



Spike in HFMD cases attributed to Covid-19 pandemic

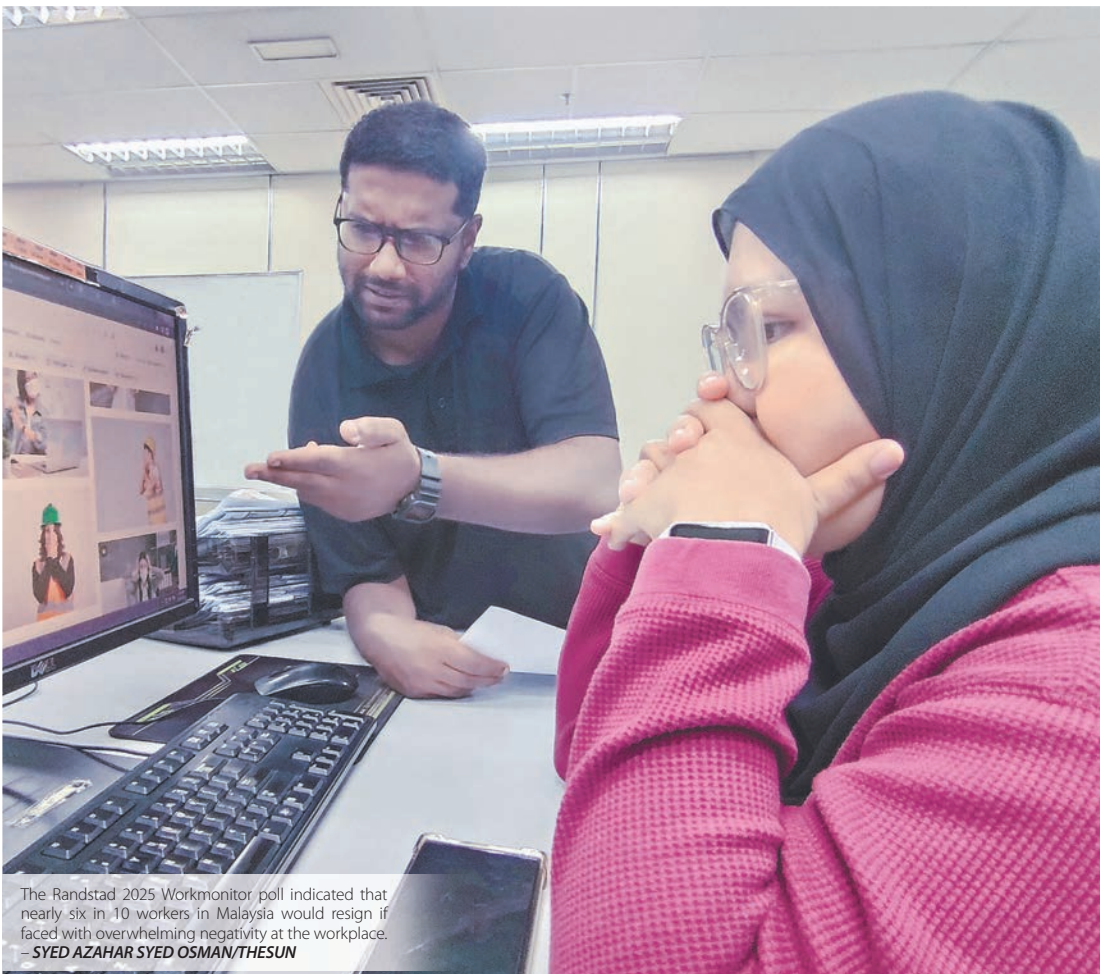
'Immunity debt' rendered by enhanced hygiene practices drastically reduced exposure of children to common viruses: Academic

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'No' to toxic workplaces

Regional survey finds Malaysian employees most likely to quit jobs rather than endure unhealthy environments and unpleasant culture.

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The Randstad 2025 Workmonitor poll indicated that nearly six in 10 workers in Malaysia would resign if faced with overwhelming negativity at the workplace.
— SYED AZAHAR SYED OSMAN/THE SUN

Egg subsidy reduced by 50% effective today

Move marks start of gradual transition aimed at aligning prices with market conditions, with full removal beginning on Aug 1.

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Process to repair, rebuild damaged Putra Heights houses begins

Cabinet approves RM40 million for reconstruction and restoration of 219 units affected by gas pipe explosion: Selangor MB

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**AERIAL DISPLAY ...**

A helicopter in action during the Armed Forces Parade and Order of the Supreme Commander at the grounds of the Segenting Camp in Port Dickson yesterday.
— BERNAMAPIC

Toxic workplace driving away younger employees

➤ Dissatisfied staff aware such conditions could harm mental health, careers and relationships: Academic

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysian workers are the most likely in the Asia-Pacific region to walk away from toxic workplaces, with nearly six in 10 saying they would resign rather than endure unhealthy environments, according to the Randstad 2025 Workmonitor survey.

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan Professor of Human Resource and Industrial Relation, Prof Dr Balakrishnan Parasuraman said awareness of toxic workplace culture has grown significantly over the past decade.

This shift, he noted, has been driven by the rise of social media, greater employee consciousness and a growing emphasis on mental health and well-being.

"Previously, toxic behaviours such as bullying, favouritism, poor communication and overwork were often tolerated or normalised."

"But younger generations entering the workforce are pushing for greater accountability and healthier work environments," he said.

He added that the Randstad report reflects rising demand for more human-centric work cultures that prioritise work-life balance, a sense of belonging and supportive leadership.

"Today's employees are more likely to quit than tolerate toxic work conditions because they're more aware of how such environments can harm their mental health, careers and

relationships. Personal well-being is now a top priority," he said.

The rise of remote work and increased job mobility have also given employees more options, empowering them to seek better workplaces.

"Cultural shifts, especially among millennials and Gen Z, have led to a stronger push for better working conditions."

"These generations are more vocal about their expectations and are helping to drive change."

"Social media also allows employees to share experiences and find support, making it easier to leave toxic environments. Moving to healthier workplaces boosts morale and enhances a company's reputation," he said.

The Randstad 2025 Workmonitor survey, which polled 503 respondents in Malaysia, revealed that 59% had either left or would consider leaving a job due to a toxic workplace culture.

Workplace culture emerged as a key factor influencing employee retention and career decisions.

Nearly half (48%) of Malaysian respondents said they would reject job offers from companies that do not actively promote a healthy, positive work environment.

This sentiment is particularly strong among younger and mid-career professionals, with 59% of Gen Z and 50% of Gen X respondents

expressing this view.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Employers Federation president Datuk Dr Syed Hussain Syed Husman said no employer wants a toxic workplace, as such an environment is unsustainable for both businesses and workers.

"No organisation can survive in a toxic environment. So using the term 'unwillingness to address' is inaccurate."

"Employers strive to create workplaces that are dynamic, positive and healthy."

Syed Hussain said employers shape a culture of positivity through training programmes that instil both values and skills.

"When hiring, employers assess both the candidate's values and skill sets to ensure alignment with the organisation," he said.

He added that tools like employee satisfaction surveys and 360-degree reviews help employers identify and address workplace issues.

However, he noted that employees often do not raise concerns when given the chance, which can delay resolution.

"No employer will wait long to resolve a toxic environment because such issues affect the entire organisation's health. Employees should feel encouraged to report toxic behaviours through the proper channels," he said.

On mental health, Syed Hussain said most employers aim to provide a safe and healthy work environment as it directly influences productivity.

"Many medium and large companies have dedicated health and safety departments. While smaller SMEs may lack the resources for such departments, no employer wants to cut costs in this area," he added.

Negative environments lead to mental health issues

PETALING JAYA: Prolonged exposure to toxic workplace environments can severely impact an employee's mental health, potentially leading to anxiety, depression and long-term emotional distress.

University of Nottingham Malaysia Assoc Prof Dr Siti Khadijah Zainal Badri, who specialises in applied and workplace psychology, said early signs of toxicity often include declining morale, reduced motivation and disengagement.

"Left unaddressed, these issues can escalate

into more serious mental health challenges."

"Over time, employees may experience intense frustration, hopelessness, confusion and dissatisfaction."

"If these negative emotions go unchecked, they can develop into serious psychological conditions such as anxiety and depression," she said.

She added that toxic environments slowly erode an employee's sense of purpose, dignity, and emotional safety – affecting not just job performance, but also relationships and overall

quality of life.

To identify early signs of a toxic culture, she advised employees to observe the tone and quality of communication in the workplace.

"Respect, trust, professionalism and compassion must be present. Toxic culture cannot thrive in a compassionate environment where people are treated with dignity and boundaries are respected."

"Workplaces that promote intense competition, tolerate gossip or bullying, and lack

Paris court sets date for Sulu claim appeal

KUALA LUMPUR: The next proceedings in the case involving the Sulu group's claim are scheduled to be heard at the Paris Court of Appeal on July 7, said Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

She said the hearing would see the French judiciary examine the validity of the arbitration award imposed on Malaysia, as well as various related legal aspects.

"Malaysia will continue to exhaust all efforts, rights and available resources to protect the country's sovereign immunity and interests, and to bring to a close the baseless fraud case by the Sulu group."

"Several recent rulings in Malaysia's favour have significantly strengthened Malaysia's legal position and sovereignty as an independent nation," she said in a statement.

She added that among these decisions were the French Court of Cassation's cancellation of the recognition of the preliminary award, the Dutch Supreme Court's rejection of the final award and the French Court of Appeal's criminal conviction of arbitrator Gonzalo Stampa for contempt of court.

Azalina, on a working visit to Europe, met with the legal team representing Malaysia in Paris to receive updates on the case.

Previously, eight Filipino nationals claiming to be heirs of the now-defunct Sulu Sultanate, filed arbitration proceedings in Spain to demand billions of US dollars from Malaysia over issues involving Sabah.

In March 2019, a court in Madrid appointed Stampa as the arbitrator for the case. On Feb 28, 2022, Stampa ruled in favour of the group and issued a Final Award of US\$14.9 billion (RM64.21 billion) through an unlawful arbitration process, despite his appointment having already been annulled by a Spanish court.

Malaysia has since secured a series of legal victories, including in November last year when the French Supreme Court fully rejected the group's legal challenge. — Bernama

'Global South needs to be proactive'

KUALA LUMPUR: The Global South must forge a new path and take the lead to reshape international cooperation, as the stability and security of the world economy are now actively undermined by the current international system, said Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan.

Speaking at the BRICS Partners Foreign Ministers Meeting 2025 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on Tuesday, he said the flurry of tariffs, which have sent shockwaves through the global community, are not a threat, but both a revelation and an opportunity.

He said the Global South, as a collective, is becoming a key actor in global realignment, and it must not be content with a passive role in global decision-making, Bernama reported.

"We must be proactive, forward-looking and united in shaping a cooperative, just world order. Malaysia stands ready to work with BRICS and all partners who share this vision," he said when delivering Malaysia's intervention at a dedicated session themed "The Role of the Global South in Reinforcing Multilateralism" during the meeting.

clear communication or transparency are all signs of toxicity.

"Environments marked by power imbalances, unethical behaviour or disrespect should also raise red flags," she said.

Despite the psychological toll, Siti Khadijah said many employees stay in toxic jobs out of necessity. "It's not always easy to leave. For many, staying in a toxic job feels like the only option when finances and family responsibilities are at stake," she said. — BY HARITH KAMAL

'Robust reforms needed to fight corruption'

PUTRAJAYA: The Malaysian government is committed to implementing wide-ranging governance reforms to restore public trust and enhance integrity across all levels of administration, Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar said.

Delivering his keynote address at the Southeast Asia Anti-Corruption Conference here on Tuesday, he said the reforms encompass greater transparency and accountability in public sector administration, public finance management, procurement, corporate governance and law enforcement, as well as the advancement of legal reforms.

"Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2024 paints a sobering picture, with over two-thirds of the 180 countries surveyed scoring below 50%. This raises a fundamental question: Are countries truly embracing good governance practices to eliminate corruption?" he said.

While Malaysia ranked second among Asean nations behind Singapore, Shamsul Azri acknowledged that more must be done.

"There is a need for a solid, robust and dynamic policy framework that prioritises good governance. We must strengthen collaboration among ministries and agencies to drive productivity growth and improve national competitiveness," he stressed.

On the conference, Shamsul Azri viewed it as a strategic platform for Malaysia, not only to showcase its ongoing reforms such as the strengthening of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, the implementation of the National Anti-Corruption Plan and the empowerment of integrity units in both public and private sectors, but also to engage with regional counterparts to learn and lead.

"This is a valuable opportunity to learn from regional best practices, from collective action models to emerging technologies in corruption detection and asset recovery."

He said Malaysia also aims to contribute towards the formulation of a regional code of practice grounded in the Jakarta Principles, tailored specifically to the Asean context, Bernama reported.

"We must collaborate to build integrity-centred ecosystems through education, youth engagement and multi-stakeholder partnerships," he said, and urged Asean nations to turn their collective strength into unified action.

Shamsul Azri also paid tribute to the role played by various groups in the anti-corruption effort.

"To all anti-corruption agencies, you are the frontliners. To civil society and NGOs, you are the conscience of our nations. To the media, in an age of misinformation, ethical journalism is more crucial than ever."

"And to all of us, let us remember – integrity is not a slogan. It is a responsibility. A daily commitment. A legacy we must pass on to future generations."

Govt halves egg subsidy, full removal by August

► Funds saved from withdrawal will be channelled to public welfare projects aligned with *Madani* economic framework, says Agriculture and Food Security Ministry

■ BY AZURA ABAS
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PETALING JAYA: The government is halving egg subsidy beginning today, with full removal scheduled for Aug 1, in a move to gradually align prices with market dynamics.

The Agriculture and Food Security Ministry said the subsidy will be reduced

from 10 sen to 5 sen per egg starting today. The remaining subsidy will be scrapped entirely in three months.

"This marks the beginning of a soft landing approach to avoid market shocks and undue strain on consumers," the ministry said in a statement yesterday, adding that the decision came after months of in-depth talks with industry players, producers and consumer groups, backed by thorough

economic reviews.

"The government has spent RM2.5 billion on egg subsidy since its rollout on Feb 5, 2022, up to Dec 31 last year."

It said the 10-sen-per-egg subsidy was introduced in 2022 in response to disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic and the Ukraine-Russia war, which led to sharp increases in the prices of imported animal feed – particularly soybean and corn, the two key ingredients in poultry farming.

With global conditions stabilising and the ringgit strengthening, the government now considers prolonged subsidies unsustainable, added the ministry.

It said the funds saved from the subsidy withdrawal will be channelled into targeted public welfare projects aligned with the *Madani* government economic framework.

To cushion the impact, egg producers have agreed to introduce a new special-grade egg category, offering a more affordable option for cost-conscious consumers.

Affordable eggs will continue to be available through government initiatives such as *Jualan Agro Madani*, *Rahmah* Sales and outlets run by the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority and Farmers' Organisation Authority.

The Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry said it will step up enforcement under the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011 to curb opportunistic price hikes and ensure a stable supply chain.

It said the removal of chicken subsidies in November 2023 did not lead to significant price increases, and a similar trend is expected for eggs. It also said over the coming weeks, consumers can expect to see prices gradually adjust at both supermarkets and local wet markets.

Meanwhile, analysts have suggested the impact on prices will be minimal, citing a stronger ringgit and declining input costs, with corn and soybean prices having stabilised in recent months.

TA Securities forecast that egg prices may rise by just two to three sen per egg following the subsidy removal. The research house also estimated that the move could save the government around RM100 million per month, or RM1.2 billion annually.

Under the previous subsidy scheme, retail prices were capped at 42 sen for Grade A eggs, 40 sen for Grade B and 38 sen for Grade C.

Several consumer advocacy groups, including the Federation of Malaysian Consumer Associations (Fomca) have raised concerns over the move.

Fomca has urged the government to explore more flexible or targeted support mechanisms to protect vulnerable and low-income households.

At the same time, industry players are expected to benefit from greater pricing autonomy, allowing them to better respond to real-time shifts in market demand and production costs.



The egg subsidy will be reduced from 10 sen to 5 sen per egg starting today, and will be scrapped entirely in three months. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Consumers, small businesses worry as aid winds down

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: The government's decision to phase out egg subsidy has sparked concern among consumers and small businesses, many of whom fear rising prices will place further strain on household and operational budgets.

For housewife Tina Abdullah, 50, from Shah Alam, who has four children, the move feels like a blow to families already dealing with the rising

cost of living.

"Our family eats eggs almost every day ... we go through at least one tray a week. The thought of the price going up is worrying."

Tina acknowledged the government's plan to retarget subsidies but urged that a partial subsidy, such as 5 sen per egg, be maintained to keep eggs affordable for everyone.

While government initiatives like *Agro Madani* and *Rahmah* Sales aim to provide eggs at lower prices, Tina said

the efforts are not frequent or accessible enough to make an impact.

"They're like occasional efforts. Many people don't have the time or transport to reach the locations. What is needed is a consistent and convenient solution to ensure daily access to affordable eggs."

Small business owners are also bracing for the fallout.

Asilah Mohamad Yusof, 51, a home baker from Seri Kembangan, Selangor, said the cut could seriously affect her *kuih* business.

Asilah relies heavily on eggs, along with other key ingredients such as coconut milk, which she said has doubled in price in recent months.

"It will significantly impact businesses like mine. Eggs are a key ingredient, we can't cut back on them in our recipes."

Higher costs, she said, would leave her no choice but to raise product prices, which could hurt customer retention.

"The government should recognise the strain on micro-businesses like mine and find a way to keep costs manageable," she added.

Guide introduced to enhance understanding of Madani administration

KUALA LUMPUR: The Public Service Department (PSD) has launched the Public Service Kit (PSK), which is aimed at ensuring civil servants have a deeper understanding of the progressive *Madani* government administration system.

In a statement, PSD announced that the initiative, launched by Public Service Director-General Tan Sri Wan Ahmad

Dahlan Abdul Aziz yesterday, is part of the ongoing efforts to strengthen the public service reform agenda.

According to the department, the PSK is also in line with the aspirations of the *Madani* core values and the H.E.M.A.T principle within the framework of the *Hijrah Tata Kelola* (transformational governance) values.

"It also aims to strengthen

competency development to be more competitive and inclusive in supporting the public service reform agenda towards greater excellence," PSD said in statement.

It also said PSK is a specific guide outlined to strengthen the understanding of civil servants, especially newly appointed officers, of the country's administrative system,

starting from the appointment phase, service and retirement phase.

PSD said the kit is an important platform to accelerate the process of adapting officers to the public service ecosystem effectively and competitively.

It added that four principles are the main thrust of the kit – clear initial guidance, introduction to duties and responsibilities, exposure to rights and

benefits, and information on administrative procedures.

"The aim is to form human capital that is magnanimous, knowledgeable, highly skilled, has integrity and performs well so that the public sector continues to be the pillar of the country's progress and prosperity."

The kit can be accessed at PSD's web portal at www.jp.gov.my. – Bernama.

Restoration of damaged Putra Heights houses begins

➤ RM40 million allocated for reconstruction, with RM300,000 for each homeowner of totally destroyed units: S'gor MB

■ BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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SHAH ALAM: The repair process for 219 affected houses in the Putra Heights inferno will begin today, said Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the Cabinet has approved RM40 million in aid for the reconstruction and repair of the damaged homes.

Of the total, 81 units were classified as completely destroyed, with structural damage exceeding 40%. The remaining units sustained less severe structural damage or minor harm.

"The RM40 million allocation, to be channelled through the Housing and Local Government Ministry, stipulates that for homes deemed totally destroyed, RM300,000 will be allocated per homeowner to rebuild.

"For homes with damage below 40%, a repair ceiling of RM150,000 has been set.

"Meanwhile, 57 homes that did not suffer structural damage but require minor repairs will each be allocated a ceiling cost of RM30,000," he told reporters yesterday.

He said for reconstruction works in Taman Putra Harmoni, the federal government has appointed Sime Darby, the area's original developer, to expedite the process, with a timeline of between 12 and 24 months.

"Syarikat Perumahan Nasional Bhd, under the ministry, has been tasked with the repair works in Kampung Kuala Sungai Baru.

"Both companies will be granted access to the affected areas by the Subang Jaya City Council."

He added that residents whose homes suffered minor damage may begin submitting invoices and claims through their resident associations or directly to the city council from



Amirudin and Nga at a press conference on the reconstruction process. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

May 6 to Oct 28.

"The reconstruction process will be led by the Putra Heights Recovery Committee, especially in matters concerning cost and construction timelines."

Amirudin said the state government is receiving regular updates from the Selangor Health Department regarding injured residents receiving treatment at public and private hospitals.

"Some residents are undergoing treatment and may require surgery and skin grafts."

He said the state government, through its Public Health and Environment exco Jamaliah Jamaluddin, is working to identify residents in need of assistance.

"We might not cover all the costs but we will cover parts of it."

He announced that the state government has agreed to provide rental assistance to 455 families, amounting to RM6,000 per

household for a period of three months.

"A total allocation of RM2.73 million has started to be disbursed to each family to help cover rental costs for accommodation of their own choosing while their homes are being rebuilt."

He added that some residents have yet to receive rental aid as their personal documentation is pending verification.

Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming announced RM6 million in aid to help rebuild public facilities that were damaged in the surrounding areas.

He said he had personally requested Sime Darby Property and Syarikat Perumahan Negara Bhd to work around the clock to rebuild and repair the affected homes.

On April 1, a gas pipeline explosion rocked residents in Putra Heights, with more than 200 houses damaged by the resulting inferno and over 300 residents displaced.

N. Sembilan internet coverage at 99.9%

SEREMBAN: The internet and communications coverage in populated areas of Negeri Sembilan has reached 99.9% as of Jan 31, the state assembly was told yesterday.

State Heritage, Technology, Innovation and Digital Action Committee chairman Datuk Mohd Faizal Ramli said the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission is implementing the National Digital Network Plan to expand connectivity and improve telecommunications infrastructure, including in the Lenggeng and Nilai areas.

Mohd Faizal (BN-Linggii) was responding to a question from Datuk Mohd Asna Amin (BN-Lenggeng), who raised concerns about weak internet access in Kampung Sungai Jai, Kampung Rawa and Kampung Tengah in Lenggeng, and asked what measures would be taken to improve infrastructure quality in those areas.

He said the remaining initiatives being implemented are expected to be completed in stages by the end of the year.

On the issue of stray dogs, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun said the animals pose a security concern for residents in Muslim-majority areas and proposed that they be culled.

"I suggest that the disposal involve only stray dogs in Muslim-majority areas. I hope animal welfare NGOs can understand the issue affecting the Muslim community."

He was responding to a question from Dr G. Rajasekaran (PH-Sri Tanjung) regarding the state government's efforts to manage the stray dog problem.

The proposal received support from government and opposition assembly members, with Yew Boon Lye (PH-Chuah) interjecting and saying the stray dogs also affect public safety. — Bernama

PTPTN settles loan of deceased student

KUALA LUMPUR: Universiti Utara Malaysia student Manarina Hasya Muhamad Karim, 22, who died in an incident involving two buses on campus last month, will have her outstanding loan of RM12,629.82 with the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) settled.

PTPTN said her loan, which she had obtained to pursue her bachelor's degree, was settled through its Education Loan Group Takaful Protection Scheme.

"PTPTN, with full sympathy through the Ziarah PTPTN Prihatin Programme, visited the next of kin of the victim."

"The visit and handing over of corporate social responsibility (CSR) contributions was held at the residence of the deceased's next-of-kin in Felda Chempalak, Labis in Johor and officiated by PTPTN Corporate Communications and Marketing Department senior general manager Zawiah Wan Abu Bakar, who represented the PTPTN chairman and management."

PTPTN said the next of kin would receive a death *khairat* amounting to RM1,500 as well as a CSR contribution in the form of RM2,000 cash and a food basket.

Group *takaful* coverage is intended to protect the amount of loans that PTPTN has issued to borrowers and provides coverage 24 hours a day throughout the world in the event of death or permanent disability.

For any borrower who has died or suffered a disability, their next of kin or heirs/claimants must make a claim by completing the Takaful claim application form, which can be obtained through the official portal www.ptptn.gov.my.

The form and required supporting documents must be submitted to the nearest PTPTN state/branch office or mailed to its headquarters in PTPTN Tower, Kuala Lumpur. — Bernama

S'wak launches first AI-based power conversion device

KUCHING: The Sarawak government has marked a significant milestone in global technology by introducing Keteq AI, the world's first artificial intelligence (AI)-based power conversion device, developed entirely by Sarawakian talent.

State premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Abang Openg said the achievement is one of the key outcomes under the Sarawak Semiconductor Roadmap 2030 and Beyond initiative, which aims to position the state as a high-tech hub in the Southeast Asian region.

