagas excite fans

➤ Prequels, sequels incoming: *John Wick*, *Hunger Games*, *The Handmaid's Tale*

extend to animation, with a project serving as a prequel to the movie franchise. The plot will explore the events preceding the films, in particular the famous "Impossible Task" that allowed Wick to leave his life as an assassin for love, killing all his rivals in one night. Reeves will lend his voice to the hero.

The franchise, which began in 2014 with a bloody act of revenge for a murdered dog, has established itself as a pillar of action cinema. After four movies, the franchise has grossed over US\$1 billion (RM4.43 billion) at the global box office.

Prequels are definitely in vogue. After Wick, it is the character of Haymitch (played by Woody Harrelson) in the *Hunger Games* franchise who is getting his own film. Based on the novel *Hunger Games: Sunrise on the Reaping*, released in March, the prequel will revisit the story of Katniss Everdeen's mentor and winner of the 50th games. Filming is due to start in the summer of 2025, according to information revealed



Filming for the sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale* begins early this month. – HULUPIC

at CinemaCon, with a big-screen release slated for November 2026.

Here too, after the success of the trilogy, the *Hunger Games* franchise had already branched out with a prequel with *Hunger Games: The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* in 2023. Starring Rachel Zegler, the film explores the youth of Coriolanus Snow, future dictator of the state of Panem.

To date, the franchise has grossed over US\$3 billion worldwide.

Barely has the final season of *The Handmaid's Tale* dropped, and there is already word of what is coming next. Entitled *The Testaments*, after Margaret Atwood's novel published in 2019, this spinoff is set 15 years after the events of *The Handmaid's Tale* and

will follow the fate of a new generation of handmaids.

Despite being forced to attend school in Gilead, these young women will question the established order and instigate a revolt of their own.

Although filming began in early April, fans will have to be patient, as this latest project is not expected to be released until 2026. – ETX Studio

Astro unveils Tamil New Year line-up

ASTRO's entertainment line-up for Tamil New Year or *Puthandu*, ranging from local premieres to international specials in Tamil, Malayalam and Hindi languages, will start today.

Customers can catch local Tamil premieres on Astro Vinmeen (Ch 202) via TV, Astro Go, On Demand and Sooka, including:

➤ *Oor Sutrum Boys*

A captivating travelogue showcasing breathtaking little-known spots, historical places, delectable food varieties available at local markets, street food stalls and gourmet restaurants. See adrenaline-pumping activities, including paragliding, white-water rafting, snorkelling, diving and more. Hosted by prominent local talents, including Daview Puvanan, Thiagu B and Kris Jay Harish, *Oor Sutrum Boys* is directed by Mugeshwaran Sivanantham and premieres tonight at 8pm.

➤ *Kambathu Ponn*

A heartwarming family drama series cum Vinmeen exclusive series featuring Jayshree Vijayan, James Devan Arokiasamy, Pavettra Reddy, Kajenthiran, Shamini Shradha and more. The story revolves around Janu, a poverty-stricken village girl who dives into a world of wealth and privilege, discovering that newfound fortune comes with its set of challenges. Directed by Saran Z, *Kambathu Ponn* premieres tonight at 9pm.

➤ *Uyir Por*

A gripping thriller telemovie



Customers can catch *Athuva Ithuva* and other local Tamil premieres on Astro Vinmeen (Ch 202) via TV, Astro Go, On Demand and Sooka.

directed by debutant local filmmaker Surrya Prakash depicts the fun trip of a group of friends that turns into an unfortunate one after they get trapped in a basement of an old bunker. Starring Moon Nila, Auro Chakkravarthy, Sri Kumaran, Puvanan and more, this thrilling telemovie premieres this Saturday at 10pm.

➤ *Athuva Ithuva*

This fun game show explores generational differences between Gen X and Gen Z, starring Aruna Raj, Psychomantra, Shamini Shradha, Thivya Kia, Dishaaleny Jack and more. Directed by Mohandass Madhavan and hosted by Bala Ganapathi William, *Athuva Ithuva* premieres this Sunday at 9pm.

On the international front,

customers can enjoy Hindi films such as the drama thriller *Sergeant on Zee Cinema* (Ch 251) and action comedy *Ambarsariya* premiering tonight, 9pm on Colors Hindi (Ch 116).

Customers can also look forward to Malayalam films, including the crime drama *Thankam* and action comedy *Malayalee From India*, premiering today at 3pm and 7.30pm on Astro Vaanavil (Ch 201).

Catch Tamil films on Astro Vinmeen (Ch 202): action crime movie *Vanangaan* premiering tonight, 9.30pm, dark comedy *Kudumbasthan* premiering tomorrow, 10pm, and prison drama *Sorgavaasal* premiering on Wednesday, 9.30pm.

These programmes are sure to add to the *Puthandu* festivities.

First footage of new Avatar movie shown at CinemaCon

EVIL NA'VI. Giant volcanoes. Airborne boats. The first-ever footage from *Avatar: Fire and Ash*, the sequel to two of the highest grossing movies of all time, was debuted at the CinemaCon event earlier this month.

Out this December, the film "expands the beautiful world of Pandora and introduces two new clans", explained star Zoe Saldana from the stage of the Las Vegas convention of movie theatre owners.

Director James Cameron, speaking in a pre-recorded clip from New Zealand, where he is finishing the film, said the movie's heroes must "face not only the human invaders, but new

adversaries, the Ash People."

The stakes for *Avatar: Fire and Ash* could hardly be higher for the movie industry.

More respected than loved by critics, the previous two *Avatar* films were unprecedented commercial hits. They are the top and the third-highest grossing films of all time, collectively earning well over US\$5 billion (RM22 billion) globally.

But across the industry as a whole, box office takings have never recovered to pre-pandemic levels, and 2025 is off to an unexpectedly weak start due to flops like Disney's *Snow White*.

Cameron said he hoped "this film can provide a shot in the arm for theater owners, as we are still struggling after the one-two punch of the pandemic and streaming."

Footage from the third *Avatar* film shows heroes Jake Sully (Sam Worthington) and Neytiri (Saldana) aboard giant, balloon-hoisted wooden ships, being towed through the air by huge blue stingray-like creatures.

The convoy comes under attack from the Ash People – who look like Na'vi but sport bright-red head-dresses, and shoot flaming arrows.

"The Wind Traders are a peaceful, nomadic, air traveling clan. And the Ash People are former Na'vi who have forsaken Eywa, the blue-skinned humanoid tribe's goddess," explained Saldana.

Cameron has previously said the new film will be longer than *Avatar: The Way of Water*, which ran for three hours and 12 minutes.

Two more *Avatar* films are dated for 2029 and 2031. – AFP



Saldana will star in new *Avatar* film.

– AFP/PIIC

MANY people use festive celebrations as an excuse to overindulge in high-fat, high-sugar foods, believing they can offset the damage later with extreme dieting. This cycle strains the body and places unnecessary stress on the heart.

Inconsistent eating habits, lack of physical activity and delayed health screenings during celebrations can significantly increase the risk of cardiovascular disease. Rather than relying on quick fixes, Malaysians must adopt a more balanced, long-term approach to heart health, even during the most joyous occasions.

During celebrations, people often consume excessive high-fat, high-sugar and high-sodium foods while reducing physical activity. This can lead to weight gain, elevated cholesterol and increased blood pressure, raising the risk of heart disease. Fluctuating between feasting and strict dieting can also be harmful, as sharp swings in cholesterol, blood sugar and blood pressure stress the cardiovascular system, increase inflammation and strain heart function.

Cardiovascular disease

A Public Perception Survey on Health conducted by the Malaysian Medical Association and Novartis Malaysia revealed a concerning gap between perceived and actual health. While 98% of respondents believed they were in good or average health due to exercise and diet, only 66% underwent annual health screenings despite 85% having done so before. Additionally, three in four Malaysians were diagnosed with cardiovascular-related conditions, including high cholesterol (37%), high blood pressure (29%) and diabetes (13%).

Cardiovascular disease is Malaysia's top killer, with non-communicable diseases, particularly atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, causing 72% of premature deaths. Alarmingly, heart disease is affecting Malaysians at a younger age, with 25% of cases occurring in individuals under 50. Poor dietary habits and high LDL-C levels affect



During celebrations, people often consume excessive high-fat, high-sugar and high-sodium foods while reducing physical activity.
— 123RF/PC

Heart health matters

➤ Festive over-indulgence places great strain on cardiovascular system

41% of Malaysian adults, significantly contributing to heart disease rates. Managing LDL-C, or "bad cholesterol", is crucial for heart health. Reducing LDL-C by just 1 mmol/L can lower the risk of cardiovascular events by 22%. This requires a combination of lifestyle changes and medical intervention.

Cholesterol-lowering treatments have advanced significantly, offering greater convenience, with some therapies requiring only twice-a-year administration. Patients should take charge of their heart health by consulting doctors, asking questions and tracking their progress using technology.

Many Malaysians postpone or

skip routine health check-ups during festive periods, assuming they can "get back on track" later. However, early detection is key to preventing serious heart complications.

Assessing heart health

Using the post-festive season as an opportunity to assess heart health reflects actual cardiovascular conditions rather than temporary fluctuations. The post-celebration period is when the effects of indulgence are most evident, providing a more accurate picture of cholesterol levels, blood pressure and overall heart health. By undergoing health assessments, individuals can detect early warning

signs and take corrective measures before serious complications arise.

Risk calculators from platforms like Unblocked allow individuals to estimate their cardiovascular risk, making it easier to take proactive steps. The Unblocked risk calculator is an online tool designed to help individuals assess their cardiovascular risk by analysing factors such as LDL cholesterol levels and personal health information. By inputting LDL-C results, the calculator estimates the accumulated exposure to bad cholesterol and predicts the average age at which one might experience a first heart attack.

Additionally, it offers a

comprehensive risk checklist, allowing users to identify other contributing factors like hypertension, diabetes, smoking, obesity and family history of heart disease. This personalised assessment enables individuals to understand their heart health better and take proactive steps toward managing and reducing their cardiovascular risk.

Managing cholesterol

Self-assessment alone is not enough. Regular screenings, stress tests and medical evaluations should be a priority — even during celebrations. These tests provide crucial insights into cardiovascular health and help individuals take timely action to control cholesterol and other risk factors.

Intermittent fasting can also be beneficial for heart health when done correctly. It has been shown to improve growth hormone levels, regulate glucose and enhance insulin response — provided that balanced meals are consumed during eating periods. By adopting sustainable eating habits, individuals can better manage their cholesterol and overall cardiovascular health. Incorporating intermittent fasting into a heart-conscious lifestyle can complement other heart health strategies, reinforcing long-term well-being.

For those newly diagnosed with high cholesterol, cholesterol management is a long-term process. Patients should work closely with their healthcare providers to find the right treatment plan, whether it involves lifestyle adjustments, medication or newer treatment options that provide effective and sustained cholesterol control.

With heart disease remaining the nation's leading cause of death, Malaysians must take proactive measures. By making informed choices during festive seasons and beyond, individuals can enjoy celebrations while keeping their hearts healthy for years to come.

This article is contributed by CVSKL consultant cardiologist Dr Wan Faizal Wan Rahimi Shah.

Three-year target to place emergency medical specialists in all hospitals

THE Health Ministry aims to place emergency medical specialists at all hospitals within three years.

Its minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said to achieve this target, the ministry has begun efforts to place emergency medicine specialists in all hospitals, including non-specialist ones, in stages.

"One of my efforts to make patients, as well as residents, around the hospital want to not just go to a specialist or minor specialist hospital is to place at least two specialists in these hospitals without specialists.

"The first is an EP (emergency physician), trauma specialist while the second is an internal medicine specialist (physician) who will be able to increase the attractiveness for residents (around the hospital) to seek treatment at these hospitals without specialists," he said at a press conference here last week.

Earlier, Dzulkefly attended a

meet-and-greet session with healthcare workers of the Batang Padang district at the Tapah Hospital.

He said the Health Ministry will place emergency medicine specialists in 10 hospitals without specialists nationwide in stages by August 2025 at the latest.

He said the ministry had stationed emergency medicine specialists in 15 hospitals without specialists and district hospitals, namely Jitra Hospital, Kuala Nerang Hospital, Sik Hospital and Yan Hospital in Kedah, as well as Sungai Bakap Hospital and Balik Pulau Hospital in Penang.

Apart from that, other hospitals include Kuala Kangsar Hospital in Perak, Sabak Bernam Hospital and Kuala Kubu Bharu Hospital (Selangor), Alor Gajah Hospital and Jasin Hospital (Melaka), Cameron Highlands Hospital (Pahang), Pasir Mas Hospital and Pasir Putih Hospital

(Kelantan) as well as Limbang Hospital (Sarawak).

Dzulkefly said the ministry has also decided to place an emergency medicine specialist at the Tapah Hospital permanently, starting May 1, 2025.

Separately, he said Malaysia must brace itself for the US government's announcement of new tariffs that will affect pharmaceutical products.

"They (Cabinet ministers) are awaiting an announcement on whether pharmaceutical products will be exempted from the 24% tariff... It will certainly have a knock-on effect on the supply chain and beyond. I don't want to elaborate further, but in short, we need to be prepared, because this import-export issue will undoubtedly affect all involved countries," he said.