"The development of the Edge AI Power Converter is more than just the result of policy. It is a game-changing catalyst for Sarawak. This innovation represents a transformational leap in our technological landscape," he said in a statement issued by the Sarawak Public Communication Unit.

He made the announcement during a visit to the CSA Catapult facility in Cardiff, Wales on Tuesday, during which he explained that the Keteq AI project began on April 23 last year, following the signing of a memorandum of understanding between SMD Semiconductor

and CSA Catapult.

He said Keteq AI is engineered with the capability to detect and correct system disturbances automatically in under 0.1 milliseconds, making it one of the most responsive systems in the field of smart control and power electronics.

"The technology showcases Sarawak's commitment to building its own strategic technological capabilities. The device not only promises high energy efficiency but is also designed to operate on a scalable platform with real-time response capabilities."

"Keteq AI has broad application potential, including in smart grids, electric vehicle systems, autonomous technologies, industrial Internet of Things, predictive maintenance systems and critical control mechanisms."

SMD Semiconductor CEO Shariman Jamil conducted a live demonstration of the prototype, showcasing its ability to handle various complex operational scenarios.

With the slogan "Innovation In Just A Snap", Keteq AI stands as proof of Sarawakian talents' capability to create world-class technology,

placing the state firmly on the global map in AI and smart energy systems.

Abang Johari arrived in London on Tuesday to lead a state government delegation for a five-day working visit to the United Kingdom (UK) as part of efforts to strengthen collaboration in semiconductor development.

His itinerary includes meetings with representatives from the Cambridge University Press and Assessment and the London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE), and witnessing a memorandum of understanding exchange between LSE and the Sarawak government.

He is also scheduled to meet officials from the International Hydropower Association and Global Renewables Alliance, and to deliver a keynote address at a gathering of UK industry players and captains of industry.

Additionally, he will meet Sarawakian students in the UK at a gathering on Saturday, during which he is expected to share insights on Sarawak's development initiatives and engage in a question-and-answer session with the students. — Bernama

HFMD surge linked to post-Covid immunity gap

► Hygiene SOP during pandemic curbed children's exposure to common viruses, leaving many 'immunologically naive'

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: A recent spike in hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) cases in Malaysia is likely the result of "immunity debt" following the Covid-19 pandemic, according to Universiti Malaya Department of Medical Microbiology associate professor Dr Tee Kok Keng.

He said lockdowns, school closures and heightened hygiene measures during the pandemic significantly reduced children's exposure to common viruses, leaving many "immunologically naive".

Immunologically naive refers to individuals whose immune systems have never previously encountered certain pathogens and therefore lack the ability to mount an immediate response.

"With the resumption of social activities, these susceptible children are now experiencing rapid transmission of the virus, leading to a rise in HFMD cases," Tee said, adding that while seasonal factors and changes in virus strains may also play a role, the main contributor is the population-wide gap in natural immunity.

HFMD is endemic in Malaysia and typically sees seasonal spikes, particularly mid-year and occasionally towards the end of the year.

Tee said the current surge aligns with this pattern, coinciding with school terms and Malaysia's hot and humid climate.

"Children under the age of five remain the most vulnerable during this period. Parents should be vigilant for symptoms such as fever, rashes and mouth sores," he added.

Tee stressed the continued importance of basic hygiene practices to limit the spread of HFMD, including isolating infected individuals, regular handwashing, disinfecting



Tee said with the resumption of social activities, susceptible children are now experiencing rapid transmission of the virus, leading to a rise in cases. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

surfaces, avoiding the sharing of personal items and maintaining respiratory hygiene.

He also pointed out that while HFMD vaccines have been approved in China since 2015, they are not yet available in Malaysia.

"Perhaps it is time for authorities to conduct randomised clinical trials to assess vaccine efficacy locally," he said.

In Kelantan, HFMD cases have increased tenfold this year.

As of April 5, 4,591 cases had been reported, up from 459 during the same period last year.

State Health Department director Datuk Dr Zaini Hussin said 87% of cases involved children aged six and below.

Meanwhile, Penang has also seen a significant rise.

Between April 6 and 12, cases jumped by 156.2% compared with the previous week, with 579 new infections and four clusters reported.

Penang State Youth, Sports and Health Committee chairman Daniel Z.S. Gooi had earlier revealed a 409% increase in HFMD cases from Jan 1 to March 22 compared with 2023.

A total of 4,585 cases have been reported in Penang as of April 12, compared with just 879

over the same period last year.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia public health specialist professor Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh warned that HFMD is highly contagious, spreading via faecal-oral transmission, respiratory secretions such as sneezes and contact with contaminated surfaces such as toys or tables.

She emphasised the need for stronger public awareness campaigns to educate communities on prevention and early detection.

"Parents should isolate infected children and ensure frequent handwashing. If a child has a persistent fever or appears unusually unwell, they should seek immediate medical attention," she advised.

While most HFMD cases are resolved without serious complications, Sharifa noted that outbreaks involving *enterovirus 71* carry a higher risk of severe outcomes, including aseptic meningitis, encephalitis, acute flaccid paralysis and potentially fatal neurological or cardiovascular complications.

"In a study conducted in Taiwan, complications were reported in up to 32% of HFMD cases," she said.

13 held in counterfeit engine oil crackdown

PETALING JAYA: Three premises suspected of bottling and distributing engine oil using counterfeit trademarks were raided in a joint operation by police and the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry in Ara Damansara and Kepong.

Bukit Aman Internal Security and Public Order Department Wildlife Crime Bureau/Special Intelligence Investigation deputy director SAC Mohammad Azlin Sadari said 13 individuals, including seven foreign nationals from Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, were arrested during the raid on Tuesday.

"The raids were conducted following nearly two months of intelligence gathering. Initial investigations revealed that the syndicate allegedly rebottled engine oil and affixed labels of well-known local and international vehicle manufacturers without authorisation, using fake addresses on the packaging."

He said the products were then marketed via e-commerce platforms and social media.

The syndicate is believed to have been operating for three years and had raked in millions of ringgit in profits.

The operation – involving personnel from Bukit Aman and ministry enforcement officers – was led by bureau investigation principal assistant director ACP Zulkarnain Samsudin.

Mohammad Azlin added that police are still investigating the source of the engine oil used by the syndicate, while the total value of items seized from all three locations is also being determined.

The case is being investigated under Section 102 1(c) of the Trademarks Act 2019 and Section 5 of the Trade Descriptions Act 2011. — Bernama

'Datuk Seri' among four detained over false claims

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has detained four individuals, including one with the title "Datuk Seri", for allegedly submitting claims containing false particulars amounting to RM360 million.

According to sources, the suspects – three men and a woman in their 50s and 70s – were arrested between 4pm and 6pm on Tuesday when they came to provide their statements at the MACC headquarters in Putrajaya.

"Initial investigations found that all suspects are believed to have committed the offence between 2016 and 2017."

"The four are believed to have submitted false claims amounting to around RM360 million, using sukuk funds for a highway construction project in the Klang Valley valued at RM1.3 billion."

MACC Investigation Division senior director Datuk Zainul Darus confirmed the arrests when contacted.

He said the case is being investigated under Section 18 of the MACC Act 2009. — Bernama

Frozen chicken parts worth RM480,000 seized

PADANG BESAR: The General Operations Force (GOF) has seized 41,800kg of frozen chicken feet and chicken liver valued at RM481,200, believed to be shipped without veterinary health certificates, during a raid on a warehouse at the Padang Besar industrial area.

The operation, conducted at about 7pm on Monday, was led by the GOF Northern Brigade First Battalion Intelligence Unit following two weeks of intelligence gathering and surveillance.

Two Thai nationals, aged 21 and 34, were arrested.

GOF Northern Brigade commander SAC Shahrum Hashim said the initial inspection revealed 1,400kg of potatoes with valid

documentation, believed to have been used to mislead authorities.

A deeper search uncovered 31,600kg of chicken feet and 10,200kg of chicken liver.

"The frozen goods were found improperly packaged, stored in unhygienic conditions and with water still dripping from the packages, posing potential health risks," he said during a press conference on Tuesday.

He added that the suspects operated via an online order and self-pickup system, using a closed warehouse in an inconspicuous location near the main road to avoid detection.

Both Thai nationals were found to be without valid work permits and were handed to the

Padang Besar district police headquarters, while the frozen items were transferred to the Veterinary Services Department for further investigation.

The total value of seized items – including two vehicles, five containers, potatoes, frozen goods and a forklift – was estimated at RM1.893 million.

The case is being investigated under Section 13 of the Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services Act 2011 (Act 728) and the Immigration Act 1959/63.

Authorities are continuing their probe to identify the warehouse owner and determine whether a broader cross-border network is involved. — Bernama

Govt retiree loses RM230,000 in investment scam

BUKIT MERTAJAM: A 62-year-old government retiree lost RM229,800 after being tricked by an Indonesian woman into investing in a non-existent scheme.

Central Seberang Perai police chief ACP Helmi Aris said the woman, known as "Zizah", contacted the victim on March 4, claiming he was supposed

to carry out plumbing work at her house.

"Since then, the victim and the woman were in frequent contact via telephone conversations and during one of the calls, she invited him to invest in a scheme by promising lucrative returns."

Within two days of making the investments, the suspect sent him a link to a website.

Helmi said the victim initially made seven transactions in small amounts to five different bank accounts and received both capital and profits as promised.

Encouraged by this, the victim made seven more transactions to the same account, but did not receive any further returns. — Bernama

Infant dies after car crashes into lorry

JASIN: A two-month-old baby girl died while her parents sustained severe injuries after the car they were travelling in crashed into a lorry on the Alor Gajah-Melaka Tengah-Jasin Highway, near Batu Gajah on Tuesday.

Jasin police chief Supt Mohamad Rusli Mat said Nur Hafizah Quintina Shahrul Asraf Naim was pronounced dead while receiving emergency treatment at the Sultanah Fatimah Specialist Hospital in Muar at 5pm.

The 22-year-old mother and 35-year-old father both suffered head injuries, while the lorry driver was unhurt.

"The 2.15pm incident is believed to have occurred when the couple's car skidded into the lane on which the lorry was making a U-turn and hit the rear of the heavy vehicle," he said in a statement.

Rusli urged road users with information on the incident to call at the nearest police station to assist in the investigation. — Bernama

➤ Driven by purpose, ERTH transforms country's e-waste habits through tech, trust and everyday heroes

CYBERJAYA: In 2018, a brief moment changed Mohamed El-Fatary's life and potentially the future of Malaysia's e-waste industry.

While watching a National Geographic documentary on illegal plastic waste shipments to Malaysia, he was struck by a firm warning from a former minister: "Stop sending your waste to us."

For Mohamed, 40, a Finnish entrepreneur with Arab roots, those words felt like a calling.

Determined to learn more, he uncovered a troubling paradox.

Despite Malaysia having more than 50 licensed e-waste facilities, recycling rates remained low at about 30% to 35%.

"I kept wondering, where do people dispose their old electronic items?"

He discovered that most people either stashed old devices away, handed them to dealers or dumped them with household rubbish.

Recognising that the issue was not infrastructure but accessibility and awareness, Mohamed founded Electronic Recycling Through Heroes (ERTH) in 2019, a social enterprise that makes recycling easier and more rewarding.

ERTH's model mobilises freelancers, called "heroes", to collect e-waste directly from households and businesses.

In 2023, ERTH secured investment from the Gobi Dana Impak Ventures Fund, backed by Khazanah Nasional Berhad under its Dana Impak initiative.

Mohamed's journey began humbly. Upon arriving in Malaysia, he met local phone dealer S.H. Lim, who had stockpiled more than 4,000 broken phones, unwilling to trust traditional recyclers.

"We didn't receive any grant from Khazanah initially. Their investment came later as equity because our company strongly aligned with

Recycling reinvented for a greener M'sia

Khazanah's national strategic pillars," Mohamed said.

At the time, Mohamed had taken over struggling tech company Blue Bee Technologies, founded in 2016.

After settling its debts, he shifted its focus entirely to recycling.

"It was never just about making money. It was about proving the system could work for the environment, for people like Lim and for a greener economy," he said.

ERTH's reverse logistics platform is simple – schedule a pickup and someone collects your e-waste free of charge.

It offers instant DuitNow payments for working items, while non-working devices are collected, with a minimum of three items.

Businesses enjoy additional services such as bulk collection, asset disposal, branded collection boxes and certified data destruction, starting from RM25.

Today, major brands that include Maxis, DHL, Panasonic, Hong Leong Bank and the Selangor state government, are among ERTH's clients.

"What sets us apart is convenience, transparency and instant reward. People want to do the right thing, they just don't want it to be a hassle," Mohamed said.

At its Cyberjaya headquarters, ERTH refurbishes usable items such as kettles, laptops and irons, selling them affordably to students and entrepreneurs – many of whom later return to recycle these items, completing a circular economy loop.

Since its inception, ERTH has scaled 65 times and recycled over 2.5 million kilograms of e-waste, expanding services across the Klang Valley, Penang and Johor Bahru.

Through a partnership with Pos Malaysia, every post office nationwide now serves as an e-waste drop-off point.

ERTH's affiliate programme empowers more than 200 active



ERTH spends over RM1 million a year on education, online advertising, school programmes and community outreach to raise awareness.

— ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

recyclers – some part-time, others full-time – to collect e-waste and earn commissions.

"We're not just building a recycling network – we're building livelihoods," Mohamed said.

Despite strong infrastructure, Mohamed stressed that awareness remains a challenge.

Many Malaysians still do not realise that improperly discarded e-waste can release toxic substances into soil and water.

"People think: 'What if I sell my old phone to a dealer?' But usually, the device gets stripped for metals and the rest is dumped illegally," he said.

To address this, ERTH spends over RM1 million a year on education, online advertising, school programmes and community outreach.

Mohamed believes early education and stronger policies could ease this burden.

"There's no lack of capacity. What's missing is a simple behaviour change," he said.

ERTH has also integrated artificial intelligence (AI) into its operations.

AI analyses historical data to determine whether devices should be reused, repaired or recycled.

It also optimises digital marketing to enhance product visibility.

Corporations now collaborate on CSR initiatives, encouraging staff to recycle and sponsoring school programmes to instil environmental values.

"If companies lead the way, it sends a message to employees and communities about the importance of sustainability."

Mother's recipe fuels son's smoked clams success

KOTA BHARU: Continuing the legacy of his late mother, a young entrepreneur from Kampung Badang has transformed a family recipe for *etok salai*, or smoked clams, into a booming business, with daily sales reaching an impressive 400kg.

Muhd Haffiz Hassan, 26, a former farmer, never imagined that taking over the business left by his mother, Hamina Ibrahim, 54, who died in early 2020, would lead to such success.

What began with sluggish sales has grown into a thriving venture, attracting both local customers and foreign tourists.

"There was a time when I nearly gave up due to poor response. But after about two months, I was inspired to open a second branch along Jalan Tok Sadang in Pengkalen Chepa.

"That decision proved to be a turning point, especially after popular influencer Abe La uploaded content about our smoked *etok* and it went viral at the end of last year," he told Bernama recently.

The fifth of seven siblings, Haffiz explained that maintaining the freshness and quality of the smoked clams requires a meticulous cleaning process.

Each batch is washed at least five times until the water runs clear to remove all traces of mud and sand.

Every two days, he sources about 800kg of raw *etok* from his supplier.

The clams are then marinated for nearly an hour in a blend of special spices using his late mother's recipe, before being smoked over a shell fire for two hours.

Haffiz offers his smoked *etok* in six flavours – original, spicy, sweet, tomyam, BBQ and paprika.

"Each pack is sold at RM5 or RM10, and we deliver fresh stock four times a day to maintain quality," he said.

The product has gained popularity not only among Kelantanese customers but also in Thailand and Singapore.

Haffiz runs the business with help from his younger brother Muhd Sukri, 24, and their aunt, Sarini Mahmood, 50.

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Singapore politicians showcase musical skills

► Election candidates try to touch base

SINGAPORE: A curious election campaign trend has emerged as Singapore gears up for Saturday's ballot: candidates showcasing their musical chops, or lack of talent, on social media clips.

The displays of musical talent range from clips of opposition star candidate Harpreet Singh playing the saxophone for *The Straits Times*, to others beatboxing and belting out songs in dialect or giving an awkward rendition of the *APT* Korean song.

One candidate, Samuel Lee of the People's Power Party, has become a

meme thanks to his self-written tune, badly sung, about looking left and right to find a career path.

Some clips are freshly shot this election season as candidates are introduced to media or speak at rallies, others are older clips resurfacing of guitar-playing Prime Minister Lawrence Wong on stage with a band, or the leader of the opposition Pritam Singh singing at his party's New Year celebration.

"They want to be relatable, but it won't work," said political scientist Walid Jumblatt Abdullah from Nanyang Technological University.

"These silly Tiktok videos, these music videos, aren't exactly the best way to appear relatable. Just speaking like a normal human being, that would make them appear for more

relatable," said Walid.

Voters, he said, are more discerning and would pay more attention to parties' and candidates' credibility and what they say about causes that matter to voters.

The election comes amid a deteriorating economic outlook, due to US tariffs, with the government warning of a possible recession.

Bread and butter issues still matter most to the 2.76 million voters.

It is the first electoral test for Wong, who took over from prime minister Lee Hsien Loong last year as leader of the People's Action Party, which has ruled the city-state of 6 million people since independence in 1965.

According to an April survey by Blackbox Research of 1,506 people,

Singaporeans gave the government the lowest scorecard ratings for its handling of the cost of living (52%), sales tax (55%), inequality (57%), car prices (58%) and housing affordability (59%).

However, the PAP is almost certain to win most seats in the election, with candidates fielded in all 33 constituencies for 97 seats in parliament.

Crucially, the PAP will be looking at its popular vote. The PAP's share of the popular vote fell to 61% in 2020 from 70% in 2015.

If it sees another decline and its main opposition the Workers' Party build on its record 10 seats in 2020, it could be interpreted as a sign the PAP's grip on power is weakening. - Reuters

'Sign up as polling agents'

SINGAPORE: Election candidate Ariffin Sha has called on the public to sign up as polling and counting agents, describing it as a "front line seat" to the democratic process.

In his rally speech on Tuesday, the 27-year-old Singapore Democratic Party (SDP) candidate encouraged those who are too young to vote to take part in the election process. Singapore's voting age is 21.

"In 2015, I was too young to vote, but I was old enough to become a polling agent and counting agent. At rallies, I saw many young people come forward, many of them were below 21, and they said, 'look, how can I get involved?'"

"I would say, go and sign up to be a polling agent and counting agent," he said.

Ariffin said the SDP needs about 770 polling agents and a smaller number of counting agents to cover the four constituencies the party is contesting - Marsiling-Yew Tee Group Representation Constituency (GRC), Sembawang GRC, Bukit Panjang Single Member Constituency (SMC) and Sembawang West SMC.

The opposition party is fielding 11 candidates in the four constituencies.

He said the party has about 10% of the volunteers it needs.

Ariffin, who is contesting in his first election at Marsiling-Yew Tee GRC, also urged voters to cast their ballots without fear.

"Your vote is 100% secret," he said. Elections Department guidelines allow polling agents to observe the sealing of ballot boxes, monitor polling, and witness the sealing and packing of election materials.

Counting agents may be present at counting centres to observe the pre-counting test of counting machines and to inspect and ensure the seals on ballot boxes are intact before they are opened for counting. - Bernama

Jailed Cambodian activists denied bail

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia's top court yesterday denied bail to five environmentalists jailed for their activism, a family member said, in a case widely condemned by the UN and human rights campaigners.

The activists from Mother Nature, one of Cambodia's few environmental advocacy groups, denied charges of plotting against the state, which they said were politically motivated.

The five were among 10 activists sentenced to between six and eight years in jail last year.

Path Raksmei, 34, wife of activist Thun Ratha, said she was disappointed with yesterday's ruling by the Supreme Court.

"I am very regretful that the court does not allow bail for them. They are the ones who protect the environment but they are locked in jail while people who have destroyed natural resources live happily," said Path Raksmei.

"It is unjust for the five," Raksmei said, adding that her husband remains "strong".

The five activists have been jailed in different prisons after their sentencing in July, but have launched appeals.

The United Nations Human Rights Office said last year it was "gravely concerned by the conviction and harsh sentencing".

The tussle over protecting or exploiting Cambodia's natural resources has long been a



Ratha being escorted by police outside the court in Phnom Penh. - AFP/PPIC

contentious issue in the Southeast Asian nation, with environmentalists threatened, arrested and even killed in the past decade.

Cambodian journalist Chhoeung Chheung died in December after he was shot while investigating illegal

logging in the country's northwest.

Unchecked illicit logging has contributed to a sharp drop in Cambodia's forest cover over the years, according to activists.

From 2002 to 2023, a third of Cambodia's humid primary forests,

some of the world's most biodiverse were lost, according to monitoring site Global Forest Watch.

The government has approved plans for a cement factory in a wildlife sanctuary, according to an order seen by AFP on Tuesday.

Indonesian top court approves defamation petition

JAKARTA: Indonesia's Constitutional Court has approved in part a petition brought by an environment campaigner, it said on Tuesday, opening the way for a legal change to bar the government or a company filing defamation complaints in the event of criticism.

Activists have said the Electronic Information and Transaction Law is a threat to freedom of speech in the world's third-largest democracy and that the government has used it to criminalise critics.

Environment activist Daniel Frits Maurits Tangkilisan had petitioned

the court to revoke an article in the law regulating defamation.

The court did not revoke the article but banned a "government, company, institution, or groups with specific identities" from filing defamation complaints against an individual, judge Arief Hidayat said.

He said defamation complaints could only be filed by the person who had been defamed and the court's action aimed to ensure legal certainty and prevent "arbitrariness by the law enforcer".

Presidential spokesperson, Prasetyo Hadi said the government

respected and would follow the ruling if it affected policy.

He also reiterated the importance of "responsible freedom of speech" such as addressing critics based on data.

Any ruling by the Constitutional Court is effective immediately and legally binding.

Tangkilisan's lawyer Todung Mulya Lubis praised the decision, saying even a good government needed critics, *Kompas* newspaper reported.

Usman Hamid, executive director of Amnesty International Indonesia,

said the ruling was positive.

"We can still put our hope to the court in preventing the setback of civil liberty in Indonesia," he said.

Among the more prominent defamation cases in recent years, two rights activists were charged with defamation under the law in 2023 after being accused of defaming a senior Cabinet minister. They were later acquitted.

A singer and opposition figure Ahmad Dhani was sentenced to a year in prison in 2019 under the law after calling political rivals idiots in an online video. - Reuters

Filipino journalist shot dead

MANILA: The killing of a veteran Filipino journalist in his home was a "heinous act", the Philippines' Presidential Task Force on Media Security said yesterday.

Juan "Johnny" Dayang, 89, who served as president emeritus of the Publishers Association of the Philippines, was shot by an assailant in his home in the central province of Aklan on Tuesday night, and died before reaching the hospital, it said.

"We stand in solidarity with the media community as we mourn the passing of Dayang, a figure regarded as a pillar of Philippine journalism whose contributions greatly enriched our democratic discourse," said task force executive director Jose Torres Jr.

Despite a media environment that ranks as one of the most liberal in Asia, the Philippines is one of the world's most dangerous places for journalists.

More than 200 journalists have been killed in the country since democracy was restored in 1986, according to the National Union of Journalists, including 32 in a single incident in 2009.

"The death of Dayang represents a significant loss to the Philippine media and political landscape," the Publishers Association said.

Dayang served as mayor of Kalibo from 1986 to 1987. - Reuters



Vietnam celebrates reunification anniversary

Victory of faith, says top communist party leader

HO CHI MINH CITY: Thousands of Vietnamese celebrated the 50th anniversary of the end of the Vietnam War yesterday, in what the country's communist leader said was a "victory of faith".

Celebrations culminated in a grand parade in Ho Chi Minh City with thousands of marching troops and an air show featuring fighter jets and helicopters, as citizens waved red flags and sang patriotic songs.

The historic anniversary commemorates the first act of the country's reunification on April 30, 1975 when Communist-run North Vietnam seized Saigon, the capital of the US-backed South, renamed Ho Chi Minh City shortly after the war in honour of the North's founding leader.

"It was a victory of faith," and also of "justice over tyranny," said Communist party chief To Lam, citing one of Ho Chi Minh's mottos: "Vietnam is one, the Vietnamese people are one. Rivers may dry up, mountains may erode, but that truth will never change."

The fall of Saigon, about two years after Washington withdrew its last combat troops from the country, marked the end of a 20-year conflict that killed some 3 million Vietnamese and nearly 60,000 Americans, many of them young soldiers conscripted into the military.