It was reported that the US government will impose tariffs on pharmaceutical products.
— Bernama

US FDA to phase out animal testing in drug development

THE US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) plans to replace animal testing in the development of monoclonal antibody therapies and other drugs with "human-relevant methods", including the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based models.

The new approach would help improve drug safety, lower research and development costs and drug prices, the agency said.

"This initiative marks a paradigm shift in drug evaluation and holds promise to accelerate cures and meaningful treatments for Americans while reducing animal use," said FDA Commissioner Martin Makary.

The FDA's animal testing requirement will be "reduced, refined, or potentially replaced" with so-called New Approach Methodologies, or NAMs data, which include the use of AI-based models to predict a drug's behavior as well as side effects and testing on human organ-like structures made in a laboratory.

"There is currently no full replacement for animal models in biomedical research and drug development," the National Association for Biomedical Research

(NABR) said in a statement.

While AI promises to speed up many aspects of research, it largely depends on pulling from existing data, said NABR president Matthew Bailey.

"The unknown variables could present the biggest risk to patients. So, it will be interesting to see where AI is validated as a replacement to a whole biological organism and where it is not," Bailey said.

The FDA said it will begin implementation of the new approach immediately, encouraging NAMs data instead of animal data for human trial applications.

The companies that submit strong safety data from non-animal tests may receive a streamlined review, which would incentivise investment in modern testing platforms, the regulator said. The agency plans to launch a pilot programme over the next year allowing select antibody-based drug developers to use a non-animal-based testing strategy. The findings from an accompanying pilot study would then be used to decide broader policy changes and guidance updates, which are expected to be rolled out in phases. — Reuters



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IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016

WU CHIN FOODS INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. 202201000878 (1446575-A)

(IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Section 439(2)(a) of the Companies Act, 2016, that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by the members of the company on 27th March, 2025

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DATIN LEE SHOOK MUN @ LEE YUE YEE (I) (NRIC No.: 661003-10-6088) Company Secretary Kuala Lumpur, 14th April, 2025

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Kuala Lumpur, 14th April, 2025
DATIN LEE SHOOK MUN @ LEE YUE YEE (I) Liquidator

Liquidator Address
No. 31-3, Jalan Task Selayan 3, Metro Centre, Bandar Task Selayan, 57000 Kuala Lumpur

Abhishek plunders 141 as Hyderabad stun Punjab

ABHISHEK SHARMA lit up the IPL yesterday with a spectacular 141 off 55 balls to steer Sunrisers Hyderabad to the second-highest successful chase in tournament history of 246 as they downed Punjab Kings by eight wickets.

Earlier, Nicholas Pooran continued his incredible form with 61 to help Lucknow Super Giants end Gujarat Titans' winning streak of four matches, coming out on top by six wickets.

The 24-year-old Abhishek put on the best stand so far this season of 171 with opening partner Travis Head, who hit 66, in a chase achieved with nine balls to spare.

"We didn't talk (about) anything," Abhishek said of the mood ahead of the chase. "It was just natural play for us. The partnership boosted me up."

Punjab hold the record winning chase of 262 against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens last year.

Abhishek's individual score is the third highest in IPL history behind Chris Gayle (175 not out for Bengaluru) and Brendon McCullum (158 not out for Kolkata) and the largest in 12 years.

"This one is very special, because I wanted to break that

losing streak," added Abhishek. "Losing four matches back to back was very tough. But we never talked about it in the team."

Shreyas Iyer's 82 and a late blitz of 34 by Marcus Stoinis steered Punjab to 245-6, but the total proved inadequate as the Sunrisers openers took their team off the bottom of the 10-team table with just a second win in six matches.

Abhishek started as he meant to go on, reaching his fifty in 19 balls.

Australia's Head fell to leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal after hitting nine fours and three sixes in his 37-ball knock.

But Abhishek raised his century in only 40 balls as he roared, punched the air and waved a piece of paper with a message reading "this one for the orange army", referencing the Sunrisers fans.

Arshdeep Singh eventually dismissed Abhishek, who hit 14 fours and 10 sixes, with 24 to win and Heinrich Klaasen saw Hyderabad home with an unbeaten 21 off 14 balls.

Earlier in Lucknow, opener Aiden Markram, who hit 58, and the in-form Pooran set up the home team's chase of 181 before they secured victory over Gujarat with three balls to spare. – AFP

All eyes on Rory

McIlroy worthy of Tiger and Jack if he wins Masters

RORY MCILROY will be worthy of consideration equal to iconic golfers Tiger Woods and Jack Nicklaus should he win the Masters to complete a career Grand Slam, says rival Jason Day.

World No. 2 McIlroy of Northern Ireland, a four-time major champion, fired a second consecutive 6-under 66 yesterday to grab a two-stroke lead entering the final round at Augusta National.

McIlroy can win his first major title since 2014 and join a career Slam list that includes Nicklaus, Woods, Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan and Gary Player.

Asked if McIlroy would join Woods and Nicklaus on a "Mount Rushmore" of modern golf, Australia's Day – seven shots adrift after a 71 – said, "Yes, if he goes ahead and wins it."

"He's the best player of our generation for sure," Day said. "He just makes things look so easy."

McIlroy has won 28 US PGA Tour titles, including the Pebble Beach Pro-Am and Players Championship in the past two months.

"He's making a boat load of birdies. He's coming off a lot of confidence winning the Players," Day said.

"He seems like he's very focused and level headed right now and he's going to be a very difficult person to beat tomorrow, just the way that he's looking off the golf course before the round. Very confident, very balanced in himself."

While McIlroy has failed the past 10 years to complete the Slam by winning a green jacket, Day sees a difference in how he meets the challenge now.

"He seemed very focused, determined to obviously accomplish that," Day said. "I know it's in the back of his mind, but I think he's

running off so much confidence and has so much belief in his game that it's almost like he knows it's going to happen, kind of thing."

"And when you're playing like that, it's very dangerous."

Canada's Corey Connors, who stands third on 208 after a 70 yesterday, played alongside McIlroy in round three and watched McIlroy go four-under in the first three holes.

"It was a pretty amazing start Rory had," Connors said. "Rory is a world-class player and a lot of people cheering him on."

"His length is pretty impressive. His firepower and ability to kind of hit the right shot at the right time, kind of get himself on a run, was impressive."

"He'll definitely be tough to try and hunt down."

Day marveled also, noting McIlroy stumbled with bogeys at the eighth and 10th only to go birdie-eagle at the par-five 13th and 15th holes.

"But he's explosive enough to be able to do that," Day said. "There's not many guys on this planet that are able to do something like that. That's what's impressive about him."

Ireland's Shane Lowry, a long-time pal of McIlroy, wasn't in the mood to hand out praise after closing with back-to-back bogeys to shoot 72 and fall seven back.

"Rory obviously was playing good," Lowry said. "The roars, you had to stand off it a little bit, wait for him to hit the shots."

But Lowry was frustrated quickly about questions regarding McIlroy.

"I'm not going to stand here and talk about Rory for 10 minutes. I'm trying to win the tournament as well," Lowry told reporters.

"I know that's what y'all want me to talk about, but I've just had a (bad) finish, I've got a chance to win the Masters tomorrow, and I'm going to go hit some balls." – AFP



Alcaraz to face Musetti in final

Carlos Alcaraz plays a backhand return to Alejandro Davidovich Fokina yesterday. – AFP/ICC

CARLOS ALCARAZ booked his place in the final of the Monte Carlo Masters for the first time with a dominant 7-6 (7-2), 6-4 win over fellow Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina yesterday.

He will face Italian Lorenzo Musetti on the red clay in the final after the 13th seed fought back to beat Australian eighth seed Alex de Minaur 1-6, 6-4, 7-6 (7-4) in the second semifinal.

"I knew how well Davidovich Fokina had played in Monte Carlo so I had to be ready to fight," said Alcaraz.

Alcaraz, a four-time Grand Slam champion, is targeting his first Masters title since winning in Indian Wells last year.

"It's been a long time since I've had the chance to win a title on clay and I can't wait to try my luck again here," said Alcaraz, who was beaten in the final of the Olympic tournament by Novak Djokovic in August.

"At the beginning of the week, the first tournament on clay, you have to get used to the conditions," he added.

"The ball comes different. You know, the

play on clay is different...

"I'm just really happy to get the level that I wanted at the beginning of the week."

His only title this season remains the ATP 500 event in Rotterdam in February, but he appears to be enjoying his return to clay.

Alcaraz quickly became the tournament favourite following early exits for top seed Alexander Zverev and Novak Djokovic, while world number one Jannik Sinner is still serving a doping ban.

The 21-year-old admitted that he has felt some added pressure due to Sinner's absence.

"The first question, you know, since Jannik was unable to play tournaments, a lot of people were asking me and talking about, how important (the) moment that I have ahead is to reach the No. 1 (ranking) again or to win tournaments or whatever," Alcaraz said.

"I was thinking so much about it instead of playing my good tennis and enjoy the time that I have, stepping on the court and playing matches." – AFP

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016

DBE IDEAS SDN. BHD. 201401029543 (1106629-P)

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Kuala Lumpur, 14th April, 2025
DATIN LEE SHOOK MUN @ LEE YUE YEE (I) Liquidator

Liquidator's Office Address
No. 31-3, Jalan Task Selayan 3, Metro Centre, Bandar Task Selayan, 57000 Kuala Lumpur

Pickles Auctions

Bank Repossessed bikes and cars for sale by auction. Auctions are conducted via eBidding on **Wednesday - 16th April** from 9.35am onwards. All are invited to join our **PUBLIC AUCTION**. Viewing inspection on **Tuesday - 15th April** at 9.30am - 5.30pm. All unsold bank repossessed vehicles will be re-auctioned on the following Wednesday until the vehicles are sold. Download Pickles Auctions app to view all auction listings or visit www.pickles.my

Reg no	Description	Reg no	Description
BRL8642	2023 HONDA VARIO 125	ABY8182	2019 PROTON PERSONA 1.6L CVT
BRY1462	2024 YAMAHA Y15ZR	VGS327	2005 MERCEDES-BENZ E240 (A)
CEP3033	2022 HONDA ADV 150A	BNL9383	2015 PROTON IRIZ 1.3L CVT
JWW8365	2022 YAMAHA Y15ZR	WH4230	2016 PERIODUA EXORA FL 1.6L CVT
VLV7849	2024 YAMAHA 135SLC	WZ2855	2014 PERIODUA MYVI
JWD7690	2022 SYM VF31 185	WS296J	2014 NISSAN GRAND LWINA 1.8L (A)
VGH7995	2021 HONDA RS150R	W206V	2014 KIA RIO UB
JVB4946	2022 YAMAHA Y15ZR	WA5400X	2014 KIA CERATO YD
VNH563	2022 YAMAHA YZF-R15	WAS252P	2014 NISSAN LIVINA X-GEAR 1.6L (A)
BRP8717	2023 YAMAHA 135SLC	WC7821Q	2016 PERIODUA AXIA 1.0 G
VGU2292	2021 HONDA WAVE ALPHA	BMR2016	2014 PERIODUA ALZA 1.5 AV
VMM1772	2023 YAMAHA Y16ZR	WAS558D	2014 BMW 118I F20
ALP7389	2020 YAMAHA Y15ZR	WPN6637	2006 PROTON WIRA 1.5GL (A)
VL0578	2023 HONDA VARIO 125	BRM2848	2023 PROTON PERSONA 1.6 CVT EXECUTIVE
MDG5965	2023 HONDA CBR125 STD	VL4959	2016 HONDA CIVIC 1.5 TC-P
VJX2214	2022 BROMO BAK150 R	BPY3174	2019 PROTON SAGA 1.3 CVT PREMIUM
JVT4182	2022 SYM JET X STD	JPE4146	2012 HONDA ACCORD 2.0L VTL (A)
QAB6309G	2023 SYM VF31 185 LE VFD	PMT1636	2017 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5E (A) FL
WA2930	2022 HONDA RS150R FS150F4	VN7452	2016 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5E (A)
JUR9041	2021 BENELLI R18i	AJG7909	2013 NISSAN NAVARA 2.5L 4X2 (A)
BQM2117	2021 SMI SPORT 110R	WYF9469	2013 NISSAN GRAND LWINA 1.8L (A)
VHA6330	2021 SYM VF31 185	PLD7705	2013 MAZDA BT-50 3.2 (A)
AHJ5111	2011 FORD FIESTA 1.6L SPORT AUTO	VDE2719	2019 PERIODUA BEZZA 1.3 X (A)
WA1556J	2013 FORD FIESTA SEDAN 1.5L	VAF8225	2014 GREAT WALL HAVAL H2
ALH4526	2008 HONDA CITY 1.5 1.5 DSI	W3375W	2014 HONDA CIVIC 1.8S
NCK3070	2014 PROTON PERSONA 1.6 (M)	W8948Y1	2015 MAZDA 2.1 1.5SDN SHYACTIV (A)
RK5055	2012 PROTON PREVE 1.6L CVT	VAG913	2016 NISSAN GRAND LWINA 1.8L (A)
WYN1689	2013 FORD FIESTA 1.6L SEDAN (A)	PMP2713	2016 PERIODUA MYVI 1.5 SE (A)
WU0306	2010 PROTON SATRIA NED 1.6 (M)	RPX7144	2019 PERIODUA MYVI 1.5 AV (A)
MCH5334	2012 PROTON PREVE 1.6L CVT	JTM2859	2019 PERIODUA MYVI 1.3 X (A)
PXB9971	2011 FORD FIESTA 1.6L SPORT (A)	PKU1220	2012 HONDA CIVIC 2.0S
PJW8290	2010 PERIODUA WIVA 1.0 EZ (A)	JUL0348	2015 HONDA HR-V 1.8L V
TBQ2505	2014 PROTON PREVE 1.6L CVT	NCY2982	2014 HONDA ACCORD 2.0L VTL (A)
PKP5662	2012 PERIODUA WIVA 1.0 EZ (A)	BNJ6900	2015 MITSUBISHI TRITON 2.5L VGT HS 4X4 DC (A)
QCE7722	2014 NISSAN SYLPHY	VAF2263	2017 NISSAN X-TRAIL 2.0L CVT
WXP450	2012 FORD FOCUS	STJ005X	2016 HONDA ACCORD 2.0 VTL
CDH6469	2013 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5E	WV0500	2013 BMW 328I SPORT
JUL645	2014 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5E (A)	TOL1433	2022 PERIODUA MYVI 1.5 X (CVT)
AJG9330	2013 PROTON PREVE 1.6L CVT	WRF00R	2014 JAGUAR XF 2.0 I4 T F LUXURY
NC0216	2011 PROTON PERSONA 1.6 (A)	WA6798L	2013 LAND ROVER RANGE ROVER EVOQUE
CCJ3229	2015 FORD FIESTA SEDAN 1.5L	RPU3000	2015 MINI COOPER S DBA XM20 (A)
CDJ7888	2008 HONDA CITY 1.5 I-DSI (A)	BRB468	2018 BMW X5 XDRIVE40E
AKS5147	2015 PERIODUA EXORA FL 1.6L CVT	WC986P	2016 MERCEDES-BENZ C200
WU9003A	2016 PERIODUA BEZZA 1.0 G (A)	GV3811	2021 BMW X1 SDRIWE20I
BLD5009	2011 NISSAN SYLPHY 2.0 CVT	BOF2383	2020 PROTON X70 1.8 TSDI EXECUTIVE 2WD
CDK5595	2014 PERIODUA MYVI 1.3 EZ (A)	WUY6973	2011 NISSAN GRAND LWINA 1.8L (A)
SSA6533A	2018 PROTON PERSONA 1.6L CVT		
JWH4352	2016 PROTON PERSONA 1.6L CVT		
PLN 7685	2014 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5V (A)		