"Communist troops rolled into the South Vietnamese capital virtually unopposed, to the great relief of the population which had feared a bloody last-minute battle," said a cable from a Reuters reporter in the city on the day it fell.

The cable described the victorious army as made up of "formidably armed" troops in jungle fatigues but also of barefoot teenagers.

Those events were seared into many memories by the images of US helicopters evacuating some 7,000 people, many of them Vietnamese, as North Vietnamese tanks closed in. The final flight took off from the roof of the US embassy at 7.53am on April 30, carrying the last US Marines out of Saigon.

The formal reunification of Vietnam was completed a year later, 22 years after the country had been split in two following the end of French colonial rule.

Vietnam and the United States normalised diplomatic relations in 1995 and deepened ties in 2023 during a visit to Hanoi by former US president Joe Biden.

"The United States and Vietnam have a

robust bilateral relationship that we are committed to deepening and broadening," a spokesperson for the US Mission in Vietnam said yesterday.

That bond is however now being tested by the threat of crippling 46% tariffs on Vietnamese goods that Biden's successor, Donald Trump, announced in last year.

The tariffs have been largely paused until July and talks are underway. But if confirmed, they could undermine Vietnam's export-led growth that has attracted large foreign investments.

Washington sent Susan Burns, its consul general in Ho Chi Minh City, to represent the country at the parade.

France, which also lost a war in Vietnam, sent a minister to last year's celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the end of the battle of Dien Bien Phu, when French colonial rule collapsed.

While Hanoi has re-established relations with the United States, it has maintained close ties with Russia.

Vietnam has also nurtured closer relations with northern neighbour China despite a complex history involving several conflicts and a rivalry in the disputed South China Sea.

China is now a major investor in its economy and the source of many components used in products exported to the US. - Reuters



Participants at the Victory parade in Ho Chi Minh City putting on a stunning display. - AFP/PPIC

Murder trial hears of 'special' mushroom meal

MORWELL: An Australian woman promised a "special meal" for her husband's family before dishing up a beef Wellington with death cap mushrooms that killed three of them, jurors heard yesterday.

On the opening day of a trial that has drawn global attention, Erin Patterson, 50, faced a jury accused of three murders, including her parents-in-law, and one attempted murder.

She has pleaded not guilty to all counts, with her defence saying it was all "a terrible accident".

Patterson "deliberately poisoned" her guests, Crown Prosecutor Nanette Rogers told the jury.

The accused cooked "individual beef Wellingtons, mashed potatoes and green beans", with her guests eating from four large grey dinner plates, while she ate from a smaller, orange plate, Rogers said.

Patterson invited her guests to lunch in late

July 2023 at her home in the sedate Victoria state farm village of Leongatha, telling them she had a health issue to relate, the prosecutor said.

Her estranged husband Simon Patterson declined, texting her the night before that he felt "uncomfortable" going.

But her husband's parents, Don and Gail Patterson, decided to go, along with his aunt Heather Wilkinson and her husband, local pastor Ian Wilkinson.

During the lunch, Patterson claimed to have cancer and wanted their advice about how to tell her two children, the prosecutor said.

Medical tests later found no evidence she had the disease, Rogers said.

Within hours of the lunch, the four guests developed diarrhoea and vomiting, and were raced to hospital.

All were diagnosed by treating doctors with

poisoning by death cap mushrooms, Rogers told the court.

Within days, Don, Gail and Heather were dead.

Ian, the pastor, survived after nearly two months in hospital.

Patterson's lawyer Colin Mandy said: "She didn't do it deliberately. She didn't do it intentionally. The defence case is that she didn't intend to cause anyone any harm on that day."

While Patterson initially "lied" to police about foraging for mushrooms, she later admitted she had done so, the defence lawyer said.

"She denies that she ever deliberately sought out death cap mushrooms," Mandy said.

Patterson is being tried in the Latrobe Valley Law Courts in Morwell, south of Melbourne.

The trial is expected to last about six weeks. - AFP

Indian hotel fire claims 15 lives

KOLKATA: A fierce fire ripped through a hotel in the Indian city of Kolkata killing at least 15 people, police said yesterday, with some clambering out of windows and onto the rooftop to escape.

Several people were rescued from rooms and roof of the budget hotel, said Kolkata police chief Manoj Verma, after the fire broke out on Tuesday evening.

"The death toll has risen to 15, including two children and a woman," said Verma, adding an investigation had been launched to find out what triggered the blaze.

"The hotel turned into a gas chamber and it appears that many people suffocated to death."

The Rituraj Hotel, which had 88 guests when the fire broke out, is located in a congested business district of central Kolkata.

About a dozen people suffered burn injuries and were undergoing treatment.

Building fires are common in India due to a lack of firefighting equipment and a routine disregard for safety regulations.

Last year, six people were killed in a fire at a hotel in Patna in the eastern state of Bihar.

The Press Trust of India news agency, which filmed images of soaring flames from the Kolkata building, reported that "several people were seen trying to escape through the windows and narrow ledges of the building".

Kolkata's *The Telegraph* newspaper reported that at least one person died when he "jumped off the terrace trying to escape" the fire.

Verma said the fire had been tackled and that "cooling operations are underway".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi offered his condolences to the families of those killed. - AFP

NEW ZEALAND, PHILIPPINES SIGN VISITING FORCES PACT

MANILA: The Philippines and New Zealand signed an agreement yesterday allowing the deployment of troops on each other's territory, a move aimed at bolstering security in a "deteriorating" strategic environment. The visiting forces pact is the latest in a series Manila has secured in the face of confrontations in the South China Sea. New Zealand Defence Minister Judith Collins said the deal reflected a commitment based on understanding "the risks to the international rules-based order". Philippine defence chief Gilberto Teodoro said Manila and Wellington would work towards "military-to-military training". He told the briefing a similar deal with Canada could be expected "very soon". - AFP

WELLINGTON TO SET UP SPACE SQUADRON

WELLINGTON: The New Zealand Air Force will establish a small space squadron to signal its growing commitment to space-based defence and international security. Air Vice-Marshal Darryn Webb said yesterday the Air Force had a team already focused on space, but creating a squadron symbolised its growing significance. "A space squadron essentially just formalises the fact that space is here with us now. It's going to be more and more important into the future so let's perhaps put a little bit of bricks and mortar around that and provide a mechanism to enhance that growth," said Webb, who is chief of the Air Force. The space squadron will sit within the Air Force. - Reuters

Harvard task forces find widespread campus fear, bigotry

NEW YORK: Jewish and Muslim students at Harvard University faced bigotry and abuse as the Massachusetts campus was roiled by protests last year, according to two reports released on Tuesday that found many felt shunned by peers and professors for expressing political beliefs.

Harvard and other universities face extraordinary pressure from President Donald Trump's administration over allegations of antisemitism and leftist bias.

The reports, jointly amounting to more than 500 pages, were the result of two task forces Harvard set up a year before Trump took office, one on combating antisemitism and anti-Israel bias, the other on combating anti-Muslim, anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian bias.

Harvard President Alan Garber wrote in a letter accompanying the reports that they included "searing personal accounts" drawn from about 50 listening sessions with some 500 students and employees.

He wrote that Harvard would do more to teach students how to have "civil dialogue" with people from different backgrounds and promote "viewpoint diversity".

The task forces recommended that Harvard review its admissions, appointments, curriculum, and orientation and training programmes.

Both Harvard task forces conducted an online joint survey last year, gathering 2,295 responses from students, faculty and staff.

The survey found 47% of Muslim respondents and 15% of Jewish respondents did not feel safe on campus compared to 6% for Christians and non-believers, while 92% of Muslims and 61% of Jews felt there were academic or professional repercussions for expressing their political beliefs. – Reuters

BRIEFS

NETANYAHU VOWS TO ACHIEVE 'VICTORY'

TEL AVIV: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed on Tuesday to achieve victory in the Gaza war and secure the return of hostages, as Israel remembered its fallen soldiers and civilian victims of attacks. "In the name of the fallen, and for their sake, we will continue to pursue the mission of victory, including the return of all our hostages," Netanyahu said in a video statement marking Memorial Day. At 8pm (midnight in Kuala Lumpur), sirens sounded across Israel to mark the start of a minute's silence in honour of its dead. The annual day of commemoration has always weighed heavily on Israelis, who have fought numerous wars since Israel's creation in 1948. Memorial Day is marked from sunset until the following evening, and ceremonies are planned in Israel's 52 military cemeteries. It falls the day before Israel marks Independence Day. – AFP

SWISS HAMAS BAN COMES INTO FORCE ON MAY 15

BERNE: A Swiss ban on Hamas will come into force on May 15, the federal government said yesterday following a parliamentary vote at the end of last year. The government's political and security committees submitted a motion to ban Hamas in October 2023, after the deadly attack on Israel that month, said a government statement, branding the assault an act of terrorism. The ban is designed to counter the movement's activities and stop people supporting the group, the statement said. The law makes it easier for the police to use preventive measures such as entry bans or expulsions as well as facilitating the handling of evidence in criminal relevant cases, said the government. The law will also make it harder for Hamas to use Switzerland's financial network for its funding. – AFP



A Palestinian woman inspecting the damage at the site of a strike on a camp in Khan Younis. – REUTERS/PIC

Concerns over refugee agency impartiality, ICJ told

State Dept official submits Israel's case

THE HAGUE: A US official yesterday told the International Court of Justice there were "serious concerns" about the impartiality of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA.

ICJ judges are holding a week of hearings to help them formulate an advisory opinion on Israel's obligations towards UN agencies delivering aid to Palestinians in Gaza.

"There are serious concerns about UNRWA's impartiality, including information that Hamas has used UNRWA facilities and that UNRWA staff participated in the Oct 7 attack," said Josh Simmons from the US State Department legal team.

Around 40 nations and organisations such as the League of Arab States are taking part in the hearings.

Israel is not taking part at the ICJ but has dismissed the hearings as "part of the systematic persecution and delegitimisation" of the country.

Simmons said Israel had "ample grounds"

to question UNRWA's impartiality.

"Given these concerns, it is clear that Israel has no obligation to permit UNRWA specifically to provide humanitarian assistance. UNRWA is not the only option for providing humanitarian assistance in Gaza," he said.

The status of UNRWA is central to the hearings.

Israel has banned it from operating on Israeli soil, after accusing some of its staff of taking part in the Oct 7 attack.

A series of investigations, including one led by former French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna, found some "neutrality-related issues" at UNRWA, but stressed Israel had not provided evidence for its headline allegation.

UNRWA head Philippe Lazzarini said on Tuesday that more than 50 of its staff in Gaza were abused and used as human shields while in Israeli military detention.

Israel strictly controls all inflows of international aid vital for the 2.4 million Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

It halted aid deliveries to Gaza on March 2, days before the collapse of a ceasefire that had significantly reduced hostilities after 15 months of war.

Supplies are dwindling and the UN's World

Food Programme on Friday said it had sent out its "last remaining food stocks" to kitchens.

In December, the UN General Assembly asked the ICJ for an advisory opinion "on a priority basis and with the utmost urgency".

It will however likely take several months for judges to form their opinion, and the international medical aid organisation Doctors Without Borders (MSF) warned time was running out.

"Waiting for any kind of legal recourse ... will condemn yet more Palestinians to avoidable death, while the world watches on impassively, doing nothing to avoid this indiscriminate and abhorrent cruelty," said MSF official Claire Nicolet.

On Monday, Palestinian delegate Ammar Hijazi accused Israel of blocking humanitarian aid as a "weapon of war".

Although ICJ advisory opinions are not legally binding, the court believes they "carry great legal weight and moral authority".

Simmons argued that the court should not focus on what he called a "one-sided" question relating only to Israel.

"There should be no finding either as to compliance with any obligations identified in this proceeding or as to the legal consequences of any breach," he said. – AFP

US, UK forces strike Yemen drone factory

WASHINGTON: US and British forces conducted a joint military operation in Yemen on Tuesday, according to Britain's Ministry of Defence, which said the operation was against a Houthi military target responsible for making drones like those used to attack shipping.

President Donald Trump ordered the intensification of strikes on Yemen last month, with his administration saying it will continue assaulting Houthi rebels until they stop attacking Red Sea shipping.

Britain and the US have also previously conducted joint operations and strikes in Yemen.

The British statement said intelligence analysis identified a cluster of buildings located some 24km south of Yemen's capital Sanaa that were used by the Houthis to manufacture

drones of the type used to attack ships in the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden.

The strike was conducted after dark, when the likelihood of any civilians being in the area was reduced, the British statement said, adding that its aircraft returned safely. There was no immediate US military comment.

Houthi-controlled television said on Monday a US airstrike killed 68 people after striking a detention centre for African migrants in Yemen.

A US defence official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said on Monday the US military was aware of claims of civilian casualties and was conducting its assessment.

Recent US strikes have killed dozens, including 74 at an oil terminal in mid-April in what was the deadliest strike in Yemen under

Trump so far, according to the Houthi-run Health Ministry.

Rights advocates have raised concerns about civilian killings.

The US military said over the weekend it has struck over 800 targets since mid-March that it says killed numerous Houthi fighters and leaders while destroying the group's facilities.

The Houthis have taken control of swathes of Yemen over the past decade.

Since November 2023, they have launched attacks on vessels in the Red Sea, saying they were targeting ships linked to Israel.

They say they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza where Israel's war has killed over 52,000, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, and led to genocide and war crimes accusations that Israel denies. – Reuters

COMMENT by Ronald Benjamin

As we celebrate Labour Day today, it is an opportune time to reflect on how the relationship between employers and employees has evolved over the decades – and to examine the real issues still affecting workers' rights in our country.

The industrial landscape has undergone significant transformation. Many companies are now embracing the digital economy, green initiatives and AI technology as they navigate global economic challenges. These shifts have placed workers in a new environment, where many dynamics lie beyond their control.

Additionally, there has been a noticeable lack of initiative to engage in honest dialogue on fundamental issues concerning workers' rights.

Malaysia's tripartite system of dialogue appears to be dormant, with few collaborative efforts aimed at crafting a shared vision for inclusive justice and human capital development – one that could inspire hope and progress for the nation's workforce.

Here are some of the key labour issues that need to be addressed as we commemorate Labour day:

➤ Ethnic discrimination

Ethnic discrimination remains a persistent issue within the Malaysian workforce. Whether in the public or private sector, bias often plays a role in hiring decisions, promotions and salary offerings. Certain individuals are favoured for positions or receive higher pay based on ethnicity.

Unfortunately, this form of discrimination is rarely acknowledged by employers, policymakers or the media. Malaysia's current labour laws also fall short – they fail to clearly define what constitutes discrimination. This gap must be addressed if the nation is to progress towards genuine equality and inclusivity.

➤ Violence and harassment in the workplace

Workplace violence and harassment continue to go unaddressed. These acts are sometimes used as coercive tools to pressure employees into resigning, particularly in non-unionised settings where workers lack adequate protection.

There are currently no clear legal

Call for inclusive labour reform



Malaysia's tripartite system of dialogue appears to be dormant, with few collaborative efforts aimed at crafting a shared vision for inclusive justice and human capital development – one that could inspire hope and progress for the nation's workforce. – SUNPIC

provisions or accessible recourse mechanisms for victims. This silence around such abuses must end, and effective legal protections must be established.

➤ Lack of training and development opportunities

According to Randstad Malaysia's Employer Brand Research (2022), a striking 97% of Malaysian employees expressed interest in learning and development opportunities – yet only 36% said their employers actually provided them.

Malaysia still relies heavily on employers to take the lead in training and development. This dependence exposes structural gaps that hinder workforce upskilling and career growth, which must be urgently addressed.

➤ Mistreatment of foreign workers

Although Malaysian labour laws technically protect all workers, foreign workers often face systemic discrimination. Many are employed through agents, and when misconduct

is alleged, they are removed without a fair process or proper domestic inquiry.

Language barriers, lack of orientation and denial of basic rights such as due process and rest days further marginalise these workers. Some endure 12-hour workdays without breaks or off days, and if they fall sick, their wages are deducted.

This blatant disregard for natural justice continues due to weak enforcement mechanisms.

To make Labour Day truly meaningful, the government, employers, unions and civil society must come together to initiate a national dialogue aimed at resolving these long-standing issues.

Without serious action and reform, Labour Day risks becoming nothing more than a symbolic gesture – void of substance and detached from the realities of the Malaysian workforce.

Ronald Benjamin is the secretary of the Association for Welfare, Community and Dialogue. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Bridging cultural divides

IN Malaysia's diverse society, an unexpected form of cohesion has emerged. One built around shared numerical achievements rather than traditional cultural markers.

This metrics-based tribalism offers surprising benefits for our multicultural nation. As an educationist, I witness this phenomenon in the annual media frenzy over SPM School Grade Averages (GPS).

These administrative metrics have evolved into public spectacles that create powerful community identities. Parents from all backgrounds form active online groups to celebrate decimal-point improvements in their schools' rankings.

State education departments craft elaborate narratives around these minor statistical victories. The passion surrounding Premier League football demonstrates similar patterns.

Liverpool's championship season united Malaysians of diverse backgrounds who analysed tactical statistics with extraordinary enthusiasm. Manchester United's performance decline has created a different tribal bond. A collective disappointment and unwavering loyalty despite diminishing results.

These statistical discussions bridge traditional social boundaries. Political scientist and historian Benedict Anderson's concept of "imagined communities" helps explain this phenomenon. In his 1983 book *Imagined Communities*, Anderson argues that communities are socially constructed through shared media and narratives.

School ranking obsessions and football team loyalties exemplify this – forming powerful "tribal bonds" across Malaysia's traditional ethnic and religious divides through shared statistical narratives. What makes these

bonds noteworthy is their ability to temporarily suspend Malaysia's historical divisions.

When parents and alumni collaborate to improve their school's ranking or when football supporters celebrate victories together, established social divides become momentarily irrelevant. These statistical spectacles create common ground where diverse Malaysians discover shared purposes.

Alumni groups transform into passionate defenders of school honour while football supporters unite in celebrating their club's performance metrics. Both create communities bound by numbers rather than traditional identities.

Does this form of tribalism have limitations? Absolutely. Educational metrics reduce complex learning to stark numerical hierarchies – just as football rivalries can transform ordinary citizens into antagonistic tribal warriors.

Parents brandish school affiliations as status symbols while alumni zealously defend GPS calculations they barely comprehend. Yet, these numerical connections simultaneously strengthen Malaysia's social fabric by forging relationships across traditional boundaries.

In a nation still developing its unifying narrative beyond ethnicity and faith, even imperfect common ground represents meaningful progress.

What began as statistical obsession may be evolving into something more significant – a shared vocabulary of achievement that speaks across our differences, creating unexpected bridges between communities that might otherwise remain disconnected. Our own new unity in numbers.

Dr Syed Alwee Alsagoff
Fellow of National
Council of Professors

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Powering data centres, sustainably

COMMENT by Chia Chu Hang

DATA centres are extremely resource intensive. According to the International Energy Agency (2025), electricity consumption by data centres was estimated to be 1.5% of global electricity usage in 2024, amounting to 415 terawatt hours.

However, experts suggest that electricity consumption in accelerated servers, primarily used for artificial intelligence purposes, could grow by 30% annually.

While 1.5% of global electricity consumption may seem insignificant, it is important to note that powering a single data centre can consume as much electricity as 100,000 households. Some data centres are even projected to consume up to 20 times that amount.

In Malaysia, Deputy Prime Minister II and Minister of Energy Transition and Water Transformation Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof stated that our data centre electricity demand could reach 12.9 gigawatts (GW) by 2030 and rise to 20.9GW by 2040.

This is set to place a massive strain on our power grid, which is predominantly powered by coal and natural gas – two of the biggest contributors to global climate change.

As Emir Research previously pointed out, carbon dioxide emissions originating from data centres are expected to more than double between 2022 and 2030.

Electricity is not the only resource that data centres consume. Water is another vital input for certain data centres, used for cooling and for generating electricity.

According to Mytton (2021), data centres consume water in two ways: indirectly through electricity generation and directly through cooling systems. In 2014, data centres

in the US alone were responsible for the use of 626 billion litres of water.

Furthermore, Google's average data centre consumed about 1.7 million litres of water per day while data centres in Johor collectively consumed roughly 1.4 billion litres daily.

Making matters worse, some of the largest data centre operators are building their facilities in regions already experiencing water scarcity.

Water issues are localised, meaning efforts to manage data centre water usage in Malaysia will likely have little effect elsewhere in the world. However, they will have a significant impact on local communities.

Despite receiving an average annual rainfall of 3,085.5mm, Malaysia regularly experiences water supply disruptions. On top of that, reservoir levels often fall below safe thresholds, forcing operators to reduce water releases to conserve supply.

Given that the average Malaysian used 226 litres of water per day in 2023 – and this water demand is projected to grow by 103% by 2050 – the growth of data centres in Malaysia presents a serious dilemma for policymakers and underscores the need for proactive measures to protect the livelihood of the people.

Reducing the water used for power generation is difficult as we remain heavily reliant on coal and natural gas power plants. Without a major shift in our energy mix – possibly incorporating advanced technologies such as small modular reactors, which offer designs with significantly reduced water dependency – meaningful progress is unlikely.

Water usage within data centres, on the other hand, can be reduced through advancements in cooling methods. Some of the most common cooling methods for data centres

include air and water-cooled systems, each with its advantages.

While air cooling uses significantly less water, its energy requirements are considerably higher than other methods.

Liquid cooling is more effective at transferring heat and requires less electricity. However, it consumes large volumes of water, making it potentially unsustainable for local communities.

This is why another cooling method – immersion cooling – is gaining traction not only for data centres but also in other applications, such as cooling car batteries in electric vehicles.

Immersion cooling involves submerging electronic components in dielectric liquids specifically designed to dissipate heat directly from the equipment, rather than relying on water. This method is characterised as highly efficient, low noise, environmentally friendly and – when applied in two-phase immersion systems – especially beneficial for high-capacity data centres.

Experiments with immersion cooling have produced promising results. Hnayno et al (2023) found that single-phase immersion cooling reduces electricity consumption by at least 20.7% compared with liquid cooling, and in certain data centres, even eliminates water usage entirely.

Although early studies suggested immersion cooling might not be cost-effective for data centres, later research has concluded that the technology's low power requirements and minimal infrastructure needs can actually make it more economical than other cooling methods.

Most dielectric coolants are hydrocarbon-based, typically derived from mineral oil. However, researchers have explored plant-based alternatives, including coconut oil and palm oils.

Pambudi et al (2022) stated that while mineral oil outperformed virgin coconut oil in cooling efficiency, the

latter holds potential as dielectric-liquids if its viscosity stability can be improved.

Akmal et al (2023) on the other hand reported impressive results when comparing cooling effectiveness across various media – natural convection, air, 3M Novec 7,000 (an engineered fluid used for cooling reactors in pharmaceutical and chemical processes) and palm oil.

At an inlet velocity of 1mm/s, palm oil emerged as the most effective, delivering the lowest maximum facet temperature over time and the highest heat transfer rate.

A recent study further reinforced palm oil's potential as a heat transfer medium, revealing that base palm oil exhibits higher thermal conductivity than mineral oil. In fact, its heat transfer coefficient surpasses that of mineral oil mixed with 1% aluminium oxide.

Of course, more research is needed to fully assess how vegetable oils can be optimised for use in heat transfer fluids. However, the existing evidence points to real potential.

Given that Malaysia is the second-largest palm oil producer, accounting for 24% of global output, there is a strong case for investing in further experimentation and development.

Ultimately, while data centre expansion is beneficial for the economy, we must also prioritise environmental sustainability and the well-being of our people.

If alternative cooling methods exist that minimise environmental and social costs, we should actively encourage their exploration and adoption. Only then can technology truly serve the interests of society.

Chia Chu Hang is a research assistant at Emir Research, an independent think tank focused on strategic policy recommendations based on rigorous research. Comments: letters@thesundaymail.com

“Ultimately, while data centre expansion is beneficial for the economy, we must also prioritise environmental sustainability and the well-being of our people.”

Will Asia soon have its first pope?

COMMENT

THE Catholic church may soon have its first Asian pope as cardinals prepare to elect the next leader of 1.4 billion faithful.

The Christian world is mourning Pope Francis, the Argentine who died on April 21, aged 88, after suffering from a serious bout of pneumonia in recent weeks.

His death could pave the way for Luis Antonio Tagle to become the first pope from Asia, home to the world's fastest-growing Catholic population.

The former archbishop of Manila was once considered Francis's preferred successor but reportedly fell out of favour over alleged “shortcomings” during his leadership of the Vatican charity Caritas International.