For more information, (WhatsApp) 012-5553727 or email info@pickles.my

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SCAN ME

MONDAY | APR 14, 2025

SPORTS 29

SHORTS

Brighton not mature enough: Hurler

BRIGHTON head coach Fabian Hurler accused his side of being "naïve" and lacking maturity as he apologised to fans following a 2-2 draw at home to beleaguered Leicester.

Albion were booed off at the Amex Stadium after their quest for European qualification was dealt a blow against lowly opposition almost certain to suffer Premier League relegation.

The ninth-placed Seagulls, who were seeking to bounce back from successive defeats to Aston Villa and Crystal Palace, twice led thanks to a pair of Joao Pedro penalties.

But Caleb Okoli headed home his maiden goal in English football 16 minutes from time to snap second-bottom Leicester's eight-match losing run after Stephy Mavididi ended the visitors' 798-minute top-flight goal drought with a first-half equaliser.

"(We were) too naïve, not mature enough, don't react well on setbacks during the game, didn't stick together, especially in the final part of the game, therefore we didn't deserve to win," said Hurler.

"When you shoot two goals at home then it should be enough to win this game."

Leeds return to top of Championship

LEEDS moved closer to the Premier League after beating Preston 2-1 to regain top spot in the English Championship, while promotion rivals Sheffield United suffered a damaging 2-1 defeat at Plymouth yesterday.

Manor Solomon's superb opener for Leeds was cancelled out by Kaine Kesler-Hayden's equaliser before Jayden Bogle restored Leeds' advantage inside the opening 13 minutes at Elland Road.

Relegated from the top-flight last season, Leeds climbed above second-placed Burnley on goal difference following the Claret's 2-1 win against Norwich on Saturday.

Daniel Farkes's men are five points clear of third-placed Sheffield United, who slipped to a third successive defeat as Plymouth fought back at Home Park to boost their survival chances.

Jesurun Rak-Sakyi fired the Blades in front before halftime, but late goals from Ryan Hardie and Muhamed Tijani dealt a major blow to the visitors' automatic promotion hopes with four games left.

Millwall bolstered their late charge to reach the playoffs with a 1-0 home win against top-six rivals Middlesbrough at The Den.

BY ANDY SIMS

UNAI EMERY admits he needs to make a decision on his penalty taker against Paris St Germain on Tuesday (Wed 3am Malaysian time) after Marco Asensio's nightmare double miss.

Villa limbered up for the Champions League quarterfinal second leg with a 3-0 win at Southampton.

But Spanish midfielder Asensio saw two spot-kicks saved by Aaron Ramsdale to leave his boss with a late call to make.

"We have our penalty shooters," said Emery. "The first one is Marcus Rashford, the second is Marco Asensio, the third is Youri Tielemans, John

Everton dents Forest's European ambition

ABDOULAYE DOUCOURE's last-minute winner for Everton dealt a big blow to Nottingham Forest's Champions League hopes.

Forest already looked like having a disappointing day as they were being held by David Moyes' side, but it got even worse in the fourth minute of time added on when Doucoure scored on the counterattack to earn his side a 1-0 victory at the City Ground.

It was as much as they deserved as they were the better team and sees them win for the first time since mid-February.

Forest could have edged closer to guaranteeing their position in the Premier League top five, but the signs suggest they are

getting nervy with the finish line in sight.

They followed up last week's 2-1 loss at Aston Villa with a first home defeat since November.

A point could have ended up being a good result, given the level of their display, but with Manchester City and Aston Villa winning, their cushion to sixth place could be cut to just three points by today.

"Disappointed with the performance," Forest manager Nuno Espirito Santo said. "We were not comfortable, we didn't play good."

"The game didn't flow, everything created a lot of problems to us. They win the duels, second balls, they keep putting us under pressure. In terms of offensive game, we didn't

create too much.

"The last minute of the game, from an offensive corner we conceded so we are disappointed but in terms of the game, we were not good. Everton were dominant."

"We cannot get away from the decisive moment in the season. We were not comfortable and the fans also saw we were struggling. You cannot get away from that. We want to try and give it a go."

Forest winger Callum Hudson-Odoi said to *Sky Sports*: "It is in our hands to make sure we stay in the position we are in. Football is cruel and it is tough to put into words. We have to move on from it now." - The Independent/Agencies

Pep hails 'fantastic' De Bruyne

Belgium playmaker determined to leave Champions League legacy for City

BY ANDY HAMPSON

KEVIN DE BRUYNE is determined to deliver Champions League qualification as his parting gift to Manchester City.

The Belgium playmaker sparked a stunning City comeback as the champions rallied from 2-0 down at the Etihad Stadium to thrash Crystal Palace 5-2 in the Premier League on Saturday.

The long-serving 33-year-old, who scored City's first goal with an exquisite freekick, was playing his first home match since it was announced he would be leaving the club at the end of the season.

City's victory lifted them back into fourth place in what is a tight battle for the top-five places.

De Bruyne told the *BBC*: "I think it was important to score as quickly as possible and change the feeling of the game a bit."

"I didn't think we were playing that bad but the scoreline wasn't good at all. We went from there."

"I want to go away with a Champions League (place) for this team because they deserve it."

"We've been in the Champions League for the nine, 10 years that I've been here so I hope we can do that for the team next year and I'll just try to play good football like I've always done."

Palace took early control with goals from Eberechi Eze and

Chris Richards inside the opening 21 minutes but De Bruyne's set-piece changed the momentum.

De Bruyne then had a hand in goals for Omar Marmoush and Mateo Kovacic before James McAtee and Nico O'Reilly completed the scoring.

City manager Pep Guardiola said: "The performance of Kevin - as he has done for many, many years in many, many games - he played fantastic. He helped us to

break this momentum that was not good."

"The gratitude we have, I have, to him is huge. He's done incredible and I know that he can deliver."

"Today he was fouled but with the ball he was so clever and, with the goals and assists, he helped a lot to win that game."

"From 2-0 down it was not easy but we stuck with the plan. We now have six games left and we need points to qualify for the Champions League, so this has been massively important."

Palace boss Oliver Glasner was disappointed that his team were unable to press home their advantage after taking early control.

He said: "It's disappointing, especially when you have the lead by two goals. It was a great start and we had a third disallowed and a big chance for Ismaila (Sarr)."

"But our defence was not good enough and made too many mistakes. Then when you give a team like City so many chances they just score. We have to learn and I think we will."

The sides could come face to face again in the FA Cup final.

Glasner said: "I said to Pep afterwards if we meet again you can't play in this system because we will solve it!" - The Independent



Emery to mull Villa penalty takers after double miss

McGinn or Ollie Watkins.

"Marco decided to take the second because the first one he failed, it was revenge for him. He missed it. We have to accept it and of course now we are going to decide for the next match."

It was Watkins who kick-started Villa's climb back into the top five after replacing Rashford in the 66th minute.

Watkins won the first penalty, and four minutes after Asensio's miss he scored a superb goal, lifting Youri Tielemans' pass over Ramsdale and in off the underside of the crossbar.

Fellow substitutes Donyell Malen and John McGinn put the match beyond Southampton - the latter with the rebound after Asensio's second miss - as Villa made it four straight Premier League wins to move into the top five.

"We are trying to set clear our demands and our way to achieve it. I think they did a fantastic job from minute one to minute 90," added Emery.

"We played serious, we followed the game plan, respected them a lot. I am very happy."

"This is our challenge, our momentum and we have to be so focused in everything we are doing

and to get everything we demand."

While Villa look towards overturning a 3-1 deficit against PSG and reaching a Champions League semifinal, Saints have the slightly more modest ambition of trying not to become officially the worst team in Premier League history.

Interim boss Simon Rusk, who has the unenviable task of guiding Saints through the dying embers of this dreadful season, said: "We showed a lot of grit for 60 or 70 minutes against a top team. All things considered I think 3-0 was quite harsh." - The Independent

BARCELONA needed a Jorge Saez own goal to edge Leganes 1-0 and move seven points clear of Real Madrid at the top of La Liga yesterday.

Second-placed champions Madrid face Alaves overnight and have to play catch-up after Hansi Flick's side scraped their way to a narrow but vital win on the road.

The Catalan giants are fighting for a potential quadruple this season and took another small step towards the league title at Butarque stadium.

"The fight and the mentality the team showed today was great," said Flick, whose side beat Borussia Dortmund 4-0 in the Champions League quarterfinals on Wednesday.

"(Madrid) have a match tomorrow but we're only looking at ourselves, three points is good and we had

Vital win for Barcelona

Own goal helps Catalan giants beat Leganes

a great week."

Despite Barca's display lacking the style and danger in front of goal they have shown for much of the season, the players celebrated vehemently at the end.

"In the end what is important in these games are three points," Barca defender Eric Garcia told DAZN.

"I think this is the type of game where the league is won... we're top of the table, which is where we want to be, and today we could extend that distance a bit."

Barcelona lost 1-0 at home against Leganes in December during a slump which they have turned around in 2025, now 24 consecutive matches unbeaten since the turn of the year.

The Madrid minnows set up to frustrate as they did in the first meeting, slowing the game

with tactical fouls and the occasional spot of time-wasting.

Despite Flick selecting a strong side Barcelona found it hard to create danger and the hosts had the best chance of an ugly first half.

Barcelona took off defender Alejandro Balde before the break as he appeared to suffer a muscular injury.

"Balde is not so good... (but) I will say nothing and we will wait until tomorrow," said Flick.

The coach sent on Frenkie de Jong for Ronald Araujo at halftime, moving Eric Garcia back into defence, and Barcelona soon took the lead.

With Robert Lewandowski lurking behind him, Saez deflected Raphinha's low cross into his own net.



Barcelona's Lamine Yamal (left) is challenged by Leganes' Adria Altamira. - AFP/IC

SHORTS

Bayern fail to make most of Leverkusen slip

BUNDESLIGA leaders Bayern Munich were held to a 2-2 home draw with Borussia Dortmund yesterday, failing to take advantage of Bayer Leverkusen's slip-up earlier in the day.

After defending champions Leverkusen were held to a 0-0 draw at home to Union Berlin, Bayern knew a win would have moved them eight points clear with five games to play.

Dortmund took the lead through Maximilian Beier in the 48th minute but Bayern hit back with two goals in four minutes, before Waldemar Anton equalised for the visitors with 15 minutes remaining.

"We've moved a step closer to the championship and we've shown we can create plenty of opportunities," said Bayern veteran Thomas Muller, who will leave the club after 25 years at the end of the season.

"That should help us in the Champions League on Wednesday," Muller added of this week's Champions League quarterfinal second leg at Inter Milan, with Bayern facing a 2-1 first-leg deficit.

"(We need) to be more clinical," said Harry Kane. "We'll have opportunities, it's about taking them in the right moments."

Arnautovic pushes Inter six points clear

MARKO ARNAUTOVIC helped move Inter Milan six points clear at the top of Serie A with a goal and assist in yesterday's 3-1 win

In stoppage time former Barca forward Munir El Haddadi broke through on goal for Leganes but was foiled by a superb Martinez tackle which clinched his side's win.