Tagle, 67, was created cardinal by Francis's predecessor Benedict XVI in 2012, making him one of the youngest cardinals at the time.

Given the nature of cardinal appointments made by Francis, there is some expectation that his successor will be another non-European and hold progressive, liberal values similar to his.

However, the election process that will take place once Francis is buried is highly secretive and nothing will be certain until white smoke pours from the chimney of

the Sistine Chapel, telling the world that a new pope has been picked.

Electing a pope from the Philippines could give the Catholic church access to China, where they have been eager to expand, analysts say.

On paper, Tagle, who generally prefers to be called by his nickname “Chito”, seems to tick all the boxes to be the next pontiff.

He comes from what is called “Asia's Catholic lung” – the Philippines has the region's largest Catholic population. His mother was an ethnic Chinese Filipino. He speaks fluent Italian and English.

He has had decades of pastoral experience since his ordination to the priesthood in 1982. He also has administrative experience, first as bishop of Imus and then as archbishop of Manila.

Tagle is known for his progressive views on homosexuality. He has spoken against abortion in the past, however.

In 2019, Tagle was called by Francis to stay in Rome as prefect of the Congregation for the Evangelisation of Peoples, which is responsible for missionary work.

However, in 2022, Francis fired the entire leadership of Caritas International following accusations of bullying and humiliation of employees and appointed a commissioner to run it.

Tagle, who was also removed from his role, had been nominally president but

was not involved in daily operations, which were overseen by a lay director general.

Announcing the pope's dramatic decision, Tagle told a meeting of the confederation that the changes were a moment for “facing our failures”. It remains to be seen how the saga will impact Tagle's chances at the papacy.

Cardinals are the pope's closest collaborators, running key departments at the Vatican and dioceses around the world. When a pontiff dies or resigns, cardinals aged under 80 enter a secret conclave to choose the new head of the Catholic church from among themselves.

There are a total of 252 cardinals, 135 of them cardinal electors under 80. As many as 108 of the electors were appointed by Francis, 22 by his predecessor Benedict and five by John Paul II.

The complex vote will reveal if the cardinals believe Francis' embrace of liberal social values and his progressive reform agenda have gone too far and whether a period of retrenchment is needed.

While Europe still has the largest share of cardinal electors, with about 39%, it is down from 52% in 2013 when Francis became the first Latin American pope.

The second largest group of electors is from Asia and Oceania, about 20%, who could be paramount in choosing Tagle as the next pope. – The Independent



On paper, Tagle seems to tick all the boxes to be the next pontiff. – PIC FROM WIKIPEDIA

Sunsuria arrives in Kwasa Damansara

► Partners EPF Board subsidiary to develop RM492 million residential project in township

KWASA DAMANSARA: Kwasa Land Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned subsidiary of the Employees Provident Fund Board and the master developer of Kwasa Damansara, recently inked a strategic partnership with Sunsuria Damansara Sdn Bhd (formerly known as Consolidated Factoring (M) Sdn Bhd) for a new residential development in the township.

With a Land Consideration Value of approximately RM89 million, Sunsuria's maiden foray into Kwasa Damansara will entail the construction of landed homes as well as a condominium on a land area of 9.464 acres.

The upcoming development will feature 520 residential units, with an estimated GDV of RM492 million. Designed for individuals and smaller families seeking an urban lifestyle, the project will incorporate modern amenities and sustainable features to promote a balanced and connected living environment. The project will

be delivered in phases, with the first phase expected to launch in the third quarter of 2026.

Strategically located near mature neighbourhoods such as Kota Damansara, Tropicana, Subang Bestari, and Sungai Buloh, the site enjoys proximity to retail, dining, and commercial hubs. Future residents will benefit from excellent connectivity via two MRT stations linked to the Putrajaya and Kajang lines, and accessibility through major highways including the North Klang Valley Expressway, Guthrie Corridor Expressway, and Damansara-Shah Alam Elevated Expressway.

"It is with great enthusiasm and optimism that we welcome Sunsuria to our list of distinguished partners who have chosen to work with us in building Kwasa Damansara. This partnership marks another milestone in our journey towards building a vibrant and sustainable new township that is being developed on

the ethos of Green, Connected and Inclusive," said Kwasa Land managing director Datuk Adenan Md Yusof.

"Together, we will create spaces that not only reflect innovation and growth but also foster community engagement and environmental responsibility. We are excited about the positive impact this partnership will have as we continue to share a future that reflects our shared values and vision for Kwasa Damansara," he added.

Sunsuria Bhd group CEO Tan Woe Bee said their development in Kwasa Damansara will offer a thoughtful mix of terraced housing and high-rise residences, designed to support multi-generational living and provides a nurturing environment where families can grow, interact, and thrive together while embracing sustainability and modern conveniences.

"Our proven track record with landmark developments such as Sunsuria City, Bangsar Hill Park, and Sunsuria Forum reflects our commitment to delivering innovative and inspiring spaces. We are delighted to embark on this strategic partnership with Kwasa Land and



Adenan (right) and Tan in front of the scale model of Kwasa Damansara.

look forward to a successful and forward-thinking collaboration on this exciting new development," he added.

Kwasa Damansara, a dynamic modern township in the making, is now witnessing multiple projects coming to life. Residential developments including detached homes, terrace houses, townhouses, condominiums and affordable homes are tucked away just a few hundred metres off Jalan Sungai Buloh that runs through the township.

Destined to become a model city for business, living and leisure, Kwasa Damansara will offer over 250 acres of surrounding green spaces encompassing nine parks and complemented by more than 25km of cycling and walking trails. The

township will also host 25,000 new housing units including 10,000 affordable housing and land designated for 15 new schools.

Kwasa Land has to-date signed collaborations with 16 development partners who have been granted development rights for 780 acres of land within the township. This constitutes 59% of the saleable land (1,331 acres) within Kwasa Damansara, with a GDV of close to RM40 billion.

This transit-oriented project offers connectivity and convenience as a way of life. Besides links to six major highways, the township has two MRT stations and access to two KTM Komuter stations. It is also just 4km from the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang.

Sime Darby Property breaks ground on RM2.4 billion Vision Business Park

SEREMBAN: Sime Darby Property Bhd marked a major milestone with the groundbreaking of Vision Business Park (VBP), the latest industrial development within Malaysia Vision Valley 2.0 (MVV2.0).

This project is part of the MVV2.0 project is poised to strengthen Negeri Sembilan's position as a key industrial hub in Malaysia.

The event was officiated by Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun, and attended by state officials and other dignitaries.

Spanning 760 acres with an expected GDV of RM2.4 billion, VBP is anticipated to generate 15,000 job opportunities, contributing to Negeri Sembilan's economic expansion. The project aligns with the state's economic vision of attracting RM294 billion in investments and creating 600,000 jobs. VBP is also part of a strategic step in realising the phased development of MVV2.0, which spans 379,100 acres in Negeri Sembilan.

The company has developed over

6,000 acres in Negeri Sembilan and is now expanding its footprint through industrial development in Southern Nilai.

Sime Darby Property Group managing director and CEO Datuk Seri Azmir Merican, said, "Vision Business Park is a key step in our commitment to industrial development, supporting Negeri Sembilan's economic transformation. As a future-ready industrial hub, VBP will attract businesses, create jobs, and strengthen the state's position as an industrial growth centre. Building on the success of Hamilton Nilai City, operational since 2021, VBP supports the growth of light and medium industries, driving innovation and expansion."

VBP features an 80:20 industrial-to-commercial ratio, offering 623 acres for industrial opportunities and 137 acres for commercial businesses that cater to businesses of all sizes. The development provides a comprehensive industrial ecosystem featuring ready-built

factories, industrial plots, shop offices and R&D centres, designed to support growing businesses. Its clustered masterplan fosters business synergies, complemented by centralised amenities such as dedicated labour quarters & centralised heavy vehicle parking to support operational efficiency.

Positioned within MVV2.0, VBP benefits from direct access to the Nilai-Labu-Enstek Road (NLE), facilitating seamless transportation to key industrial and logistics hubs such as Nilai Inland Port, KLIA and klia2. In addition, the NLE Road connects VBP to the North South Expressway enhancing logistics efficiency for regional and international trade.

Beyond its accessibility, VBP is designed with sustainability in mind, setting a new benchmark for industrial zones. The incorporation of green & blue lifestyle linkages enhances the business environment with integrated green spaces, water features and eco-friendly infrastructure.

SkyWorld Development to buy freehold plot in KL for RM110 million

KUALA LUMPUR: SkyWorld Development Bhd's wholly owned unit Rimba Maju Realiti Sdn Bhd (RMRSB) will buy 1.23ha freehold land at Tempat Sungei Teba, Mukim Batu, Kuala Lumpur, for RM110 million from MS Tan Corporation Sdn Bhd.

The developer said the purchase is in line with SkyWorld Development's business plan to expand its urban property development business in the Klang Valley by accumulating new suitable land to be included in the group's landbank.

"The proposed acquisition will be in cash funded by a combination of internally generated funds, proceeds raised from initial public offering in 2023 and/or bank borrowings.

"The exact quantum funding mix will be decided at a later date after due consideration of SkyWorld Development Group's gearing level, interest costs as well as working capital requirements for SkyWorld Development Group's business operations," it said in a filing with Bursa Malaysia recently.

In a statement SkyWorld said RMRSB plans to develop a high-end residential development on the land, offering an exclusive living environment with modern amenities.

The acquisition is expected to be completed within nine months from date of sale and purchase agreement.

SkyWorld Development CEO Lee Chee Seng said the acquisition aligns with its strategic focus to grow its urban development footprint and diversify SkyWorld's product offerings.

"It marks SkyWorld's entry into the premium segment, complementing our SkyAwani and SkySignature series," he added.

This latest move not only supports our long-term growth but also positions us to capitalise on the Klang Valley's evolving demand for quality urban living.

SkyWorld Development's total land bank now stands at 103.09ha, including 102.57ha in Malaysia. — Bernama

Widad acquires four parcels of industrial land in Nilai

KUALA LUMPUR: Widad Group Bhd's wholly owned subsidiary Widad Development (Nilai) Sdn Bhd, has signed a conditional sale and purchase agreement with Guper Bonded Warehouse Sdn Bhd to acquire four adjacent parcels of freehold industrial land valued at RM31.3 million.

The parcels of land measuring about 4.21ha are located in Bandar Nilai Utama, Negeri Sembilan.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia recently, it said the proposed acquisition will be satisfied entirely via the issuance of 993.65 million new ordinary shares in Widad at an issue price of 31.5 sen per share.

The group intends to convert the category of land use from industrial to commercial for the development of commercial properties.

In addition, the group also proposed a diversification of its business to embark on the property development business following the proposed acquisition.

"With the additional revenue stream from the property development business, the proposed diversification is expected to contribute positively to the group's financial performance moving forward.

"This aligns with the group's vision of expanding its business vertically to encompass construction, property

development and integrated facilities management, all of which are inter-related in nature and form part of the overall property market ecosystem," it added.

Meanwhile, Widad has also proposed share consolidation as part of the group's proactive plan to improve its capital structure. — Bernama



'Cosmetics a massive industry with big value'

■ BY **HAYATUN RAZAK**
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

SHAH ALAM: The Malaysian cosmetics sector can serve as a launchpad to position the nation as an innovation-led economy, said Sirim Bhd chief technology officer, Dr Muhammad Izzal Ismail (pic).

He said Sirim also sees the cosmetics sector as offering low barriers to entry and high commercial potential, with the global market valued at US\$380 billion (RM1.8 trillion) in 2024.

"Cosmetics is a massive industry in Malaysia with a big market value. A well-branded product prices can be RM250 to RM500 per set especially if it's marketed with international cues like Korean or celebrity endorsements," he told reporters at the Business Linkages: Unlock New Horizons in Commercialisation event yesterday.

Muhammad Izzal pointed out that many successful entrepreneurs in Malaysia have built their businesses in cosmetics.

"Cosmetics is a very tempting business in Malaysia, and I believe Sirim's cosmetics team is very solid and mature in supporting local brands to enter and compete in this space."

He said Sirim is offering tax perks, ready-made biotech intellectual property protection and lab-to-market support for Malaysian businesses, including SMEs, to explore commercialisation opportunities.



➤ Sector can serve as launchpad to position Malaysia as an innovation-led economy, says Sirim chief tech officer

"It is about bridging the gap between lab and market, making it easier for local businesses to scale science-backed, safe and sustainable products," he added.

Through its commercialisation support, Muhammad Izzal said, Sirim is aligning with the national target of raising SME contribution to gross domestic product from 39.1% currently to 50% by 2030.

"As of 2024, Malaysia has achieved its highest position since 2016 in the Global Innovation Index, ranking 33rd out of 133 economies. Under the 12th

Malaysia Plan, we are working to help the country break into the top 30 by 2025," he added.

Muhammad Izzal said about 90% of the public still associates Sirim only with appliance safety testing.

"People don't know that Sirim's technologies extend beyond cosmetics into areas like vaccine development, artificial coral reef restoration, and semiconductor readiness. For example, our patented artificial coral reef technology can help regenerate fish populations in warming oceans – an innovation matured here at Sirim but still largely unknown to the public."

He stressed that local businesses can use Sirim's existing infrastructure, equipment and scientific manpower rather than investing heavily in in-house research and development.

"Sirim offers chemical analysis, microbiological testing, heavy metal detection, allergen and irritation tests all in line with ISO certification. Our goal is to support companies in creating certified, safe, effective products without the cost burden of building their own labs, said Muhammad Izzal.

The event brought together cosmetic brands, mid-sized manufacturers and startups to explore licensing and co-development opportunities for Sirim's patented innovations. It showcased five innovations ready for market adoption with complete intellectual property protection and is available for immediate licensing through Sirim's flexible commercialisation programmes, including Nephelium lappaceum (rambutan) extract, postbiotic pineapple biomass microbiome friendly extract, kenaf seed oil, roselle extract and biodegradable microbeads.

Through its Life Sciences Centre, Sirim Industrial Research also provides support to licensees, offering not just the technologies themselves but also technical expertise, product development resources and market readiness guidance.

Mihas 2025 targets RM4.5 billion in global halal trade sales

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia International Halal Showcase 2025 (Mihas 2025) – the 21st in the series – is targeting global trade sales of RM4.5 billion.

Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) chairman Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican said Mihas 2025, scheduled to be held from Sept 17 to 20 at Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre, will harness its groundbreaking artificial intelligence-powered Madani Digital Trade Platform.

The platform will connect businesses, optimise trade matchmaking and enhance global halal trade opportunities, he said at the soft launch of Mihas 2025 – which carries the theme "Pinnacle of Halal Excellence" – yesterday.

Hosted by the Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry (MitI) and organised by Matrade, Mihas 2025 builds on a legacy of excellence, with Mihas 2024 recording RM4.3 billion in sales and attracting over 43,000 visitors from 90 countries.

Reezal said that at the heart of this innovation is the integration of the Madani Digital Trade Platform into Mihas's flagship International Sourcing Programme, a business matching programme that generated RM2.53 billion in sales last year.

"Leveraging AI algorithms, the platform will intelligently match Malaysian exporters with targeted international buyers, based on real-time data, market trends and business preferences."

This pioneering move aligns with Malaysia's broader national digitalisation efforts and its vision under the New Industrial Master Plan 2030 and the National Trade Blueprint, Reezal said.

"It also supports Matrade's commitment to empowering micro, small, and medium enterprises with cutting-edge digital tools to expand their global reach," he added.

As Malaysia is the Asean Chair in 2025, Reezal said, Mihas will also serve as a regional platform for collaboration, featuring dedicated pavilions from Asean and dialogue partners, and the Gulf Cooperation Council, amplifying intra-Asean trade and halal partnerships with the Gulf region.

He said Mihas 2025 will redefine how businesses connect, collaborate and thrive, with the Madani Digital Trade Platform empowering MSMEs to access international markets seamlessly and more efficiently.

"Despite global trade tensions, Matrade remains steadfast in enhancing Malaysia's export initiatives, focusing on high growth emerging and fast growing markets such as Africa, Middle East and Latin America," Reezal said.

Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz said despite ongoing global economic uncertainties, the global halal market is still expected to grow to US\$5 trillion (RM21.6 trillion) by 2030.

"With Malaysia holding the world's gold standard for halal-certified goods and services, this presents a significant opportunity for our exporters to expand their international footprint. To that end, we look forward to harnessing the AI-powered MDT platform to help us achieve Mihas's target of RM4.5 billion sales of high-quality, certified halal products and services for 2025," he added.

Furthermore, Reezal noted that Matrade is confident of achieving RM1.58 trillion in exports for 2025, reinforcing the nation's commitment to trade growth through strategic diversification and global engagement.

He said the figure, which matches 2024's record-setting performance, is a "humble" target, and affirmed the agency's resolve not to fall below that benchmark. – by **AIMIE SHAZRIE**

Labuan IBFC posts vigorous growth across major sectors, aided by new technologies

■ BY **AIMIE SHAZRIE**
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KUALA LUMPUR: The Labuan Financial Services Authority (Labuan FSA) reported a 21-fold surge in the market value of syariah-compliant security tokens to US\$1.05 billion (RM4.53 billion), supported by the launch of the Islamic Digital Asset Centre as a landmark initiative in Islamic digital finance.

Labuan FSA director-general Nik Mohamed Din Nik Musa (pic) said the growth reflects the emergence of technologies such as artificial intelligence and blockchain, as well as a shift towards digital tokenisation for cross-border investment and fundraising.

"Labuan International Business and Financial Centre's (IBFC) innovation was also recognised as the Best International Jurisdiction for Islamic Banking and Finance 2024 by the Global Islamic Finance Awards. Its appeal is expected to strengthen further following the new tax exemption introduced for Labuan digital takaful operators in October 2024," he said at the unveiling of the Labuan IBFC Market Report 2024.

He said Labuan's captive insurance segment expanded by 16% in terms of newly licensed entities and 24% in the establishment of new cells, the highest since 2019.

"This growth was driven by new lines of business such as workers' compensation and

professional indemnity coverage. The segment posted revenue growth of 8.5%, recording the highest gross premiums in five years at US\$677.4 million. Non-Malaysian insurance business contributed 58% of the portfolio, mainly from the Asia-Pacific and Far East regions, cementing Labuan's position as the second-largest captive insurance market in Asia."

He said Labuan IBFC also saw more than a twofold increase in new oil and gas leasing assets to US\$815.9 million.

"The leasing sector continued to grow, with aircraft leasing remaining the primary driver, contributing over 60% of total leasing assets at US\$36.8 billion. Subsequent leasing transactions spurred revenue growth of 69.3% and profit growth of 152% to US\$654.6 million.

"Company registrations also maintained upward momentum with a 9% increase to 627 new registrations compared with 575 the previous year. Over 60% of Labuan companies originated from Asia and the Pacific, reinforcing the centre's position in the region."

Nik Mohamed Din said Labuan companies recorded more than a twofold increase in new oil and gas leasing assets to US\$815.9 million.

"The leasing sector continued its growth,



with aircraft leasing remaining the key contributor, making up over 60% of the total leasing assets worth US\$36.8 billion. Follow-on leasing transactions drove a 69.3% increase in revenue and a 152% jump in profit to US\$654.6 million.

"Meanwhile, Labuan's capital market expanded in line with strong demand for fund management and digital financial solutions. The Labuan fund management segment posted more than a threefold increase in profit, driven by higher professional fee income. In tandem, the securities licensee segment nearly tripled its revenue to US\$9.6 million," he said.

In addition, trust and corporate service providers' revenue rose by nearly one-third to US\$40.8 million, while profit increased by 86%, driven by robust income growth.

Beyond financial performance, Nik Mohamed Din noted that Labuan IBFC's growth has positively impacted the Labuan economy through job creation.

"Throughout the year, the licensed financial sector in Labuan recorded a five-year high in employment, reaching 5,006. This reflects the economic stimulus effect from the implementation of economic substance requirements introduced since 2019," he said.



SCAN ME

iMotorbike kickstarts regional expansion, first stop Vietnam

► Malaysia-based online platform holds firm to product safety, transparent pricing and customer trust

BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia-based online platform iMotorbike is expanding its regional presence, but it is doing so with a firm focus on safety, transparency and customer trust.

Co-founder and CEO Gil Carmo said the used motorcycle market in Malaysia, and across much of Southeast Asia, has long been driven by informal sales and unregulated online listings, leaving buyers vulnerable to unclear pricing, unverified sellers and hidden defects.

"We aim to address these problems by offering a structured, professionally managed marketplace for preowned bikes. At the core of its offering is a 170-point inspection process conducted by certified mechanics. This includes everything from engine health and suspension condition to ownership documents and service history.

"People do not just want a bike, they want assurance that it is safe, fairly priced, and would not give them problems a week later. We created iMotorbike to fill that trust gap," he told *SunBiz*.

He said every listing that carries the "certified" label has passed this comprehensive check. Buyers can



Carmo says if a bike does not meet expectations, whether it is the ride feel or mechanical performance, customers can return or exchange it within six days.

view inspection reports online before making a decision, removing the guesswork and uncertainty often associated with used vehicle purchases.

Carmo emphasised that one of iMotorbike's key selling points is its transparent, data-driven pricing model. The platform uses real-time market analytics and historical sales data to ensure that prices reflect true market value, not seller guesswork or inflated markups.

"This benefits buyers, especially first-timers unfamiliar with motorcycle pricing, while also helping sellers justify their asking price with confidence. There is less haggling, less doubt and more trust in the transaction," he said.

In a move to shift consumer expectations, iMotorbike offers a six-day return policy and a six-month warranty on all certified motorcycles, a rare feature in the secondhand vehicle space.

Carmo explained, "If the bike does not meet expectations, whether it is the ride feel or mechanical performance, customers can return or exchange it within six days. We also back all certified bikes with a warranty that covers major mechanical and electrical issues.

"The platform further simplifies the process by bundling road tax and insurance into the purchase, offering buyers a more convenient and protected ownership experience."

Affordability remains a key

concern, particularly among young buyers, and iMotorbike addresses this with financing plans tailored to individual profiles, supported by its banking partners.

"Loan options are designed to be accessible, and the added protections, such as warranties and return policies, reduce the perceived risk of financing a used vehicle. Financing a used motorcycle has historically been difficult and risky. We're changing that by not only providing access, but also ensuring that buyers are protected throughout," Carmo said.

Following the company's traction in Malaysia, iMotorbike has begun expanding into regional markets, starting with Vietnam.

"The company has set up local teams and is working with regional partners to align with domestic regulations and consumer habits. While the platform's core model, certified listings, seller verification, secure payments, remains unchanged, iMotorbike customises its approach to fit each market's operational and legal landscape.

"We do not believe in copy-paste expansion. What works in Malaysia might not work in the exact same way elsewhere, so we adapt but without compromising on safety or transparency," Carmo said.

As iMotorbike scales up its operations, it sees tightening regulations, rising consumer expectations, and increasing digitalisation as major trends shaping the industry.

"Our mission has always been to make the used motorcycle space more transparent, accessible and secure. Whether in Malaysia or abroad, that is the foundation we are building on," Carmo said.

PIAM: General insurance industry remains on steady growth path

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's general insurance (GI) industry remains on a steady growth path despite external uncertainties and inflationary costs, said the General Insurance Association of Malaysia (PIAM).

In a statement yesterday, it said 2025 will see continued emphasis on sustainable underwriting, innovation in electric vehicle insurance, and resilience-building against climate risks, as insurers align their strategies with evolving consumer needs and regulatory expectations.

"Malaysia's GI sector is poised for further growth in 2025, driven by economic recovery and increased demand for digital insurance products.

"There is also growing interest in natural catastrophe insurance. Medical cost inflation remains a concern, with projections rising from 15% in 2024 to 16.4% in 2025, significantly above the Asia-Pacific average of 10%," it said.

According to PIAM, Malaysia's GI industry recorded a resilient performance, with gross written premium growing by 6.9% year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM23.1 billion in 2024, driven primarily by the recovery in vehicle sales and continued momentum in infrastructure and liability-related insurance.

"The GI industry remained robust despite global economic headwinds stemming from escalating trade tensions and inflationary pressures," it said.

PIAM noted that motor, fire, marine aviation and transit segments led the premium growth, supported by strong domestic demand and industrial recovery initiatives under the national economic framework.

It said motor insurance contributed the largest share of total gross written premium, rising 6.7% to an additional RM651.1 million in premiums against the previous year, underpinned by a 2.1% y-o-y rise in new vehicle registrations, as reported by the Malaysian Automotive Association.

"Meanwhile, fire insurance premiums grew by 5.8%, amounting to RM258.5 million in additional premiums, driven by a 4.9% rise in average premiums – a reflection of higher material and reconstruction costs. Nevertheless, the fire business line remains the second-largest line and profitable with net claims incurred ratio at 34.1%, despite rising reinsurance costs and the frequency of weather-related events," it added.

– Bernama

Pharmaniaga confident of exiting PN17 status

KUALA LUMPUR: Pharmaniaga Bhd remains confident of exiting Practice Note 17 (PN17) status, supported by resilient business operations and recovery strategies that have underpinned its steady financial progress.

In a statement, the group said this positive trajectory reflects its strong fundamentals and financial recovery, as shown in the audited financial statements for the year ended Dec 31, 2024 (FY24), released on Tuesday.

The auditor made a standard reference to material uncertainty related to going concern, which is common for companies undergoing recovery, but issued an unqualified opinion, reflecting the confidence in

the group's steady progress.

Pharmaniaga managing director Zulkifli Jafar said that while the group appreciates the auditor's opinion, it remains confident in its recovery, citing strong operational momentum across its business segments.

"The return to profitability in FY 2024, along with the successful approval of our regularisation plan, is clear evidence that we are on the right track. Our strong operational foundation, growing investor interest, and progress in biopharmaceuticals give us every reason for optimism," he said.

On Monday, Pharmaniaga reported a net profit of RM131.82

million for FY24, reversing a net loss of RM80.16 million recorded in FY23. Revenue rose to RM3.75 billion from RM3.40 billion a year earlier.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia, the group disclosed that its independent auditors, Messrs Ernst & Young PLT, had issued a statement of material uncertainty related to going concern in their report dated March 26, 2025, in respect to financial statements for FY24.

"We draw attention to Note 2 in the financial statements, which indicates that the group's and the company's current liabilities exceeded their current assets by RM748.8 million and RM827.2 million, res-

pectively, and the group recorded a capital deficiency of RM145.9 million as of Dec 31, 2024.

"These events or conditions, along with other matters set out in Note 2(a), indicate the existence of material uncertainties that may cast significant doubt on the group's and the company's ability to continue as a going concern.

"Nevertheless, the financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis, which is materially dependent on the successful and timely implementation of the proposed regularisation plan and continued support from lenders," the auditors said. – Bernama

Sabah nets RM4.5 million sales at Matta Fair KL

PETALING JAYA: Sabah's strong presence at the first edition of Matta Fair Kuala Lumpur 2025 held from April 18 to 20 yielded sales of RM4.5 million, a significant increase of 46% from that registered at last year's edition.

Forty-three Sabah travel agents

participated in the fair, which was led by the Sabah Tourism Board (STB) as the anchor for promoting the destination.

STB CEO Julius Jeffery Jimit attributed the success to the dedication and active participation of Sabah's tour and travel agencies, which reflects the Sabahan

camaraderie in promoting the state's tourism industry together with STB.

Sabah Tourism continued its strong commitment to enhancing its destination promotional efforts for Sabah in the domestic and international markets, including active participation in major travel events

such as Matta Fair. This effort echoes STB's *Explore Sabah* campaign leading up to Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Julinus also launched Sabah Tourism's Augmented Reality Map (AR Map), available for both the Sabah Map and the Kota Kinabalu City Map. Users can scan a barcode on the maps

to unlock more information about key attractions. The maps offer an interactive experience, complete with helpful guidelines and animations.

This latest promotional material is part of STB's initiatives to make exploring Sabah a more immersive, engaging and accessible experience.

M'sian Q1 growth estimated at 4.4%

► Economic expansion continues to be led by services, manufacturing and construction, says chief statistician

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's advance GDP estimates point to a steady growth of 4.4% in the first quarter of 2025, although this marks a moderation from the 5% recorded in the previous quarter, said Chief Statistician Malaysia, Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin.

The growth, he added continued to be underpinned by the services, manufacturing and construction sectors, while the mining and quarrying sector remained on a declining trajectory.

However, on a quarter-on-quarter basis, he said the economy contracted by 3.7%, against a 2.7% expansion in the fourth quarter of 2024.

Continuing its upward trajectory, Malaysia's industrial production demonstrated moderate growth in February 2025. The Industrial Production Index (IPI) rose by 1.5%, largely driven by a notable 4.8% expansion in the manufacturing sector.

This positive performance outweighed declines in other sectors, notably mining and electricity, which recorded contractions of 8.9% and 2.8% respectively. These contrasting outcomes underscore the uneven nature of industrial production in the country.

When comparing month-on-month figures, the IPI experienced a drop of 6.8% in February, a sharp decline compared to a marginal decrease of 0.4% recorded in January 2025.

Looking at a broader perspective, Malaysia's wholesale & retail trade sector achieved RM148.3 billion of sales in February 2025, reflecting a growth of 5.1% compared to the same month in the previous year.

This increase was largely driven by strong performances in retail trade which grew by 5.9% and wholesale trade at 5.3%. In a similar trend, the volume index also experienced a year-on-year rise of 3.9%, with wholesale trade rising 4.9% and retail trade growing 4.3%.

However, when compared to January 2025, the sector saw a slight decline of 0.4% in overall sales, primarily due to decreases in both wholesale trade (-1.9%) and retail trade (-1.5%). This indicates a slowdown in consumer activity month-on-month, despite the positive year-on-year performance.

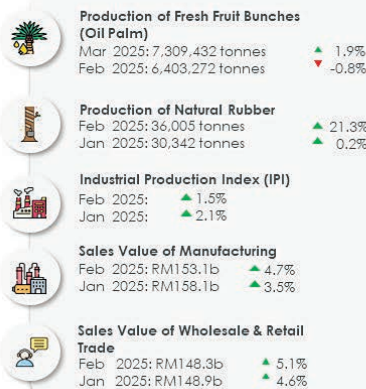
In a climate of stable economic conditions, Malaysia's inflation rate eased to 1.5% in February 2025, down from 1.7% in January. This moderation was primarily driven by slower price increases in key categories such as housing, water, electricity, gas & other fuels, which saw a growth of 2.3%, and recreation, sport & culture which increased by 1.5%.

Malaysia's trade sector continued to demonstrate steady growth in early 2025, driven by strong performances in both exports and imports. In February 2025, Malaysia's total trade increased by 5.9% year-on-year, reaching RM223.9 billion. This growth was largely fuelled by a 6.2% rise in exports, which amounted to RM118.3 billion, alongside a 5.5% increase in imports, totalling RM105.6 billion. As a result, the trade surplus saw a significant boost, rising by 12.2% to reach RM12.6 billion.

"The country's labour market continued to show strength, with the number of employed persons rising by 2.9% year-on-year to reach 16.73 million in February 2025. This growth led to an increase in the employment-to-population ratio, which climbed to 68.5%, up from 68.2% in the same period last year. The labour force also expanded by 2.6%, reaching a total of 17.27 million, supported by a slight increase in the labour force participation rate which rose to 70.7%. Additionally, the number of unemployed persons decreased by 4.3%, falling to 532.8 thousand, which contributed to an unemployment rate of 3.1%," said Mohd Uzir.

MALAYSIAN ECONOMIC STATISTICS REVIEW VOL. 4/ 2025

PRODUCTION

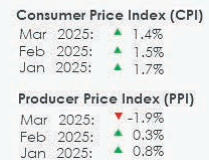


EXTERNAL SECTOR

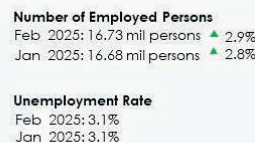


* As published for the corresponding month

PRICES



LABOUR FORCE



b: billion
Percentage Change: Year-on-Year

Source: Malaysian Economic Statistics Review, Vol. 4/ 2025, Department of Statistics, Malaysia (DOSM)



Hartanah Kenyalang unveils IPO prospectus, aims to raise RM19.3m

KUCHING: Building and infrastructure construction firm Hartanah Kenyalang yesterday unveiled the prospectus for its initial public offering (IPO) in conjunction with listing of its entire enlarged issued share capital of 620 million ordinary shares on the ACE Market of Bursa Securities, scheduled for June 9.

TA Securities Holdings Bhd is the principal adviser, sponsor, sole underwriter and sole placement agent.

Hartanah Kenyalang is primarily an investment holding company, while its subsidiary Hartanah Construction Sdn Bhd, specialises in building construction services – particularly institutional buildings such as schools and other public facilities – as well as infrastructure projects, with a focus on bridges and roads.

Hartanah Kenyalang's IPO entails the public offering of 198.4 million ordinary shares comprising a public issue of 120.9 million new shares and an offer for sale of 77.5 million existing shares which collectively represent 32% of the company's enlarged issued share capital of 620

million ordinary shares.

Of the 120.9 million new shares, 31 million new shares will be made available for application by the Malaysian public, and 18.6 million new shares for eligible directors and employees of the group, and persons who have contributed to the success of the group.

The remaining 71.3 million new shares will be allocated for private placement to selected investors. There is also an offer for sale of 77.5 million existing shares which will be allocated for private placement to identified Bumiputera investors approved by the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry.

Based on the IPO price of RM0.16 per share, the IPO exercise is expected to raise RM19.3 million for Hartanah Kenyalang. The public issue of 31 million new shares available for application by the Malaysian public, opened yesterday and will close on May 27 at 5pm.

The IPO proceeds of RM19.3 million will be fully allocated – RM3 million (15.5%) for the purchase of new

machinery and IT related hardware and software; RM10.5 million (54.2%) for project working capital; RM2.1 million (10.9%) for repayment of bank borrowings; and RM3.8 million (19.4%) to defray estimated listing expenses.

Based on the enlarged share capital of 620 million ordinary shares and IPO price of RM0.16 per share, Hartanah Kenyalang is expected to have an indicative market capitalisation of RM99.2 million.

Hartanah Kenyalang managing director Seah Boon Tiat said: "Over the past 11 years, the group has achieved significant progress in Sarawak's construction industry. Today, we are excited to embark on the next phase of our corporate journey – the long-held dream of listing Hartanah Kenyalang on the ACE Market, which is now close to becoming a reality."

As at April 30, 2025, he added they have tendered for various building and infrastructure construction projects with an aggregate contract value of RM451 million, of which RM311 million is in respect of a design and build construction project.

DKSH to distribute Kino Biotech wellness products in Malaysia

PETALING JAYA: DKSH Business Unit Consumer Goods, a partner for companies looking to grow their consumer goods business in Asia and beyond, has partnered with Kino Biotech (M) Sdn Bhd – an integrated bio-nutraceutical and cosmeceutical company – to distribute its range of innovative health and wellness products under the Kinohimitsu brand across Malaysia.

The partnership marks a strategic collaboration to enhance the brand's reach in both Peninsular and East Malaysia through DKSH's extensive distribution network and market expertise.

As part of this partnership, DKSH will provide full market expansion services including sales, field activation, distribution, and logistics, as well as credit and collection – ensuring seamless distribution of Kinohimitsu's functional beauty and wellness products such as WellSure, SuperFood, Wellness Supplements, Bird's Nest, and Immunity range.

Building on DKSH's proven track record in brand growth and distribution in the region, the partnership will focus on broadening Kinohimitsu's product accessibility through modern trade channels including hypermarkets, supermarkets, convenience stores, and mini markets chains.

Kino Biotech chief operating officer Jennifer Chin said: "Through our partnership with DKSH, products under our subsidiary brand Kinohimitsu are expanding nationwide, tapping into white spaces and uncovering untapped opportunities to bring our range of products to more consumers than ever before."

Meanwhile, DKSH Malaysia fast moving consumer goods vice-president Daniel Schwalb said: "This collaboration goes beyond simply expanding the product offerings of Kino Biotech and its brand, Kinohimitsu – it's about enriching lives by providing functional supplements that empower people to live healthier, happier lives."



China's factory activity falls sharply as trade war bites

➤ Most stock markets rise despite gloomy data, eyes on US reports

HONG KONG: Stocks mostly rose yesterday ahead of key US economic and earnings reports, while traders took in their stride data showing Chinese factory activity contracted at its fastest pace for nearly two years as Donald Trump's trade war kicked in.

While markets have recovered some of the losses suffered after the American president's "Liberation Day" tariffs announcement on April 2, uncertainty still rules as countries look to cut deals to avert the worst of Washington's duties.

China has pointedly not flown to the United States in a bid to pare back the levies of up to 145% imposed on its goods, instead hitting back with 125% tolls of its own.

But the effect of the measures began to shine through in April, with data published yesterday showing manufacturing activity contracted at its fastest pace since July 2023 – a month after expanding at its quickest rate for 12 months.

That came after Chinese exports soared more than 12% last month as businesses rushed to get ahead of the swingeing tariffs.

And observers fear things will only worsen.

"The weak manufacturing PMI in April is driven by the trade war," Zhiwei Zhang,

president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management, wrote in a note.

"The macro data in China and the US will weaken further ... as the trade policy uncertainty delays business decisions," he added.

The figures saw fresh calls for Beijing to introduce new stimulus measures, though Zichun Huang, China economist at Capital Economics, warned in a note that more fiscal support "is unlikely to fully offset the drag," predicting the economy to expand just 3.5% this year.

Still, Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING, said: "Tariffs are a lose-lose proposition, and the PMI data is our first official look at how it's affecting China."

"Our take is that there's a clear negative shock taking place."

"But, all things considered, survey data suggests the shock may be less than what the more bearish market participants feared."

Shares mostly fell in early trade but some bounced back as the day wore on.

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

Tokyo rose thanks to a 7.1% surge in Sony fuelled by a report that it is considering spinning off its chip unit, raising expectations that such a move would unlock value in the Japanese entertainment and electronics company.

London, Frankfurt and Paris also rose.

Equities have clawed back a lot of the huge losses suffered at the start of the month as Trump has shown a little more flexibility on

some issues and as governments hold talks with Washington.

US Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick said he had reached a deal with a country but did not name it, while Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said progress had been made with India, South Korea and Japan.

But Saxo chief investment strategist Charu Chananana warned economic data will likely worsen.

"We've probably seen peak tariff rates, but not peak tariff uncertainty," she said in a commentary.

"The hard data still reflects the impact of front-loaded demand, as companies and consumers rushed to buy goods ahead of expected tariff increases."

"We haven't yet seen the real data showing the drag from sustained uncertainty and elevated tariff costs."

"As that uncertainty filters through business decisions, we expect a more meaningful slowdown in real economic activity – in production, hiring, and investment."

"In short, the rate shock may be behind us, but the real growth damage is just starting to unfold."

Investors are awaiting the release of key US inflation and economic growth data due later in the day, while jobs figures are lined up for tomorrow.

This week also sees the release of earnings from Wall Street titans including Microsoft, Apple, Meta and Amazon, which observers will provide an insight into how corporate America is dealing with the tariffs crisis, and how they expect to fare. – AFP

Rakuten to invest at least US\$100m in India

MUMBAI: Japan's Rakuten aims to invest at least US\$100 million (RM431 million) and increase its headcount by 8% in India this year to strengthen its global operations, a top executive of the internet conglomerate said.

Rakuten plans to invest "at least three digit millions dollars" to scale up technology, infrastructure and hiring, Rakuten's India CEO Sunil Gopinath said, without specifying the exact amount.

The company, which operates in sectors such as fintech, e-commerce, and telecom, is using artificial intelligence to enhance operations across key areas including, business tools, customer experience and employee productivity, he said.

Rakuten currently employs 4,000 people in India – 90% of whom are tech staff – and plans to recruit people who it considers "power users" of AI.

"We look for AI-savvy people that we can intersperse across the company," Gopinath said.

The India global capability centre (GCC) is a key contributor in building Rakuten Pay, a major payment app in Japan, and its SixthSense platform, which is used to track the health of a system and flag issues.

"It (SixthSense) is almost like Sherlock Holmes, so we are able to figure out not only what has happened automatically, but we can actually project and predict an issue happening before it happens," Gopinath said.

The SixthSense platform is used by a wide range of clients including banks, healthcare companies, airlines and the government of India.

Rakuten generated a profit of ¥10.5 billion (RM318 million) in fiscal year 2024 by using AI, and aims to double this in 2025.

Last year, employees almost halved their time to create sales material, according to its full-year earnings presentation.

Rakuten's India GCC operates about 50% of the company's 70-plus businesses, with offices at multiple locations in the country, including two centres in the southern city of Bengaluru.

The market size of India's GCCs is expected to be valued at up to US\$105 billion by fiscal year 2030 from US\$64.6 billion in 2024, according to a report by IT industry body Nasscom and consulting firm Zinnov. – Reuters

CATL said planning to launch Hong Kong listing in week of May 12

HONG KONG: Chinese battery giant CATL plans to launch its Hong Kong listing next month, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter said, in what is set to be the city's largest share sale in four years.

The bookbuilding for the deal, or the process to invite bids for the equity offering from investors, is expected to start the week of May

12, the sources said who declined to be named discussing information that is not yet public.

Reuters has reported, citing people with knowledge of the matter, that the offering could raise at least US\$5 billion (RM21.6 billion).

CATL did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The size and timing of CATL's bookbuilding

could change, one of the sources added.

The battery giant's listing would be the largest in Hong Kong since 2021 when Kuaishou Technology raised US\$6.2 billion in an initial public offering.

CATL has previously said in a regulatory filing that part of the funds raised will be used to build a battery plant in Hungary. – Reuters

Samsung Electronics posts 21.7% jump in Q1 net profit

SEOUL: South Korean tech giant Samsung Electronics reported a better-than-expected 21.7% rise in first-quarter net profit yesterday as consumers rushed to buy smartphones under the looming threat of US tariffs.

The firm said it expected improved earnings in the second half if "uncertainties are diminished".

The results come as Seoul and Washington work to craft a "trade package" intended to roll back US President Donald Trump's new tariffs ahead of the July 8 expiration of a reciprocal tariff freeze.

Samsung Electronics is the flagship subsidiary of South Korean giant Samsung Group, by far the largest of the family-controlled conglomerates that dominate business in Asia's fourth-largest economy.

The world's largest memory chipmaker reported net profit of 8.22 trillion won (RM25 billion) for the January-March quarter, up 21.7% on-year.

Sales rose 10% to an all-time quarterly high of 79.14 trillion won and operating profit rose 1.2% to 6.7 trillion won on-year, exceeding forecasts according to Yonhap News Agency, which cited its own financial data firm.

South Korea – one of the United States' key trading partners and home to powerhouse chip and auto industries – earlier this month also unveiled an additional US\$5 billion investment in its semiconductor industry, citing "growing uncertainty" stemming from American tariffs.

The figures were "on the back of strong sales of flagship Galaxy S25 smartphones and high-value-added products", the company said in a statement.

"Despite the growing macroeconomic uncertainties due to recent global trade tensions and slowing global economic growth," Samsung said it "expects its performance to improve in the second half of the year", assuming "that the uncertainties are diminished".

Analysts also attributed the results in part to record sales of the new Galaxy S25 series smartphones, which launched in February.

The firm's "early introduction of AI features, beginning with the Galaxy S24 and enhanced further in the S25, gave it a strong competitive edge", Sheng Win Chow, an analyst at Canalis, told AFP.

"The combination of native on-device AI capabilities and Google Gemini apps offered



A view of a Samsung Electronics factory in Bac Ninh province, Vietnam. – REUTERS/PIC

users a rich suite of AI functions right out of the box, creating strong pull factors for early adopters."

But experts expressed concerns as more than half of Samsung's smartphones are manufactured in Vietnam, where steep tariffs of up to 46% could be imposed if trade negotiations between Washington and Hanoi break down.

According to Chow, more than 90% of Samsung's US smartphone shipments originate from Vietnam, and to effectively mitigate risks, the company "would need to ramp up production and export of higher-end models like the Galaxy S25 series from India".

But "this shift would require time and operational adjustments", the analyst added. – Reuters

Amazon denies plan to display tariff costs for consumers

➤ White House earlier attacked reported proposal as 'hostile and political act'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday said Amazon founder Jeff Bezos "did the right thing" by stopping a plan to show consumers how much US tariffs add to each price tag.

Earlier on Tuesday, Punchbowl News reported that the e-commerce site would show users how much Trump's tariffs are hiking the price of products, citing a person familiar with the matter.

The report created immediate tension with the White House as it marked its 100 days in office, with the administration eager to defend its high tariff policies against criticism they raise prices for US consumers.

Multiple US media outlets reported that Trump personally called Bezos about the matter.

Trump, seeming to confirm this conversation, described Bezos to reporters as "very nice" and "terrific", adding that the Amazon executive chairman "solved the problem very quickly ... and he's a good guy".

Without fully denying the Punchbowl report, Amazon released a statement saying its low-cost Amazon Haul store had "considered the idea of listing import charges on certain products".

"This was never approved and is not going to happen," the company statement added.

The issue flew into the open when White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt early on Tuesday called the reported plan "a hostile and political act by Amazon".

"Why didn't Amazon do this when the (Joe) Biden administration hiked inflation to the highest level in 40 years?" she added during a briefing in Washington.



Leavitt, joined by US Secretary of Treasury Scott Bessent, holding a news article on Bezos that reads *Amazon partnered with China propaganda arm* during a briefing in the White House. – AFP/IC

Also criticising the plan, top Trump adviser Stephen Miller told Fox News that Amazon customers "complain all the time they can't see where products are coming from and where they're made".

"A lot of American consumers want to buy products from America," he added.

After taking office in January, Trump slapped a 10% baseline tariff

on most countries, along with higher levies on dozens of countries – only to then pause the elevated rates for 90 days to allow for trade talks.

The White House has also imposed steep duties on China, and additional sector-specific measures – leading Beijing to impose its own retaliatory tariffs on US goods.

The American president's tariffs are already starting to have an impact

on businesses in the United States.

Package delivery giant UPS said on Tuesday it plans to cut 20,000 positions worldwide in 2025 following a significant drop in business from Amazon, its largest customer.

UPS chief executive Carol Tome said the firm, which had around 490,000 employees at the end of 2024, was reacting to a "changing trade environment". – AFP

Trump tempers duties on automakers

NEW YORK: President Donald Trump moved on Tuesday to soften tariffs on automakers, sparking cautious optimism in an industry that has been on tenterhooks as it awaits details on the fast-evolving policy.

Trump signed an executive order to limit the impact of overlapping tariffs on automakers.

He also released a proclamation that gives the industry a two-year grace period to move supply chains back to the United States and reduce "American reliance on imports of foreign automobiles and their parts".

Automakers have been among the hardest-hit sectors by Trump's multi-pronged assault on free trade.

The announcement of relief coincided with a visit by the president to the Detroit area to celebrate his 100th day in office.

"We just wanted to help them during this little transition. Short term," Trump said.

The American Automotive Policy Council welcomed the steps, calling tariff duplication a "significant concern", according to its president, Matt Blunt.

The council represents General Motors, Ford and Stellantis.

"We will review the details of the executive order closely to assess how effectively it will mitigate the impact of tariffs on American Automakers, our domestic supply chains and ultimately American consumers," Blunt said.

The administration determined that some relief was needed to give companies enough time to move supply chains to this country, a senior Commerce Department official said in a briefing.

"You're going to see a massive resurgence of domestic auto manufacturing," the official said.

Besides a 25% tariff on finished imported cars, the industry has also been affected by Trump's 25% tariff on steel and aluminum.

Automakers are also set to face new tariffs on foreign auto parts expected to take effect on May 3.

Trump's new policy means that a company would not face both a 25% levy for an imported vehicle and 25% on steel or aluminum; the importer would pay the higher of the two levies, but not both, a Commerce official said.

The other change is that companies that import parts for vehicles assembled in the US would be able to offset 3.75% of a vehicle's list price in the first year and 2.5% in the second year.

That modification is designed to give companies two years to move supply chains to the US.

Automakers told the Trump administration there would be "dramatic increases in production ... as the payoff to America" from a two-year grace period, the Commerce official said.

But analysts have cautioned that Trump's approach will not incentivise multi-billion-dollar investments if the industry does not believe the tariffs will last throughout his administration and beyond. – AFP

Meta releases standalone AI app, competing with ChatGPT

SAN FRANCISCO: Social media behemoth Meta unveiled its first standalone AI assistant app on Tuesday, challenging ChatGPT by giving users a direct path to its generative artificial intelligence models.

"A billion people are using Meta AI across our apps now, so we made a new standalone Meta AI app for you to check out," the company's CEO and founder Mark Zuckerberg said in a video posted on Instagram.

Zuckerberg said the app "is designed to be your personal AI" and could be primarily accessed through voice conversations with the interactions personalised to the individual user.

"We're starting off really basic, with just a little bit of context about your interests."

"But over time, you're going to be able to let Meta AI know a whole lot about you and the people you care about

from across our apps, if you want."

Embracing the company's social media DNA, the app features a social feed allowing users to see AI-made posts by other users.