"The last save (by Martinez) was unbelievable," said Flick. "Everyone celebrated this as if it was a goal."

Leganes, 19th, are two points from safety after the defeat.

"It's so tough... we leave with empty hands against a Barca that, while it's true they attacked against us, they were not as efficient as usual, and you leave with a bitter feeling because we put in a great performance," Leganes midfielder Renato Tapia told DAZN.

"We can do it (stay up), and I think today we showed it." - AFP

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6094 2743	7583 8500
2062 3055	4887 9770

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4 1 6 7 6	8 6 5 9 4	4 6 9
		6 9

6D	1ST	6TH
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4693 8274	5230 9893
5745 3304	2816 8932

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597 360 + GOAT		RM922,611.00
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
563 659 + RABBIT		RM1,991,506.00

Starters	Consolation
507 970 722 012	777 191 108 045
889 790 626 739	282 120 539 462
896 099 070 826	526 977 825 368
184 693 198 274	955 230 669 893
235 745 353 304	742 816 808 932

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3rd Prize	659

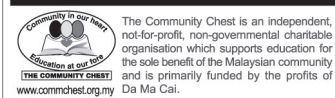
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RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE: Arsenal 1 (Partey 61) **Brentford 1** (Wissa 74), **Brighton 2** (Pedro 31-pen, 55-pen) **Leicester 2** (Mavididi 38, Okoli 74), **Manchester City 5** (De Bruyne 33, Marmoush 36, Kovacic 47, McAtee 56, O'Reilly 79) **Crystal Palace 2** (Eze 8, Richards 21), **Nottingham Forest 0** **Everton 1** (Doucoure 90+4), **Southampton 0** **Aston Villa 3** (Watkins 73, Malen 79, McGinn 90+4).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	31	22	7	2	72	30	73
Arsenal	32	17	12	3	57	27	63
Nottm Forest	32	17	6	9	51	38	57
Man City	32	16	7	9	62	42	55
Aston Villa	32	15	9	8	49	46	54
Chelsea	31	15	8	8	54	37	53
Newcastle	30	16	5	9	52	39	53
Fulham	31	13	9	9	47	42	48
Brighton	32	12	12	8	51	49	48
Bournemouth	31	12	9	10	51	40	45
Brentford	32	12	7	13	52	48	43
Crystal Palace	31	11	10	10	41	40	43
Man Utd	31	10	8	13	37	41	38
Everton	32	8	14	10	34	38	38
Tottenham	31	11	4	16	58	45	37
West Ham	31	9	8	14	35	52	35
Wolves	31	9	5	17	43	59	32
Ipswich	31	4	8	19	31	65	20
Leicester	32	4	6	22	27	72	18
Southampton	32	2	4	26	23	77	10

CHAMPIONSHIP: Cardiff 0 Stoke 1, Leeds 2 Preston 1, Luton 0 Blackburn 1, Millwall 1 Middlesbrough 0, Plymouth 2 Sheffield United 1, Portsmouth 2 Derby 2, QPR 1 Bristol City 1, Sheffield Wednesday 0 Oxford 1, Sunderland 0 Swansea 1, West Brom 2 Watford 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Leeds	42	25	13	4	82	29	88
Burnley	42	24	16	2	57	13	88
Sheff Utd	42	26	7	9	57	33	83
Sunderland	42	21	13	8	57	38	76
Bristol City	42	16	16	10	54	45	64
Coventry	41	18	8	15	58	53	62

LA LIGA: Real Sociedad 0 Real Mallorca 2 (Larin 20, Darder 47), Getafe 1 (Alderete 19) **Las Palmas 3** (Silva 53, 74, McBurnie 61), **Celta Vigo 0 Espanyol 2** (Fernandez 28, 63), **Leganes 0 Barcelona 1** (Saenz 48-og).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Barcelona	31	22	4	5	84	29	70
Real Madrid	30	19	6	5	63	31	63
Atletico	30	17	9	4	49	24	60
A. Bilbao	30	14	12	4	46	24	54
Villarreal	29	13	9	7	51	39	48
Real Betis	30	13	9	8	41	37	48

SERIE A: Inter Milan 3 Cagliari 1, Juventus 2 Lecce 1, Venezia 1 Monza 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Inter Milan	32	21	8	3	72	31	71
Napoli	31	19	8	4	48	25	65
Juventus	32	15	14	3	49	30	59
Atalanta	31	17	7	7	63	30	58
Bologna	31	15	12	4	51	35	57
Lazio	31	16	7	8	52	42	55

BUNDESLIGA: Bayern Munich 2 Borussia Dortmund 2, Bayer Leverkusen 0 Union Berlin 0, Hoffenheim 2 Mainz 0, Borussia Monchengladbach 1 Freiburg 2, Bochum 1 Augsburg 2, Holstein Kiel 1 St Pauli 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Bayern	29	21	6	2	83	29	69
Leverkusen	29	18	9	2	63	34	63
E. Frankfurt	28	14	6	8	55	42	48
RB Leipzig	29	13	9	7	47	37	48
Mainz	29	13	7	9	46	34	46
SC Freiburg	29	13	6	10	40	45	45

FRENCH LIGUE 1: Monaco 3 Marseille 0, Toulouse 1 Lille 2, Strasbourg 2 Nice 2.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Paris SG	28	23	5	0	80	26	74
Monaco	29	16	5	8	57	35	53
Marseille	29	16	4	9	57	41	52
Lille	29	14	8	7	44	31	50
Strasbourg	29	14	8	7	48	37	50
Nice	29	13	9	7	54	37	48

■ CHAMPIONS ■ RELEGATED

Valuable point

Kedah FC coach happy after draw against Sabah

KEDAH DARUL AMAN FC (KDA FC) interim head coach Victor Andrag is pleased with his team's 1-1 draw against Sabah FC in their Super League match at Darul Aman Stadium in Alor Setar on Saturday night.

He said the result was enough to motivate the players, who had shown a high level of professionalism and managed to overcome their challenges.

"Of course, I'm grateful for the result - one valuable point in a situation where the team have many shortcomings, yet we still managed to give our best tonight," Victor told reporters after the match.

"We've gone through a lot, and it hasn't been an easy journey. Day after day, defeat after defeat, match after match - it has been tough for us to secure a win.

"For the players who turned up for training, I appreciate every drop of sweat they gave. Words can't describe how much I value them."

Victor said the challenges faced together with the team since taking over from former head coach Nafuzi Zain in November last year had left him with many shared memories.

"You all can see how long we've endured the hardships together, how long we've risen together as a family," he said.