"We learn from seeing each other do it, so we put this right in the app," Meta chief product officer Chris Cox said as he opened the tech titan's LlamaCon developers gathering devoted to its open-source AI model.

"You can share your prompts. You can share your art. It's super fun."

The new application also replaces Meta View as the companion app for Ray-Ban Meta smart glasses, allowing conversations to flow between glasses, mobile app and desktop interfaces, the company said.

Meta also added an experimental mode designed to let the AI app engage in human style conversations with users. – AFP

Super Micro fans AI spending worries with cuts to revenue, profit estimates

SAN FRANCISCO: AI server maker Super Micro Computer on Tuesday cut its third-quarter revenue and profit expectations due to delays in customer spending, amplifying worries of a pullback in AI-linked investments and pushing its shares down 16%.

The dour projections came after months of accounting issues had prompted a potential delisting, damaging customer and investor confidence in a company that had emerged as one of the biggest winners of the AI trade.

Investor jitters around AI spending have also heightened as President Donald Trump's sweeping tariffs on trading partners have sparked fears of a global slowdown.

Nvidia shares fell close to 2% in after-hours trading while rival AMD's stock slipped about 1%

following the cuts by a key partner.

Delayed "customer platform decisions" moved sales into the fourth quarter, Super Micro said, trimming its preliminary revenue expectation for the three months ended March 31 to a range of US\$4.5 billion to US\$4.6 billion, from US\$5 billion to US\$6 billion earlier.

Some analysts pinned the cut from Super Micro to its litany of internal issues.

"Super Micro's stumble looks more like self-inflicted wounds than a signal of broader trouble," said Michael Ashley Schulman, chief investment officer of Running Point Capital.

"Tariffs may have nudged sentiment, but it's internal missteps – customer spending delays and missed expectations – that kicked the stock down the stairs." – Reuters



BRICS blasts 'resurgence of trade protectionism'

➤ Growing group shows internal rifts as ministers fall short of joint statement

RIO DE JANEIRO: China, Brazil and other members of BRICS on Tuesday slammed the "resurgence of trade protectionism" at a meeting in Rio de Janeiro dominated by US President Donald Trump's tariffs blitz.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi and his Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov were among the top diplomats of the 11-country grouping attending two days of talks on issues ranging from Trump's trade war to the push for peace in Ukraine.

Mauro Vieira, foreign minister of Brazil which holds the rotating BRICS presidency, said the bloc underscored its "firm rejection" of protectionism, without explicitly referring to Trump.

Since returning to the White House in January, Trump has hit dozens of countries with a blanket 10% tariff, but China faces levies of up to 145% on many products.

Beijing has responded with duties of 125% on US goods.

BRICS, which was founded by Brazil, Russia, India and China in 2009 and now also includes Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and the United Arab Emirates, has become a major counterweight to Western-led groups such as the G7.

It now makes up nearly half of the world's population, and 39% of global GDP.

The meeting in Rio came at a critical moment for the world economy after the International Monetary Fund slashed growth forecasts over the impact of Trump's sweeping levies on imports.

The ministers did not issue a joint statement.

Brazil instead settled for a declaration summarising the discussions.

Vieira said there was "absolute consensus" on the subject of "trade conflicts and tariffs".

Some BRICS members have avoided Trump's trade fury.

Brazilian exports to the United States are subject to 10% tariffs, a fraction of those imposed on China.

And while Latin America's biggest economy has been hit by Trump's tariffs on steel imports – Brazil is the second-biggest supplier of steel to the United States – President Luiz Inacio Lula's government has declined to retaliate and sought to

negotiate with Washington instead.

Brazil has, however, made no secret of its frustration with European Union regulations on some of its agricultural exports, imposed over Amazon deforestation.

Vieira hit out on Tuesday at the use of "non-tariff" trade barriers, deployed under "environmental pretexts".

The group trod more carefully on the issue of non-dollar transactions among BRICS members.

At a summit last year in Russia, BRICS leaders discussed boosting such transactions, eliciting a swift rebuke from Trump who threatened them with 100% tariffs if they undercut the US currency.

Brazil said the ministers this week had "underlined the importance of greater use of local currencies".

"Multilateralism" and "cooperation" were the watchwords of the meeting, which also discussed the wars in Ukraine and Gaza.

The BRICS ministers called for a "complete withdrawal" of Israeli forces from Gaza, terming Israel's more than 50-day aid blockade of the territory "unacceptable".

As in the past, Russia's BRICS partners stopped short of condemning Moscow's invasion of its neighbour, while calling for a "lasting peace deal". – AFP

Mercedes pulls 2025 earnings guidance

BERLIN: Mercedes-Benz yesterday pulled its earnings guidance for 2025 amid uncertainty over the impact of US President Donald Trump's tariffs on car imports, as the German automaker posted sharply lower first-quarter profit.

"Clearly Mercedes-Benz is a global player ... we don't fear competition in any direction," CEO Ola Källenius told analysts.

"But that's not the environment we're operating in."

He said "constructive" talks with the Trump administration over boosting Mercedes' US manufacturing presence were ongoing, but declined to provide details.

Chief financial officer Harald Wilhelm told analysts that, given the uncertainty over tariffs, full-year guidance "cannot be provided today with a reliable degree of certainty".

But he said that if tariffs remained in place all year, it would reduce profit margins by 300 basis points on cars and 100 basis points on vans.

Mercedes faces challenges in all its major markets, from Trump's tariffs, to competition from fast-moving rivals in China and new CO2 emissions targets in the European Union.

Stellantis also said yesterday it was suspending its guidance.

On Tuesday, Volvo Cars withdrew its earnings forecast for the next two years, citing uncertainty over the tariffs.

Meanwhile, German rival Volkswagen yesterday posted a steep drop in first-quarter profit and said it expected its annual operating profit margin at the lower end of guidance.

Mercedes told analysts at the end of March it had been stockpiling inventory in the US to mitigate the impact of tariffs.

The premium automaker's car and van sales dropped 7% in the first quarter, led by 10% declines in both Europe and China, though sales were up 1% in the US market.

The company's sales fell 3% last year, led by a 7% drop in China.

Mercedes reported a first-quarter profit margin for its car business of 7.3%, down from 9% in the same period last year. – Reuters

UK govt to regulate cryptocurrencies

LONDON: The UK government published on Tuesday draft legislation aimed at regulating cryptocurrencies like bitcoin and ethereum, after the European Union introduced its own framework.

"Crypto exchanges, dealers and agents will be brought into the regulatory perimeter – cracking down on bad actors while supporting legitimate innovation," the Finance Ministry said in a statement.

"Crypto firms with UK customers will also have to meet clear standards on transparency, consumer protection, and operational resilience – just like firms in traditional finance."

The new regime comes after the introduction of the European Union's Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation, which came into force in December.

But Finance Minister Rachel Reeves stressed that the UK was in talks with the United States on the issue, adding that "regulation must support business, not hold it back".

Speaking at a fintech summit in London, Reeves said international cooperation on the sector was vital.

She said she had discussed "continued US and UK engagement" with American Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent last week.

This would include further dialogue at the UK-US financial regulatory working group in June "to support the use and responsible growth of digital assets".

Around 12% of UK adults own or have owned cryptocurrencies, compared to just 4% in 2021. – AFP



A woman working on a bicycle assembly line in the MFC (Manufacture Française du Cycle) factory in Machecoul, France. – AFP/PICT

French economy returns to thin growth in Q1

PARIS: France's economy returned to growth in the first three months of the year but the expansion was modest, held back by sluggish household consumption and stagnant investment, official data showed yesterday.

Gross domestic product (GDP) expanded by 0.1% between January and March in the eurozone's second biggest economy after a 0.1% contraction in the fourth quarter.

In the first quarter, growth was restrained by the reluctance of consumers to reach deep into

their pockets, with household consumption unchanged after growing by 0.2% in the previous three months.

Investment for businesses, households, and government, meanwhile, continued to trend in negative territory, contracting 0.2% following a 0.1% contraction the previous quarter.

This growth update from France is the first to be published yesterday ahead of those from Germany, Italy and the eurozone itself.

The political context in the country remains unstable almost eight years into President Emmanuel Macron's tenure and casts a shadow over the economy.

Prime Minister Francois Bayrou's minority government is regularly threatened by the risk of a no-confidence vote that could bring it down.

Russia's war against Ukraine and President Donald Trump's imposition of tariffs have added to the uncertainty. – AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: APRIL 30

Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

30 April 2025

Participation		Retail (16.64%) Net (in RM mil.)	Institution (40.60%) Net (in RM mil.)	Foreign (42.76%) Net (in RM mil.)
		-51.91	-273.32	+325.23
Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	348.54	400.46	
Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	776.94	1050.26	
Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	1124.76	799.52	

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

iPacOnline **@iPacOnline1972** **Inter-Pacific Securities** **@iPac_TV**

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	11,407.70 +133.37
FBMKLCI	1,540.22 +24.66
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	506.47 +7.00
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	151.48 +2.56
CONSTRUCTION	267.41 +5.76
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,234.60 +134.50
ENERGY	688.14 +10.18
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	501.02 -4.31
HEALTH CARE	1,916.13 +7.39
TRANSPORTATION	977.98 +3.09
PROPERTY	973.54 +0.41
PLANTATION	7,257.42 +95.07
FBMSHA	11,274.20 +156.56
FBMACE	4,628.66 +10.56
TECHNOLOGY	47.89 -0.06
TURNOVER: 2.586 bil	VALUE: RM2.250 bil

Bursa surges on foreign buying, bargain hunting

BURSA Malaysia bounced back from Tuesday's losses to close on a firmer footing yesterday, with the key index gaining 1.63%, buoyed by bargain hunting, renewed foreign fund inflows, and signs of easing trade-related anxieties.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI jumped 24.66 points to 1,540.22 from Tuesday's close of 1,515.56.

The market bellwether opened 2.51 points higher at 1,518.07, marking its intraday low, and climbed to its intraday high at closing.

On the broader market, market breadth was positive with 454 gainers outpacing 347 decliners, while 475 counters were unchanged, 1,143 untraded, and 96 suspended.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said the local market displayed resilience, underpinned by the influx of foreign capital and shifting sentiment.

"Notably, US President Donald Trump's tariff 2025 announcement, which initially drove the composite index to a 20-month low of 1,400.59 on April 9, ultimately proved to be a boon in disguise.

"A sectoral symphony unfolded post-tariff, with export-oriented and consumer discretionary stocks harmonising to drive gains. This dynamic emerged as investors rotated into undervalued segments of the market, positioning ahead of potential trade normalisation," he told Bernama.

Among the heavyweights, Petronas Chemicals gained 20 sen to RM3.67, Press Metal Aluminium added 11 sen to RM4.90, CIMB put on 10 sen to RM7.12, and Petronas Gas rose 68 sen to RM17.50.

As for the actives, Nategate Holdings rose eight sen to RM1.36, RichTech was up three sen to 31 sen, Velesito and WTEC Group rose by half-a-sen each to 15.5 sen and 24 sen respectively, while Tanco Holdings dipped two sen to 86 sen.

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWEI	0.135	+0.005	+3.85	1,577,675
HSI-CWEP	0.100	-	-	1,534,835
HSI-PWFQ	0.080	-0.010	-11.11	767,254
HSI-PWFK	0.085	-0.010	-10.53	621,403
NATGATE	1.360	+0.080	+6.25	518,029
MEYEG	0.895	-0.005	-0.56	429,383
VELESTO	0.155	+0.005	+3.33	414,434
HSI-PWFM	0.145	-0.010	-6.45	397,215
RTECH	0.310	+0.030	+10.71	391,175
SUMI	0.190	+0.015	+8.57	358,373
TANCO	0.860	-0.020	-2.27	328,152
WTEC	0.240	+0.005	+2.13	291,360
CLITE	0.235	+0.005	+2.17	285,039
HSI-CWC4	0.075	-0.005	-6.25	278,981
KAB	0.325	-	-	261,370
HSI-CWEQ	0.160	-	-	254,925
JIANKUN	0.030	-	-	243,900
CIMB	7.120	+0.100	+1.43	240,001
PERMAJU	0.035	-	-	234,702
SFPTECH	0.210	-0.005	-2.33	233,657



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	87.000	+2.780	5,741
ALLIANZ-PA	18.860	+0.960	95
FBN	27.000	+0.780	2,023
PETGAS	17.500	+0.680	4,079
PETDAG	19.740	+0.540	1,991
PPB	12.440	+0.480	6,805
ALLIANZ	18.400	+0.360	1,440
CVIEW	2.330	+0.240	1,223
UTDPLT	22.920	+0.240	8,525
TENAGA	13.860	+0.220	102,407
MISC	7.510	+0.210	12,252
KLUANG	5.650	+0.200	4
PICHEM	3.670	+0.200	39,924
GAMUDA	4.240	+0.190	223,231
SDG	4.750	+0.190	41,011
LPI	14.320	+0.180	331
CARLSBG	18.880	+0.160	827
HLFG	17.180	+0.160	1,298
SAB	3.250	+0.150	194
EUROSP	2.450	+0.130	1

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
BAT-C36	0.020	+100.00	43,406
EVD-PA	0.040	+100.00	1
HONGSENG	0.010	+100.00	16,672
MAHSING-C74	0.010	+100.00	31,682
SALCON-WB	0.020	+100.00	89,922
SAPNRG-WA	0.010	+100.00	567
MRDIY-C41	0.105	+75.00	100
ARMADA-C96	0.025	+66.67	21,560
TEOSEN-CB	0.040	+60.00	6,000
MSM-C4	0.045	+50.00	5,002
OMESTI-WC	0.015	+50.00	1,947
TEOSEN-CD	0.015	+50.00	6,300
PICHEM-CIK	0.125	+47.06	2,000
MSM-C3	0.065	+44.44	3,622
DIGISTA-WD	0.020	+33.33	295
GAMUDA-C2U	0.060	+33.33	10,152
LHI-C26	0.060	+33.33	209
PICHEM-CII	0.080	+33.33	3,816
YTL-CIF	0.020	+33.33	601
GAMUDA-C3E	0.130	+30.00	27,687

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	40,527.62	300.03	0.75
S&P 500 (US)	5,560.83	32.08	0.58
NASDAQ (US)	17,461.32	95.19	0.55
NYSE (US)	19,089.21	117.48	0.62
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	5,165.11	3.21	0.06
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,464.98	1.52	0.02
DAX (GER)	22,512.33	86.5	0.39
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	36,045.38	205.39	0.57
TOPIX INDEX (JPN)	2,667.29	16.68	0.63
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	22,119.41	111.3	0.51
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,770.57	-4.51	-0.12
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	185.34	0.6	0.32
SHANGHAI SE COM (CHN)	3,279.03	-7.62	-0.23
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,556.61	-8.81	-0.34
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	80,341.88	53.5	0.07
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,126.21	55.62	0.69
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,340.99	53.08	0.64
FBM KLCI	1,540.22	24.66	1.63
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,819.42	14.24	0.37
WTI (US\$/BBL)	59.73	-0.69	-1.14
BRENT (US\$/BBL)	63.46	-0.79	-1.23
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	3,294.00	-39.6	-1.19
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	32.6	-0.97	-2.89
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	969.99	-11.34	-1.16
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	466.4	-20.85	-4.28
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,440.00	62	0.66
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	469.25	-1	-0.21
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	524.75	-0.75	-0.14
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	49.04	-0.29	-0.59
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	8,671.00	-220	-2.47
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	164.6	-0.2	-0.12

As at 5pm, April 30

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
BIPORT	5.240	-0.200	1,195
HSI-PWFO	0.600	-0.145	29,392
SCIENTX	3.500	-0.130	7,355
BURSA	7.360	-0.120	32,209
HSI-PWHA	0.050	-0.110	1,000
ASIAFLE	1.400	-0.100	10
RVIEW	2.960	-0.090	1
BYD-C36	0.185	-0.075	850
MBMR	5.700	-0.070	1,127
SURIA	1.570	-0.070	38
GENP	4.830	-0.060	7,664
HSTECH-H21	0.765	-0.060	2,000
PBBANK-CIU	0.090	-0.060	18,000
VITROX	3.130	-0.060	17,806
MEDIA	0.390	-0.055	186
GENETEC	1.030	-0.050	135,949
HSI-CWEC	0.100	-0.050	2,000
IDEAL	3.650	-0.050	49
GOLDET	4.500	-0.050	1,191
CHGP	2.300	-0.040	1,275

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
DUFU-CX	0.005	-75.00	4,905
YINSON-C42	0.015	-72.73	253
HSI-PWHA	0.050	-68.75	1,000
NATGATE-CH	0.005	-66.67	300
BCMALL	0.005	-50.00	2,910
HSI-PWD3	0.005	-50.00	3,122
JIANKUN-WB	0.005	-50.00	230
SIMEPROP-C41	0.005	-50.00	9,701
VELESTO-C40	0.010	-50.00	561
ZENTECH	0.005	-50.00	6,580
PBBANK-CIU	0.090	-40.00	18,000
SINARAN-WB	0.015	-40.00	1,501
FCPO-CW01	0.035	-36.36	75
COMFORT-WB	0.010	-33.33	60
GAMUDA-C2X	0.010	-33.33	12,071
HSI-CWEC	0.100	-33.33	2,000
ITRONIC-WA	0.010	-33.33	300
MNC-WC	0.010	-33.33	2,893
MALAKOFC55	0.010	-33.33	11,066
YINSON-WA	0.010	-33.33	187,493

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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FMM calls for rethink on expansion of SST's scope

KUALA LUMPUR: The Federation of Malaysian Manufacturing (FMM) has acknowledged the government's decision to delay the implementation of the expanded Sales and Service Tax (SST) scope, which was initially scheduled for May 1, 2025. The Customs Department has indicated that the gazettement of the new tax changes is now scheduled for June 1, 2025. FMM president Tan Sri Soh Thian Lai said this deferment is both necessary and timely, as it allows the Finance Ministry (MoF) to further refine the scope, guidelines, and compliance framework in consultation with industry.

He added FMM has had several engagements with the MoF and the Customs Department, and following these, had carried out intensive consultations with their members to gather detailed industry feedback. Based on this feedback, it is clear that a total and comprehensive study is essential before any major expansion of the SST is implemented.

"The present time is not conducive for such an expansion, given the significant external pressures faced by manufacturers, including the imposition of US reciprocal tariffs and the upcoming review of electricity base tariffs in July 2025. The expanded SST coverage, without appropriate safeguards, will amplify the cost of doing business, weaken Malaysia's industrial competitiveness, and increase the financial burden on consumers through higher retail prices."

FMM strongly urged that the SST expansion should not proceed with implementation following the anticipated gazettement on June 1, 2025 unless key issues are fully addressed.

Ringgit appreciates further on softer demand for US dollar

THE ringgit continued to close firmer against the greenback yesterday as the US Dollar Index (DXY) remained below the 100-point level amid softer demand, an economist said.

At 6pm, the local currency rose to 4.3130/3185 versus the US dollar from Tuesday's close of 4.3245/3300.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said that ongoing heightened uncertainties over US tariff issues had led to lower demand for the greenback.

"This has raised questions over the US dollar's status as a safe-haven currency, which normally would thrive during economic calamities," he told Bernama.

Meanwhile, SPI Asset Management managing director Stephen Innes said the ringgit would continue to ride on the narrative of possible worst-case tariff scenarios.

At the close, the ringgit traded higher against a basket of major currencies.

It rose versus the Japanese yen to 3.0142/0182 from 3.0301/0341 at Tuesday's close, strengthened vis-a-vis the euro to 4.9009/9071 from 4.9217/9280 Tuesday, and improved against the British pound to 5.7626/7699 from 5.7927/8000 previously.

Meanwhile, the ringgit performed mixed against its Asean peers.

It was flat versus the Singapore dollar at 3.3027/3074 but strengthened against the Thai baht to 12.9066/9304 from 12.9399/9629 on Tuesday.

In contrast, the local note weakened vis-a-vis the Philippine peso to 7.72/7.73 from 7.70/7.72 on Tuesday and depreciated against the Indonesian rupiah to 259.7/260.2 from 257.9/258.4.

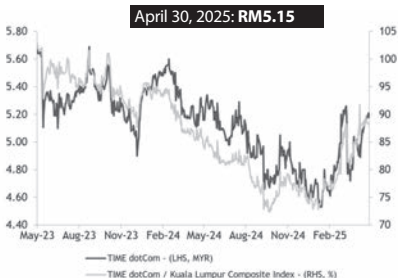
Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.3845	4.2515	4.2415
1 Australian Dollar	2.8210	2.7070	2.6910
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3490	3.2520	3.2440
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1640	3.0800	3.0680
1 Euro	4.9880	4.8280	4.8080
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6090	2.5130	2.4970
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3490	3.2520	3.2440
1 Sterling Pound	5.8790	5.6940	5.6740
1 Swiss Franc	5.3570	5.1300	5.1150
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.6820	3.4300	3.2300
100 Chinese Renminbi	60.6500	58.1100	58.1100
100 Danish Krone	68.4900	63.0400	62.8400
100 Hongkong Dollar	57.0900	54.2600	54.0600
100 Indian Rupee	5.2300	4.9100	4.7100
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0271	0.0245	0.0195
100 Japanese Yen	3.0820	2.9850	2.9750
100 Norwegian Krone	43.3200	39.8400	39.6400
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5900	1.4900	1.2900
100 Philippine Peso	7.9500	7.4900	7.2900
100 Saudi Riyal	118.1500	112.1600	111.9600
100 South Africa Rand	24.4600	22.0900	21.8900
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5000	1.3800	1.1800
100 Swedish Krona	46.8100	42.6200	42.4200
100 Thai Baht	13.6900	12.1400	11.7400
100 UAE Dirham	120.7200	114.4800	114.2800
100 Qatar Riyal	121.5800	115.4100	115.2100
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.7000	N/A	N/A

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

TIME dotCom Bhd

Hold. Target price: RM5.10



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

TDC'S capex undershot in FY24 (due to permit delays pertaining to fibre deployment), which likely prompted the distribution of excess cash in our view. With net cash levels still elevated, there remains ample room for further balance sheet optimisation in our view. Under a hypothetical scenario of both elevated capex (RM500 million/year) and dividends (100% payout), we estimate TDC would still be in a net cash position for the next 3 years.

Home fibre broadband has been the main growth driver for TDC in recent years. However, fibre broadband penetration (60%) is showing signs of plateauing while competitive intensity has remained elevated due to aggressive discounts by mobile players. TDC has thus far held its ground, having largely maintained its retail offerings YTD. Going forward, TDC could potentially be a beneficiary from the deployment of the second 5G network, given its prevailing backhaul partnership with UMobile.

Our forecasts remain unchanged. We assume 100% dividend payout going forward, which implies a 5% dividend yield. We believe prevailing exploratory steps into rooftop solar (similar to Maxis) and EV charging infrastructure are unlikely to be capex-intensive, with management continuing to prioritise the expansion of its fibre footprint.

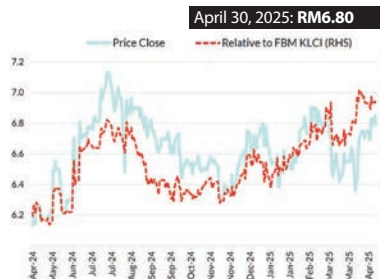
TIME is primarily entrepreneur-controlled and led, with Khazanah owning a passive stake after facilitating the entry of CEO Afzal and team back in 2008.

There are several risk factors for our earnings estimates, price target, and rating for TDC. Competitive developments, such as price wars could adversely affect pricing and profitability.

HOLD with RM5.10 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, April 30**

Telekom Malaysia Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM8.15



Source: Bloomberg

READ throughs from a recent meeting with management suggest: i) A "high-press" approach to defend its retail fibre broadband (FBB)/Unifi business, ii) the strong intent to grow dividends (a record high in FY24), and iii) limited impact on the data centre (DC) business from the proposed US Artificial Intelligence (AI) diffusion rules.

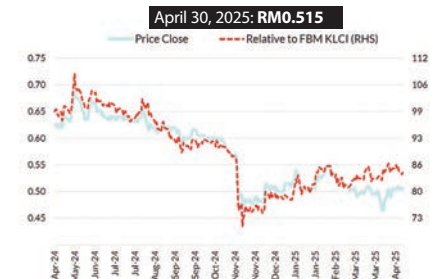
TM will continue to defend its value proposition despite the stiff FBB competition in the market via tactical offerings. We note the usage of graphics processing units (GPUs) at TM's DCs are confined to lower-end Nvidia chips which are not subject to the proposed US AI diffusion rules. The first phase of TM's new AI-DC with Singtel is on track for completion in 2H'26. Overall, we believe TM's stable EBIT guidance for FY25 (FY24: RM2.3 billion) has factored in upside risks to cost including higher 5G wholesale charges. There is upside to EBIT, in our view, as TM had typically outperformed its guidance in the past with cost controls still a core area of focus.

We see the commissioning of the SEA-ME-WE6 undersea cable by mid-2026 fuelling stronger wholesale revenue for the group going forward (FY24: 26% of revenue). This comes from greater managed connectivity services and indefeasible rights of use (IRU) sales. The doubling of its DC capacity by 2H'25 (to 40MW) will also drive stronger DC revenue going forward as TM capitalises on the robust demand from customers for AI-related workload. This comes on top of the GPU-as-a-service (GPUaaS) commissioned late last year with TM having already signed-up a number of global enterprise customers.

BUY with RM8.15 TP. – **RHB Research, April 30**

DXN Holdings Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM0.88



Source: Bloomberg

DXN Holdings' FY25 results met our expectations thanks to solid growth in key markets and efficiency gains which more than offset the impact of unfavourable FX. Core net profit of RM329 million (+2% YoY) accounted for 100% of our full-year forecasts but only 97% of Street's. Post results, we make no material changes to our FY26-27 earnings and roll out FY28 earnings (+12% YoY).

YoY, FY25 revenue rose 6% to RM1.9 billion, underpinned by robust growth in key markets including Peru, Bolivia, the Middle East, and Turkey. This was supported by effective marketing efforts and quality product launches to drive sales productivity of the members. Meanwhile, DXN's focus on enhancing production efficiency has borne fruit, evidenced by the steady 9% growth in FY25 PBT to RM523 million, with margin expanding 0.8ppts to 27.4%. QoQ, Q4'25 revenue and earnings fell by 6% and 9% respectively, impacted by unfavourable FX and seasonality. FY25 DPS amounted to 3.7 sen (FY24: 3.6 sen), representing a payout ratio of 56%.

DXN's earnings growth will be supported by the relentless growth momentum in major markets. The core strategies of recruiting new members and enhancing their productivity levels will continue to revolve around member engagements, complemented by quality new product launches. Meanwhile, the recent capacity expansion should help capture the rising demand and roll out new product categories to broaden the addressable markets.

Risks to our recommendation include major delays in expansion plans and unfavourable regulatory changes.

BUY with RM0.88 TP. – **RHB Research, April 30**



the Sun **LYFE**

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DIY decor

Claim your home with personalised touches – P22

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MONDAY

Technology and social media

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Latest streaming sensations



Transform your home with DIY decor

➤ Hacks for tasteful, meaningful spaces

BY THASHINE SELVAKUMARAN

YOUR home is your sanctuary. It is a space that should reflect your personality and sense of comfort. But revamping your interior spaces does not have to mean breaking the bank or hiring a designer. With just a bit of imagination and some hands-on effort, you can breathe new life into any room. These decor ideas will help you add charm and personal flair to your home instantly, whether you are going for cosy and rustic, or modern and vibrant.

Gallery walls

Gallery walls have become a go-to way of personalising a space, but you can take yours a step further by mixing traditional framed photos with unexpected elements.

Try incorporating handwritten quotes, pressed flowers in glass frames, postcards from your travels or even mini mirrors. Use varying frame styles and sizes to add depth and character. To make it even more meaningful, include DIY art pieces you have made yourself.

Hand-painted accent wall or mural

A painted feature wall is one of the most impactful yet affordable ways to transform a room. While bold solid colours can work, consider going a step further with DIY geometric patterns, arches or soft watercolour-style murals.

Even a sponge-painting technique with a complementary shade can create a textured, cosy vibe. Stencils are your best friend if

you lack in artistic skills. Choose motifs that reflect your taste and make your walls sing.

Floating shelves with character

Floating shelves are functional and stylish, but you can make them even more charming by customising them. Repurpose old wooden planks for a rustic look, or paint them in bold colours for a pop-art aesthetic.

Style them with a mix of books, small potted plants, candles and quirky trinkets. To make it prettier, layer heights and textures. Bonus points if the shelves themselves are a DIY build.

Upcycled furniture magic

Instead of tossing that old side table or outdated dresser, give it a second life with a bit of creativity. Chalk paint can work wonders, and changing knobs or handles to vintage or modern ones gives a fresh twist.

Add wallpaper or fabric to the drawer linings for a hidden surprise. You can try decoupage using printed images or maps if you want it to be more bold. It is sustainable and budget-friendly.

Textile art

Textile decor is making a huge comeback, especially in the form of handcrafted wall hangings or woven pieces. You do not have to be a master weaver because there are plenty of simple tutorials that exist online to get you started with basic knots and patterns.

Hang a piece above your bed, or create a tassel garland in a child's room. The textures add warmth and the handmade aspect makes it uniquely yours.

Candle jars or lanterns

There is something magical about soft, flickering candlelight. Creating your own candle jars or lanterns can be soothing and pretty. Reuse glass jars and decorate them with lace or pressed flowers.

For a rustic vibe, wrap the jars in burlap or dip them in chalk paint for a frosted finish. Fill them with tea lights or fairy lights and place them on windowsills, coffee tables or even hang them outdoors.

Indoor plant corners

Plants breathe life into any room, and you can make them even more appealing by getting creative with your planters. Paint old cans or jars, repurpose ceramic bowls or use hanging baskets wrapped in fabric.

Wooden crates can be turned into vertical plant displays for small spaces. If you are crafty, try plant hangers or concrete planters for a modern edge. Not only do plants purify your air, but they also add lush, living charm.

Creative entryway organisation

The entryway is often overlooked,



Textile decor is making a huge comeback in the form of handcrafted wall hangings or woven pieces.



DIY art pieces you personally made add more meaning to your home.

but it is the first impression of your home. Give it personality with DIY solutions that mix function and style. Install a pegboard and paint it to match your theme, then hang keys, hats and bags in a visually pleasing layout.

Create a bench from crates or old pallets, add some comfy cushions and slide baskets underneath for storage. You could even hang a framed chalkboard or corkboard for weekly notes and greetings.

All in details

These DIY decor ideas help create a home that reflects you. Do not be afraid to experiment with different colours and textures. Mix old and new, handmade and found items to create a layered, inviting space that feels lived-in and loved.

Remember, it is more about personality than perfection. The beauty of DIY is in the imperfections, the stories behind the materials and the pride of saying "I made that". So, roll up your sleeves, put on your favourite playlist and let your home become your canvas for your creativity.

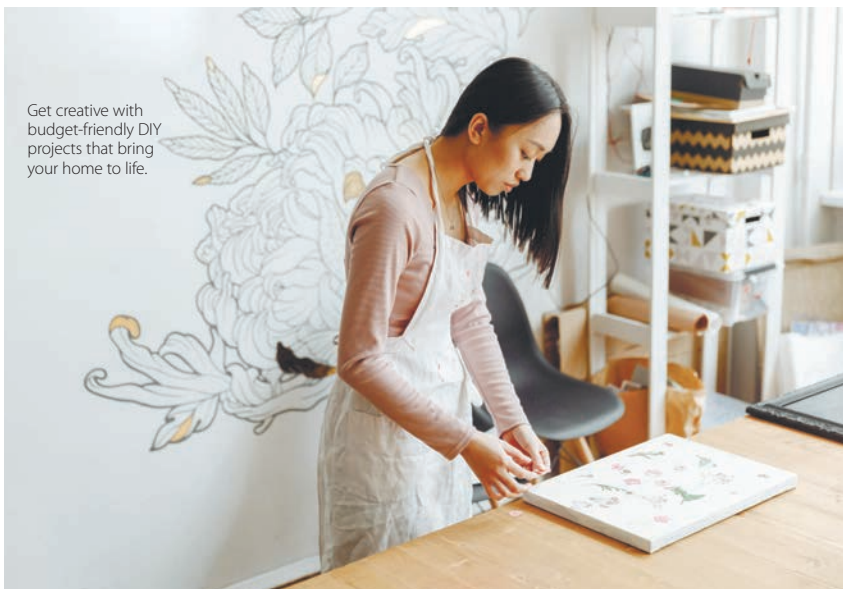
Creating your own candle jars or lanterns can be a soothing and rewarding exercise.



Do not be afraid to experiment with new designs and techniques.



Get creative with budget-friendly DIY projects that bring your home to life.



■ BY R. BALA

LOOKING to upgrade your fridge or freezer? Before you spend on a typical two- or three-door fridge and freezer combo, why not consider having a dedicated freezer unit? These freezer units come in a variety of shapes and sizes making it easier to fit into your home. Here are a few factors to consider before buying one.

Hungry mouths to feed

Typically, a dedicated freezer unit will be useful for larger households where there are more people at the *makan* table. It will allow more storage space for meats and other items that need deep freezing. This means less trips to the grocery store as well, which can be a time-consuming affair.

Saving by buying things in season

Yes, stock up on items when in season or avoid peak price buying. A good example would be the Chinese New Year festive season when the price of seafood, especially prawns and certain types of fish, skyrocket. Having a sizeable dedicated freezer will

Benefits of freezer units

➤ Extra standalone storage for frozen, dairy items

allow households to stock up on these items well in advance, and in sufficient quantities as well.

Some households are also able to negotiate for better prices from their neighbourhood butchers when buying meat in bulk, which is another incentive during these inflationary times.

Easy access and organisation

Having a standalone freezer allows for better organisation and access. In fact, as it will usually be for items that are not always in use, the freezer unit can be hidden away in a section of the house that has a little bit more space. It does not even have to be in the kitchen. It could even be placed outside for convenience or to save floor space.

Modern options

Most people think of a standalone freezer as a bulky chest-like unit catering to businesses, taking up plenty of floor space. But, a quick

glance online will show that there are plenty that cater to smaller households. Tiny, cute and small, these upright freezers are ideal for a household of four to five family members. Meats, ice creams and a variety of dairy products will fit nicely into its elongated compartment offering solid freezing for items that need it.

Star ratings

Best of all, many modern stand alone freezers come with energy saving ratings that make them cost-efficient. Instead of sharing frozen good space in a typical unit where the door is constantly opened, releasing cold air, have one to store those deep freeze items that will help lower utility bills.

Do not forget a freezer unit can contribute greatly towards the meter readings, so this is a good option if a household has kids constantly reaching for the freezer to get ice-lollies and the likes.



Standalone freezers do not need to be in the kitchen and can be placed elsewhere for convenience. – PEXELSPIC

Istana Budaya retiree restores family's traditional Malay home

A retired Istana Budaya official is in the process of transforming a 62-year-old traditional Malay house in Pahang into a "living canvas" to preserve Malay architectural heritage.

Badrul Zaman Abdul Jalil, who was deputy director of the design division at Istana Budaya and has over three decades of experience in design and art, said the wooden house, located in Kampung Tampin in Benta, Lipis, holds special significance for him as it was built by his late father Abdul Jalil Lebai Hassan, who was a religious teacher.

"The house was where my eight siblings and I grew up – and it holds many cherished memories for us."

"According to my mother (Nur Ainun Ibrahim, now 84), the house was completed in 1963, the year Malaysia Day was declared. I was born (in the house) a year later, making it deeply sentimental for me," he said.

He added that he took on the

responsibility of restoring the house after retiring last year.

"After retiring last year and following the passing of my eldest sister in 2016, I took on the responsibility of restoring this house as a symbol of our family's heritage."

Not long ago, photos showcasing the beauty of the restored family home went viral on social media, garnering positive feedback from netizens.

"I did not expect such overwhelming attention. I merely wanted to share stories about my family home, a traditional house filled with memories. I am grateful for the encouraging support," he said.

Named "Teratak Ustaz Jalil" in honour of Badrul's late father, the house is spread over a 325sq m area and has seven bedrooms and five bathrooms.

Other components include a living room (also known as *Rumah Ibu*), central area, kitchen and two verandas, all hallmarks of traditional Pahang Malay houses.

He said the house's main structure, built with Malacca teak and tualang wood, remains sturdy while its tall wooden windows with railings – a distinctive feature of old Malay houses – are still intact.

Badrul shared the house underwent significant renovations in 1982. Currently, restoration and renovation works are in progress.

"The first phase, which started in March 2024, involved cementing the ground floor, building drains and reinforcing the wooden pillars with concrete. The second phase, which began in July last year, focused on restoring the two verandas and the living room and central area by replacing the decayed floors, ceilings and termite-damaged wooden railings."

"We are now in the third phase, which includes renovating the kitchen with tile installations, upgrading the bathrooms and adding more rooms. The final phase will address landscaping and parking



The abode has elements of Malay architectural heritage. – PICS FROM BERNAMA

space," he said, adding the total cost of renovating and restoring the house will come to about RM100,000.

Reflecting on his fond memories of the house, Badrul said the abode was a gathering place for his siblings, not just during festive periods but

throughout the year.

He also expressed hopes that the house will serve as a space where one can share the experience of living in a traditional Malay house rich in history and culture, as well as appreciate its long-standing legacy. – Bernama



Bright colours are a staple for a *kampung* home-vibe.



The home has all the hallmarks of a traditional Pahang Malay house, from its many bedrooms to the verandas.



KITCHEN appliances brand KitchenAid has launched the Go Cordless System – a lineup of small appliances designed for convenient cooking and living without being bound by cords.

KitchenAid cordless system

Combining portability, performance and style, the new KitchenAid cordless system features six new small appliances, all powered by the same interchangeable battery, enabling seamless transitions from preparation to clean-up. Four are now available in Malaysia:

➔ The Go Cordless Hand Mixer (RM999, excluding battery), offers seven speeds and a Soft Start function that minimises splatter for cleaner preparation.

➔ The Go Cordless Hand Blender (RM999, excluding battery) includes a four-point stainless steel blade and variable speed trigger, enabling controlled blending directly in pots or pitchers.

➔ The Go Cordless Food Chopper (RM899, excluding battery) offers a five-cup capacity and one-click assembly, suited for quick tasks such as chopping herbs, vegetables or nuts.

➔ The Go Cordless Personal Blender (RM849, excluding battery) includes a 16-ounce jar and travel lid, supporting on-the-go lifestyles with easy blending and portability.

Completing the lineup are the Go Cordless Blade Grinder, ideal for grinding fresh coffee beans or spices, and the Go Cordless Citrus Juicer, a versatile reamer juicer that utilises forward and reverse movements for better extraction of juices, from grapefruits to limes.

The KitchenAid Go Cordless System eliminates the hassle of fixed kitchen setups, clearing clutter and expanding the possibilities of where cooking can take place. Whether indoors or outdoors, it enables creativity to flow freely – redefining what it means to “make anywhere”.

Tailored for modern lifestyles, the Go Cordless System is designed for urban professionals, lifestyle seekers and food enthusiasts who prioritise flexibility in their cooking adventures. At the centre of the system is a removable 12V Max lithium-ion battery (RM499) that powers all six appliances, supported by a sleek, compact charging dock that keeps everything streamlined and ready to use.

Cordless small appliance market

The brand's exclusive distributor in Malaysia, Visionary Solutions Sdn Bhd co-owner and executive

Cordless kitchen aids for busy bees to conquer everyday life

➔ New small appliances that combine portability, performance, style



The Go Cordless Personal Blender supports on-the-go lifestyles with easy blending and portability.

director Lim Pei Yan shared KitchenAid, which is well known for its stand mixers, is expanding its footprint in the Malaysian cordless small appliance market.

“This cordless ecosystem is designed to grow year over year, boosting consumer confidence in our commitment to the category and maximising the everyday benefits of going cordless. It marks an exciting step forward in our efforts to provide the freedom to make, anytime, anywhere, cementing KitchenAid's leadership in the premium kitchen appliance space.”

The global cordless appliances market is projected to grow to



The Go Cordless System gives you freedom to move effortlessly from kitchen to balcony or garden, making the act of cooking natural and intuitive.

US\$77.2 billion (RM332.8 billion) by 2031, from US\$41.4 billion in 2022, driven by increasing demand for portable, flexible kitchen solutions. Meanwhile, compact kitchen appliances are fuelling rapid growth in the small appliances category, with the global market expected to grow at a CAGR of 5.9% through 2030 as urban consumers prioritise space efficiency. Malaysia mirrors this trend, with rising demand for portable and space-saving solutions.

Cordless functionality is increasingly sought after by premium consumers, those who desire products that perform well while complementing their refined lifestyle and space. The Go Cordless System supports clean, uncluttered counters while delivering the same trusted performance KitchenAid is known for.

The KitchenAid Go Cordless System is available at Harvey Norman, Seibu The Exchange TRX, Parkson, TBM, Shopee, Lazada and on Kitchen Aid Malaysia's website.



(From left) Visionary Solutions managing director Ooi Kah Hin and Lim launching the KitchenAid Go Cordless System.



The Culinary Masters Challenge enables users to experience the KitchenAid Go Cordless System firsthand.



The KitchenAid Go Cordless System features six products, with four available in Malaysia.

Music triggers your brain chemistry

» Tunes can bring pleasure, soothe pain

THERE is a good chance you have experienced a thrill running down your spine when you listen to your favourite song.

What if this ecstasy, intense and difficult to describe, had its roots in humans' neurochemistry?

That is precisely what a Finnish study published in the European Journal of Nuclear Medicine and Molecular Imaging revealed.

It argued that music directly activates the brain's opioid system, the same network involved in the fundamental pleasures associated with our survival.

To explore this mystery, Finnish researchers at the Turku PET Centre sought to understand what actually happens in our brains when we listen to a song we like.

Their study used a dual brain imaging technique.

First, they used positron emission tomography on around 15 volunteers with an average age of 26.

This technique measures chemical activity in the brain by tracking the release of certain substances, such as opioids.

On the other hand, the researchers performed functional MRI scans on the same participants to record changes in blood flow and thus locate the areas of the brain activated when they were listening to music.

The results are unequivocal: listening to your favourite music triggers the release of opioids in several areas of the brain associated with pleasure.

This phenomenon is even more pronounced in people who report experiencing "music-induced chills", intense feelings of pleasure that can be accompanied by goose bumps, tingling or sudden emotions.



Listening to your favourite music triggers the release of opioids in several areas of the brain associated with pleasure. – PEXELSPIC

The more frequent these chills were, the higher the activity in the relevant areas of the brain.

In addition, the density of opioid receptors, which varies from person to person, directly influences how the brain responds to music.

Painkiller without side effects

In other words, the more opioid receptors we have, the stronger our emotional response to our favourite songs.

"These results show for the first time directly that listening to

music activates the brain's opioid system. The release of opioids explains why music can produce such strong feelings of pleasure, even though it is not a primary reward necessary for survival or reproduction, such as food or sexual pleasure," explained professor Lauri Nummenmaa.

University of Turku researcher Vesa Putkinen in a statement.

Much more than just a source of pleasure, music also has an amazing power to soothe.

Long observed by researchers, this analgesic effect now has a neuromodulator explanation.

"The brain's opioid system is also involved in pain relief. Based on our findings, the previously observed pain-relieving effects of music may be due to music-induced opioid responses in the brain," explained professor Lauri Nummenmaa.

These discoveries could well change the way we think about music in the field of health.

In addition to improving our understanding of the mechanisms of musical pleasure, they pave the way for innovative therapeutic approaches.

Integrating music into treatments for pain or mental disorders is no longer a far-fetched idea, but a serious avenue supported by neuroscience.

Behind the magic of a simple melody, there is a whole chemical orchestration at work in our brains.

Perhaps that is a great reason to put your headphones back on, close your eyes and let yourself be carried away by the universal, mysterious and deeply human pleasure that is music. – ETX Studio

Re-visiting demo days of Wolves

■ BY R BALA

SOME could be forgiven for thinking that black metal bands are nothing but frustrated make-up artists with an unhealthy obsession with the occult and Sir Lucifer.

Peel away the layers of corpse paint though, one will find bands with a deep respect for nature. This is most apparent when listening to the first wave of Norwegian black metal. Those pioneers of the genre were keen to illustrate the beauty of their ice cold surroundings with album art reflecting silent forests with silhouettes of trees piercing night skies conveying a profound respect for these bands' surroundings.

Such an aesthetic has been adopted by later bands, most notably by American outfit Wolves in the Throne Room (WITTR). Formed by siblings Aaron and Nathan Weaver in 2002 in the fog-covered vistas of Olympia, Washington, WITTR's musical concept was to transfer "energies of the Pacific Northwest landscape" into musical form.

The band's first recording was its 2005 demo – a black CD-R wrapped in fur with mossa inside the lyric sheet, which caused a stir in the metal underground. To date, WITTR has released seven full-length albums, two EPs and two live recordings but it all began with that initial demo.

Fans who missed out on its original release back in the day can now rejoice as WITTR has re-released this seismic recording. The band's ambition and scope is all too apparent even on this early stab at atmospheric black metal.

Although it only features three songs, the running time spans over 50 minutes and is reflective of the band's sense of musical adventure. First off, a note of warning as it is a demo, the sound is far from polished and the drums, in particular, lack the punch of later professional studio efforts. However, as far as demos goes, the sound quality is pretty acceptable and is even superior to those produced in the nascent black metal scene from northern Europe in the late 80s.

The three tracks on offer encapsulate the band's vision as well as what was to come next. *Queen of the Borrowed Light* announces the arrival of a band that can thrash with the best but also one that has something a bit more to offer apart from relentless speed and aggression.

Dagger of Amethyst Crystal is a spellbinding weave of a track that features all the usual black metal elements of anguished screams and dissonant guitars churning to create a perfect aural maelstrom.

The multiple shades and varying tones is best captured on *A Shimmering Radiance*, which clocks in at an almighty 25 minutes, taking listeners on an epic and immersive journey.

Black metal fans who feel that the genre has become a tad too polished will welcome the release of this demo. Raw, uncompromising and totally brutal, it is indeed a throwback to the genre's early years. But at the same time, the epic scale of the songs hint at the grand ambition lurking within.



Wolves in the Throne Room brings the gloom of the US Pacific Northwest to stereos worldwide. – PIC FROM FACEBOOK @WOLVESINTHETHRONEROOM



Mufasa: The Lion King (Disney+ Hotstar)
Creator: Barry Jenkins
Cast: Aaron Pierre, Kelvin Harrison Jr, Tiffany Boone
Jenkins takes us back to the Pride Lands with *Mufasa: The Lion King*, now streaming after a massive run at the global box office. Told in flashbacks by Rafiki to Simba's daughter Kiara, the film recounts the origin of Mufasa and his unlikely bond with Taka. With new music from Lin-Manuel Miranda and stunning visuals, it is a heartfelt exploration of legacy, family and finding your path. Whether you are a longtime fan or diving into the franchise for the first time, *Mufasa* stands tall among its predecessors.

Marathon night in

BY THASHINE SELVAKUMARAN

THERE is nothing better than discovering that a new season of your favourite show or a film is not only on its way but it is already here.

No teaser countdowns or frustrating delays. Just press play. Here are five titles that have officially dropped and are ready to binge. Let us look into what is new and streaming now.

► Five new series, films you can stream right now

Available on most streaming platforms, grab your popcorns, kick your feet up and get ready for a viewing marathon fest right at the comfort of your home.



Hyper Knife (Disney+ Hotstar)

Creators: Kim Jung-hyun, Kim Sun-hee
Cast: Park Eun-bin, Sul Kyung-gu, Yoon Chan-young
One of the most intriguing K-dramas of the year, *Hyper Knife* blends medical drama with noir thriller. Seok, a brilliant but disgraced neurosurgeon, performs underground surgeries while wrestling with her fall from grace. When her former mentor reappears with an impossible operation and a plea for help she must choose between revenge or redemption. Led by Eun-bin and Kyung-gu and written by Sun-hee, *Hyper Knife* delivers tension sharp enough to cut bone.



Gannibal, Season 2 (Disney+ Hotstar)

Creators: Shinzo Katayama, Hayato Kawai, Masaaki Ninomiya
Cast: Sho Kasamatsu, Takato Yonemoto, Yuya Yagira
The chilling Japanese thriller is back and it is darker than ever. In *Gannibal* Season 2, officer Daigo Agawa finds himself battling his trauma and the grotesque legacy of the Goto family. The second season digs deeper into the family's history, including the rise of Gin Goto, a figure as magnetic as she is menacing. With eerie village rituals and twisted power plays, the series remains one of the most unsettling and addictive psychological thrillers out there. All eight episodes are now available, having rolled out across March.



Mobile Suit Gundam GQuuuuuuX (Jikuuakusu) (Prime Video)

Creators: Yoshiyuki Tomino, Hajime Yatate
Cast: Ryan Colt Levy, Casey Mongillo, A.J. Beckles
April brought us a groundbreaking entry in the *Gundam* universe with *Mobile Suit Gundam GQuuuuuuX*. A collaboration between Studio Khara and Sunrise, the series introduces Amate Yuzuriha, a teenager drawn into an underground Mobile Suit battle circuit known as "Clan Battle". As she pilots the powerful GQuuuuuuX unit under the alias "Machu", a fugitive Gundam and its mysterious pilot change her path forever. With direction from Evangelion's Kazuya Tsurumaki and writing from Hideaki Anno, this is a new era for the franchise.