Sabah FC head coach Martin Stano said Kedah put up a strong fight, and the result was disappointing as he failed in his mission to collect the full three points.

He said the focus now shifts to the remaining match at Likas, which he considers crucial for the team to retain third place in the league before the season's fixture concludes.

In another Super League match on

Fatin Nurfatehah Mat Salleh. - BERNAMAPIC



Compound archer Fatin can dream of LA28

FOR nearly two decades, Malaysian compound archer Fatin Nurfatehah Mat Salleh has proudly carried the nation's hopes with her bow and arrows.

Yet deep down, she held onto a dream she once believed was impossible - to compete at the Olympic Games. That long-awaited dream has finally been reignited.

Recently, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) announced that the mixed team compound archery event will be included as a medal event at the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics (LA28), marking a historic breakthrough for compound archers around the world.

Fatin Nurfatehah described the IOC's decision as a turning point in her life - both as an athlete and as someone who never gave up hope.

"Happy, excited and honestly shocked because compound was added at the last minute," said the 33-year-old archer from Kota Kinabalu.

"It's truly incredible news, especially for the compound archery community. This announcement gives us new energy because as athletes, we've always dreamed of becoming Olympians.

"Before this, it felt pointless to dream about the Olympics because compound wasn't part of it. Now that it is, I truly hope to qualify and contribute a medal for the country," Fatin Nurfatehah told Bernama here today.

For most of her career, competing in the Olympics felt like an impossible feat for Fatin. Despite years of training and competing in hundreds of tournaments, compound archery was simply not recognised in the world's biggest sporting stage.

Every time someone asked if she was going to the Olympics, she had to explain that it wasn't possible because her event wasn't contested there.

"After this, when people ask me about the Olympics, I can finally say I will try my best to qualify and prepare for it," said Fatin, who has proven her talent through achievements in global competitions like the World Cup and SEA Games.

Although excited by the opportunity, Fatin knows the journey to LA28 won't be easy. With about three years to prepare, she admits there's still a lot to understand about the qualification process and event format, which have yet to be finalised.

"It's going to be tough because we don't even know the qualifying system yet. But what I can say now is that preparation can finally begin. We have around three years to get ready for LA28," she added.

Earlier this year, Fatin and her teammate Alang Arif Aqil Muhammad Ghazali made headlines by winning the gold medal in the mixed team compound event at the 2025 Asia Cup in Bangkok - a promising sign of Malaysia's potential heading into the Olympics. - Bernama

Saturday, Sri Pahang FC built a positive momentum ahead of the 2024/2025 Malaysia Cup final when they recorded their third consecutive win by beating Perak FC 1-0 at the Manjung Municipal Council (MPM) Stadium.

Substitute striker T. Saravanan emerged as the hero of the East Coast side when he scored the team's winning goal in the 82nd minute following a quick counter-attack which he calmly finished after receiving a pass from Muhammad Baquidin Shamsuddin in the penalty box.

It was Sri Pahang's sixth win in the league competition this season, in addition to eight draws and nine defeats to occupy ninth place with 26 points and with one game remaining.

Sri Pahang are scheduled to take on Penang FC at the Temerloh Municipal Council Stadium on Saturday in their final league action before taking on Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) in the Malaysia Cup final on April 26. - Bernama

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SCAN ME

Arteta throws in towel

Partey injury worry for Arsenal as title hopes hit hard by Brentford draw

BY PHILIP DUNCAN

MIKEL ARTETA cast doubt over Thomas Partey's availability for Arsenal's decisive match against Real Madrid as he all-but conceded his side's wafer-thin hopes of contesting Liverpool for the Premier League after a 1-1 draw with Brentford.

Partey put Arsenal ahead against Brentford after 61 minutes at the Emirates only for Yoane Wissa to haul the visitors level 13 minutes later.

Arsenal's attention will now return to the Champions League as they head to the Bernabeu with a three-goal advantage following their stunning first-leg win against the Spanish giants four days ago.

But Partey, who has impressed at the pivot of Arsenal's midfield this season and yesterday operated as a makeshift right-back, has been ruled a doubt by Arteta after he was withdrawn with 20 minutes left.

Asked if he would be fit for Wednesday's (Thurs 3am Malaysian time) fixture in Spain, Arteta said: "We don't know."

"I haven't spoken to the doctors yet so they will check him now and see how he is. He felt something so we didn't want to take any risks."

Partey's possible absence could create a headache for Arteta after Jorginho was unable to continue when he sustained a rib injury which left Arsenal contesting the closing moments with 10 men.

Arsenal's 12th draw of a disappointing League campaign means Liverpool could even be crowned champions as early as next weekend if the Gunners lose their next League fixture at Ipswich, and Arne Slot's side see off West Ham and then Leicester at the King Power Stadium on Easter Sunday.

"We still have six games to play in the Premier League, which are going to be really important, but for sure it is now all about Wednesday," said Arteta, when it was put to him that it is now the Champions League or bust for Arsenal.

"It is difficult because obviously there are a lot of reasons as to why we are that distance (behind Liverpool) and the amount of things that we have to deal with, and still, we are

where we are. But we want to be higher, that's for sure.

"Today, what we wanted to do was increase the probability of us really challenging for what we are looking for in the Premier League. With that result, obviously, it's more unlikely to happen."

Brentford's Christian Norgaard could perhaps count himself fortunate to escape a red card when his off-the-ground tackle on Gabriel Martinelli in the first half was deemed only a bookable offence.

Martinelli felt his leg could have been broken after the Brentford captain escaped a sending off for a scissor tackle.

Norgaard hacked the Arsenal winger to the ground in the first half, which evoked a reaction from both the Emirates crowd and the touchline, with Arteta also furious with the decision to only caution the midfielder with a yellow.

VAR chose not to upgrade the decision after review despite strong appeals from Arteta to fourth official Simon Hooper.

"I didn't see that again but in the moment if my foot was on the floor he could break my leg," Martinelli told *Sky Sports*.

"He (Norgaard) said he didn't mean it. I believe him but still he could have broke my leg. For me it was red. I need to see it again to be sure. But for me it was nasty."

On the touchline, Arteta was incandescent with the decision, and he added after the game: "I think my reaction says everything."

Reacting to Martinelli's comments, Brentford manager Thomas Frank said: "That is his opinion. I thought it was a strong yellow."

For Brentford, the draw takes them up to 11th and leaves them with an outside chance of securing a European spot.

"We want to end as high as possible," said Frank.

"There are some very good teams above us. We have six games left and we have to have a perfect run (to make it into Europe next season)." - The Independent



Arsenal's Thomas Partey (right) in action with Brentford's Mikkell Damsgaard. - REUTERS/SPIC



All eyes on Rory

Story on page 28



Pep hails 'fantastic' De Bruyne

Story on page 29



Vital win for Barca

Story on page 30