Moana 2 (Disney+ Hotstar)

Creators: David G. Derrick Jr., Jason Hand, Dana Ledoux Miller
Cast: Auli'i Cravalho, Dwayne Johnson, Hualalai Chung
A billion-dollar box office hit *Moana 2* brings the ocean's heroine back for a brand-new adventure. Three years after her first voyage, Moana teams up with Maui and an unlikely crew after receiving a call from her wayfinding ancestors. Together they sail into the far seas of Oceania facing unknown dangers and unlocking ancient truths. Directed by Derrick Jr, Hand and Miller, the film features a standout soundtrack from Abigail Barlow, Emily Bear, Opeteta Foa'i and Mark Mancina. Now streaming after becoming one of the highest-grossing films of the year.



Andor, Season 2 (Disney+ Hotstar)

Creator: Tony Gilroy
Cast: Diego Luna, Stellan Skarsgard, Denise Gough
The wait is over, *Andor* has returned for its second and final season. Picking up as Cassian Andor edges closer to becoming the rebel hero we meet in *Rogue One*, the new season unfolds against the growing threat of full-blown war. Split into four arcs of three episodes each, the series continues its exploration of resistance and the cost of rebellion. The first chapter premiered last week and new episodes roll out weekly. With standout performances from Luna and a stacked cast, including Skarsgard and Genevieve O'Reilly, this is prestige sci-fi that pulls no punches.

Kim back at Byron Nelson

Teen English prodigy up against World No. 1 Scheffler at CJ Cup

KRIS KIM is at an age where he's still prone to growth spurts.

For many teenagers, that means shopping for clothes. For the 17-year-old Kim, you can add new golf apparel and getting his clubs re-fit.

"I think last year I want to say I was around 5-10, I want to say. I think I'm maybe 6-foot now," Kim said yesterday, adding that he checks in with his club fitter "every six months or so."

The English prodigy made history at last year's CJ Cup Byron Nelson when he made the cut in his PGA Tour debut at age 16.

A year older and wiser, he's back at TPC Craig Ranch in McKinney, Texas, this week to compete in the tournament again on a sponsor exemption.

"I feel like mentally I'm a bit stronger compared to last year, and a bit stronger physically," Kim told reporters. "I feel like I've grown a little bit more and just hitting it a bit longer in general."

Kim shot rounds of 68 and 67 to open the tournament last year. He wound up in 65th place at 6-under at week's end.

More impressively, he was the youngest player to make the cut in any PGA Tour event since 16-year-old Kyle Suppa at the Sony Open in 2015.

Kim also beat Texas fan favourite Jordan Spieth's record at the Byron

Nelson. Kim was three months younger than Spieth was when he made the cut at the 2010 edition.

The son of Korean professional golfers, Kim was raised in Surrey, England. He said it can be tough to grow up so far away from his parents' homeland.

Kim earned a sponsorship from the South Korean conglomerate CJ Group, which became the title sponsor of the Byron Nelson last year.

Still an amateur, Kim hopes to improve on his placement from

Kris Kim. –
REUTERS/PICTA



last year, but acknowledged it will be a difficult task.

"(The course is) so different," Kim said. "The greens are a lot quicker. I feel like a lot better as well. The rough's a lot thicker as well."

"Yeah, it's definitely playing a bit tougher than last year with the wind and the weather expected as well. Should be a lot tougher than last year."

The field is also substantially strengthened by the presence of World No. 1 Scottie Scheffler. The Texan missed last year's tournament after the birth of his first child, but he will complete this week.

"I haven't had a chance to say hello just yet. I figured I'd leave him alone during his practice round," Kim said. "Yeah, he's a huge idol of mine."

– Field
Level
Media

'Boss Baby' Vaibhav, India's next superstar

VAIBHAV SURYAVANSHI (pic) was touted as Indian cricket's next superstar on Tuesday after the 14-year-old's IPL century off 35 balls shattered batting records.

Left-handed opener Vaibhav became the youngest player to hit a Twenty20 hundred in Rajasthan Royals' thumping eight-wicket win over Gujarat Titans on Monday.

"It is like a dream," the teenager said.

In only his third Indian Premier League match, he scored the second-fastest century in competition history, second only to Chris Gayle's 30-ball ton in 2013.

Nicknamed "Boss Baby", Vaibhav has drawn instant comparisons with West Indies great Gayle, who styled himself as the "Universe Boss".

Vaibhav, who made headlines when bought by Rajasthan for US\$130,500 (RM587,000) after a bidding war at the November auction when aged 13, has been fearless in the face of seasoned opponents.

He announced himself on debut earlier this month by launching his first ball in the IPL for six off experienced India pace bowler Shardul Thakur on his way to a quickfire 34 off 20 balls.

Nine days later in Jaipur, Vaibhav destroyed a bowling attack comprising India's Mohammed Siraj, Ishant Sharma and Washington Sundar, shredding reputations as he hit 94 of his 101 runs in boundaries – 11 sixes and seven fours.

"Have you ever seen anything like this?" former Australia white-ball captain Aaron Finch posted on social media. "What a talent!"

India's 1983 World Cup-winning batsman Kris Srikkanth lauded the teenager's "composure, class and courage" beyond his years, adding: "Indian cricket's next superstar is here."

India's T20 skipper and Mumbai Indians batsman Suryakumar Yadav said it had been "carnage of an innings" and "absolutely insane!"

After the game on Monday night, Vaibhav, who comes from a modest family, credited his success to his parents.

"Whatever I am today, I owe it to my parents," he said in a video posted on the official IPL handle on X.

"My mother used to wake up early because I had to go to practise, and she used to prepare food for me. She would sleep for only three hours. My father left his work for me." – AFP



Narine leads KKR from the front

WEST INDIES' Sunil Narine put in a fine all-round performance to keep holders Kolkata Knight Riders alive in the IPL with a tense 14-run win over Delhi Capitals yesterday.

Narine smashed 27 off 16 balls in Kolkata's 204-9 and then returned figures of 3-29 with his mystery spin to restrict the opposition to 190-9 at Delhi's Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

Delhi's South African star Faf du Plessis top-scored with 62 off 45 balls, but his knock was in vain as the hosts regularly lost wickets.

Delhi are fourth in the 10-team table. Kolkata, who won their third title last year, stay seventh with four wins and five defeats.

The top four teams at the end of the league phase will move into the playoffs of the popular and lucrative T20 tournament.

Du Plessis hit back for Delhi after Abhishek Porel's early departure, but Kolkata had the opposition in trouble at 60-3 when KL Rahul was run out off a direct hit by Narine.

Du Plessis, who returned to the team in the previous match after missing four games due to injury, raised his fifty in 31

balls and put on 76 runs with skipper Axar Patel, who hit a quickfire 43.

Narine broke the stand to get Axar back in the dugout and five balls later bowled Tristan Stubbs for one to tilt the game in KKR's favour.

He then got the prized wicket of Du Plessis in his final over to dim Delhi's hopes, but Vipraj Nigam smashed 38 off 19 balls to keep the chase alive until the last over when he fell to Andre Russell.

Earlier, Narine and fellow opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz set it up for Kolkata in their brisk stand of 48 from 18 balls.

Narine got off the mark with a first-ball six off Sri Lankan pace bowler Dushmantha Chameera and along with Gurbaz got 25 runs from the second over.

Starc got Afghanistan's Gurbaz caught behind for 26.

Delhi struck back when leg-spinner Nigam trapped Narine lbw in his first over and Axar had skipper Ajinkya Rahane, who made a 14-ball 26, lbw with his left-arm spin.

Angkrish Raghuvanshi, a 20-year-old up and coming batter who made 44, stood firm and, with Rinku Singh, added 61 runs. – AFP

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Notices

**IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT JOHOR BAHRU
IN THE STATE OF JOHOR DARUL TAKZIM, MALAYSIA
ORIGINATING SUMMONS NO.: JA-28JM-1-01/2025**

In the matter of Q Development Sdn. Bhd. (Company No.: 201801009616 (1271630-U));
And
In the matter of the Judicial Management and the appointment of Judicial Manager pursuant to Section 404, Section 405 and Section 410 of the Companies Act 2016;
And
In the matter of Companies (Corporate Rescue Mechanism) Rules, 2018
And
In the matter of Rules of Court 2012 and the inherent jurisdiction of the Honourable Court.
BETWEEN
M&R ARCHITECTS SDN. BHD.
(COMPANY NO.: 199701001198 (416694-M))
...APPLICANT
AND
Q DEVELOPMENT SDN. BHD.
(COMPANY NO.: 201801009616 (1271630-U))
...RESPONDENT

NOTICE OF JUDICIAL MANAGEMENT ORDER

Notice is hereby given that on the 25th day of April, 2025, an order for placing the above-named company i.e. Q Development Sdn. Bhd. (Company No.: 201801009616 (1271630-U)) under the judicial management has been made by the Court and the relevant particulars are given as follows:-

(1)	Date of filing of application for judicial management order:	27th January, 2025
(2)	Applicant's solicitor:	The Chambers of Cheong 8-02-15, Sunway Nexis, No. 1, Jalan PJU 5/1, Kota Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan
(3)	Date of judicial management order:	25.04.2025
(4)	Registered office of the above-named company	Q Development Sdn.Bhd. (Company No.: 201801009616 (1271630-U)) Level 7, Quill 9, 112 Jalan Prof. Khoo Kay Kim, 46300 Petaling Jaya, Selangor And/or B-3-17, Block B, Merchant Square, No. 1, Jalan Tropicana Selatan, PJU 3, 47410 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

Dated this 29th April, 2025

The Chambers of Cheong
.....
(Solicitors for the Applicant)
Name of solicitor for the Applicant:
CHEONG HENG WAI
B-2-15, Sunway Nexis,
No. 1, Jalan PJU 5/1, Kota
Damansara, 47810
Petaling Jaya,
Selangor

NOTICE OF JUDICIAL MANAGEMENT ORDER is prepared by The Chambers of Cheong, solicitors for the Applicant whose address for service is at B-02-15, Sunway Nexis, No.1, Jalan PJU 5/1, Kota Damansara, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.
03 - 7624 4862 03 - 7624 4963 legal.tccoc@gmail.com
(Ref: TC00A/00641/25/APEOC/JM/KC/HL)

BRIEFS

Fury ready to come out of retirement

TYSON FURY told Oleksandr Usyk that he is ready to come out of retirement for a third fight, telling the Ukrainian that he will be ready "anytime any place." Fury quit professional boxing in January after losing their second bout, but has now laid out demands for their trilogy to be completed in the United Kingdom. Usyk will fight Daniel Dubois at Wembley Stadium on July 19 in a rematch and claimed he has one more bout in him before retirement. When asked who that last contest could be with, Usyk told *The Stomping Ground*: "Maybe it's Tyson Fury. Maybe it's Anthony Joshua." Pressed further on the prospect of taking Fury on again, the 38-year-old added: "He's not retired. I think Tyson will continue training, continue boxing, because he's a great man. Yes, Tyson Fury... a lot of speak – blah blah blah – but it's good. Great man, wow." Fury commented on that interview and on *Instagram* and fired back: "Beat the f***er two times and the world knows the truth. Anytime any place. sucher(sic) uk next time 100k people."

Nadal tips Alcaraz to enjoy 'one of the best' careers

RAFAEL NADAL has backed Carlos Alcaraz to have "one of the best tennis careers of all time". The 21-year-old already has four Grand Slams to his name and is one of the best players in the world at the moment, and a victory at the Australian Open would see him complete a career grand slam. Nadal has now thrown his support behind his fellow Spaniard, telling *CNN*: "All of us received the pressure from the media and from the hope that people have about you, but I think at the end, we are humans and we know how to handle that. I don't think for Carlos it's a big deal holding that pressure. He's a great player and has a great family behind him. I think he's doing great and he's having an amazing career and he's going to win much more if he stays out of injury – that's the most important thing. I wish and I really believe that he's going to have one of the best careers of all time."

Tsunoda gets Marko backing

RED BULL chief Helmut Marko has praised the progress of Yuki Tsunoda since he replaced Liam Lawson. "His speed is right, as is his approach," he told *Speedweek*. "When things get serious in qualifying, he loses time to Max, but the normal margin is two or three tenths. Tsunoda goes his own way. A crash like the one with Gasly on the first lap in Saudi Arabia, that can happen, from our calculations he could have finished sixth. And that's a huge step forward, because before him, our second car rarely came close to the top 10."

Checo backed for F1 return

SERGIO PEREZ has been tipped to return to F1 by Sauber team principal Jonathan Wheatley. The pair previously worked together at Red Bull and Wheatley told *Formula.Hu*: "I think he's more than capable of coming back and very quickly getting up to speed in a new team. Checo was in one of the toughest seats in Formula 1 last year, next to Max. I was always surprised how he could rebuild himself and come back stronger from each setback. He seems to have an incredible ability to rebuild, he's just got a great way with him, with the team, and the team naturally responds well to him."

Courier worried for Djokovic after Rome pullout

NOVAK DJOKOVIC'S shock withdrawal from next week's Italian Open should be a huge worry for the 24-times Grand Slam champion's fans as he heads to the French Open without winning a match on clay this season, former Roland Garros winner Jim Courier said.

Djokovic, who turns 38 three days before the year's second Grand Slam begins on May 25, has been woefully out of form and was comprehensively beaten in his opening matches at Masters tournaments in Monte Carlo and Madrid this month.

The Serb was expected to jumpstart his clay campaign in Rome before returning to Paris,

where he won Olympic gold last year, but yesterday he said he was skipping the Masters 1000 event, without providing a reason.

"That's troubling. It's worrying for me as a Novak fan," Courier, who won back-to-back Roland Garros titles in 1991 and 1992, said on the Tennis Channel.

The American added that Rome would have been the perfect venue for Djokovic to find his rhythm as it had similar conditions to Paris without the challenge of playing at altitude in Madrid.

"If you're going to play one between Madrid and Rome (then) Rome would be the one you

would want to play to get ready for Roland Garros," he said.

Djokovic, who is chasing a 100th tour-level title and first since his ATP Finals triumph in 2023, said after his loss in Madrid that he was trying to come to terms with a "new reality" in tennis where he is just "trying to win a match or two".

"I don't know what to make of it, but I don't like the way it feels in the gut," Courier added.

"It's a very strange thing to announce a pullout now, well in advance of it, and we'll see what it all means when we get to Roland Garros." – Reuters

Zverev crashes in Madrid

WORLD NO. 2 Alexander Zverev was knocked out of the Madrid Open in the round of 16 by Argentina's Francisco Cerundolo yesterday as defending women's champion Iga Swiatek had a few scares before advancing to the quarterfinals.

Cerundolo, ranked 21, beat the German – a two-time former winner in Madrid – 7-5, 6-3 to repeat his feat from last year.

Swiatek reached her fifth WTA 1000 quarterfinal of the season with a hard-fought 6-0, 6-7 (3-7), 6-4 victory over 13th-seeded Diana Shnaider.

Argentinian Cerundolo will face Jakub Mensik in the quarterfinals after the Czech's straightforward 6-3, 6-2 victory over Kazakhstan's Alexander Bublik.

"I didn't play terrible, he just played better than me," Zverev said.

Matched game for game in the first set, Zverev offered up two set points to Cerundolo, who took the opening set at the second time of asking.

An over-hitting Zverev was broken immediately in the second set, allowing the 20th seed an advantage he built on to lead 4-1.

Zverev flung his racket to the ground in frustration, but Cerundolo kept his calm and served out for the match.

"I'm super happy because I know he loves playing here. He told me last year when I beat him," said Cerundolo.

"He's an incredible player. I have a great relationship with him, so super happy to get another win and to be in the quarterfinals again."

After a nationwide blackout cancelled the majority of play at the Caja Magica on Tuesday,

... as Swiatek advances into last eight despite wobble

power was restored at the venue yesterday morning, with matches commencing at midday.

Bulgaria's Grigor Dimitrov finally completed a 6-4, 7-6 (7-3) win over Britain's Jacob Fearnley, converting his third match point some 27 hours after his first.

"That shows you how quickly anything can change, in life as well. From one point, you're serving for the match, from the other you're about to receive, and then the lights went out," said Dimitrov, who will face lucky loser Gabriel Diallo in the fourth round.

Former finalist Matteo Berrettini retired after dropping the opening set tiebreak to Jack Draper due to an abdominal injury. Draper will face American Tommy Paul in the last 16.

Sixth-seeded Alex de Minaur defeated Canadian Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 7-6 (7-3) and next meets Italian

Lorenzo Musetti.

Frances Tiafoe, the 16th seed, beat Alexandre Muller 6-3, 6-3 to book a fourth-round meeting with Novak Djokovic's conqueror, Matteo Arnaldi.

In the women's tournament, Swiatek saved 11 of 13 break points en route to a two-hour 34-minute victory over Shnaider that sent her through to a last-eight showdown with Australian Open champion Madison Keys.

Asked about the power outage, the 23-year-old Swiatek admitted she enjoyed being off the grid for a few hours.

"Honestly, I liked yesterday, I think the whole world was more relaxed kind of, obviously the people who didn't lose because of this. I had time to rest," said Swiatek.

"Honestly, I just chilled and used the time not thinking about what I should do."

Women's world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka eased past 44th-ranked American Peyton Stearns 6-2, 6-4 to reach the last eight. – AFP

Iga Swiatek returns the ball to Russia's Diana Shnaider (not pictured) during their 2025 WTA Tour Madrid Open match. – AFP/CIC



'Aston Martin may have 'get out' clause to sign Max'

ASTON MARTIN'S audacious bid to snatch Max Verstappen from the clutches of Red Bull has been backed by Johnny Herbert, who believes the British team's aggressive pursuit is justified.

With ambitions of becoming a Formula 1 powerhouse, Aston Martin, under the financial muscle of billionaire Lawrence Stroll and Saudi oil giants Aramco, are reportedly ready to table a staggering £75 million-a-year (RM 413m) offer to lure Verstappen into a three-year contract.

Despite Red Bull's Christian Horner expressing confidence that his leading man will remain with the team until at least 2026, the arrival of F1 design guru Adrian Newey at Aston Martin has fuelled speculation about a potential shake-up.

Herbert highlighted the significance of the

Saudis' involvement with Aston Martin: "It's very interesting if the Saudis get involved with Aston Martin," he said.

"If you had the money, you would pay all you have to get Max Verstappen on your team."

Herbert praised Verstappen's current form, saying, "He's still, by far, the best driver on the grid at the moment. He's still out-qualifying the McLarens, which is just a little faster."

Looking ahead, Herbert speculated on Aston Martin's prospects: "If Aston Martin gets their development right for next year, you could see them become the next team to beat."

"But, they have a big hill to climb. If you have Verstappen and Adrian Newey at the top of their games, then it will be hard to beat them, but that isn't a guarantee."

"Verstappen will be thinking where is the best place for him, and when can he leave. Helmut Marko alluded to a get-out clause, which could come into effect this season, it would be perfect timing for Verstappen."

"I hope he chooses the right team so he can keep battling at the very top for the foreseeable future."

"We want him and the likes of Oscar Piastri to really fight for the title, which can only be good for the sport."

"Lawrence (Stroll) is a shrewd businessman, and he's moving Aston Martin towards being a winning team."

"If he's getting closer with Saudi Arabia and has the best driver, we could see that plan come to fruition." – Express Newspapers

Bodo/Glimt's historic run no flash in the pan

BODO/GLIMT'S historic run to the semifinals of this season's Europa League has not happened by chance after a remarkable success story that has been years in the making.

Tomorrow, the club from just north of the Arctic Circle will become the first Norwegian team to play in the semifinals of a major European competition when they take on Tottenham Hotspur in the first leg of their last-four tie.

It is a stunning achievement for a side from a town with a population of barely 50,000 situated almost 1,200kms, or 16 hours, by road north of Norway's capital Oslo.

What should be a frozen footballing backwater has been placed firmly on the map thanks to the performances of Kjetil Knutsen's team over the last half-dozen years.

On April 17, Bodo/Glimt – "glimt" means "flash" in Norwegian – pulled off their most stunning result yet when they beat Lazio on penalties in Rome in their Europa League quarterfinal.

They won 2-0 at home in the first leg a week earlier thanks to two goals by Ulrik Saltnes, albeit only after snow from a blizzard had been cleared off the pitch at their 8,200-capacity Aspmyr Stadion.

They then weathered the storm on the pitch in Italy in the return to progress in the shoot-out and set up a tie against Tottenham.

Bodo/Glimt were runners-up in 2019 before winning their first title in 2020. They have now won four of the last five domestic championships.

That form has seen them become regulars in Europe under Knutsen, who took them to the quarterfinals of the Europa Conference League in 2022, notably beating Jose Mourinho's Roma 6-1 in a group game and eliminating Celtic.

They have had three failed attempts to go beyond the qualifying rounds of the Champions League but there have been glamour ties against Arsenal, Ajax and Manchester United.

Now, reaching a semifinal means they have eclipsed Rosenborg, who got to the Champions League quarterfinals in 1997.

"I don't believe in miracles, I believe in our journey," said Knutsen after ousting Lazio.

The future looks bright, and so does the present, with 3,000 Bodo/Glimt supporters set to back their team against Tottenham in London tomorrow. – AFP

Spurs' Europa League lifeline

Postecoglou on borrowed time after dismal season

ANGE POSTECOGLOU can still make good on his claim that he always wins a trophy in his second season but he must find a way to inspire struggling Tottenham for a shot at Europa League glory.

Spurs suffered their 19th defeat of a demoralising Premier League campaign at Anfield on Sunday, crumbling 5-1 as swaggering Liverpool were crowned champions.

The predictable loss left them 16th in the table – on course for their worst League finish since they were relegated from the English top flight in 1977, though they cannot go down.

Spurs host Norwegian champions Bodo/Glimt in the first leg of their Europa League semifinal tomorrow (3am Malaysian time) with all their eggs now in one basket.

If they come through that they will face either fellow strugglers Manchester United or Athletic Bilbao in the final in Bilbao, with a chance to win their first European trophy for 41 years.

Tottenham manager Postecoglou made eight changes at Anfield from the team that had lost to Nottingham Forest the

previous week, and is open about where his priorities now lie.

The Australian has been hit hard by injuries this season but has nearly a full roster of players available for tomorrow's first leg in London.

His main concern is over the fitness of captain Son Heung-min, who has missed the past four games with a foot injury.

A glimmer of hope for Tottenham is that Bodo/Glimt themselves will be weakened as a result of suspensions and manager Kjetil Knutsen also has injury worries.

A frustrated Postecoglou 59, has acknowledged the "general sentiment" points to a Spurs exit even if he wins the Europa League to end Tottenham's 17-year wait for silverware.

"We finished fifth last year, but it's not a good story," he said. "A better story is my tenure has been a disaster and it continues to be."

"I just think that the kind of hysteria that is surrounding what's happening at the moment is all premeditated for a certain outcome. Hopefully we can defy that."

Postecoglou arrived from Celtic after an unhappy end to Antonio Conte's reign, in July 2023.

The former Australia boss made the best start to life in the Premier League of any manager in the competition's history, winning eight of his first 10 Premier League games with his "Ange Ball" brand of attacking football.

Smitten Tottenham chairman Daniel Levy even declared to a fans' forum in September 2023: "We've got our Tottenham back."

But Spurs wobbled and eventually collapsed badly at the end of the campaign, losing five of their last seven Premier League games to miss out on a Champions League spot.

This season has been grim for the club and Postecoglou cut a dejected figure when he faced the press following Sunday's defeat at Anfield.

But despite Tottenham's woes he does not believe he will have to work hard to lift his players for their Europa League date with destiny.

"There's a massive opportunity," he said. "We'll put all our energies, efforts and focus into that and try to push on to a European final." – AFP



Paris St Germain coach Luis Enrique. – REUTERS/SPIC

PSG not getting carried away, insists Enrique

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN coach Luis Enrique hailed his "incredible" team after Ousmane Dembele's early goal gave them a 1-0 win away to Arsenal in the first leg of their Champions League semifinal yesterday, but insisted there would be no euphoria in their ranks ahead of next week's return.

"I think we showed the mentality that we show in every match and that mentality is a great pleasure for me to see as coach of Paris Saint-Germain," the Spaniard told broadcaster *Canal Plus* following the game at the Emirates Stadium.

Dembele's goal was all that separated the teams, although substitute Goncalo Ramos hit the bar late on, while Mikel Merino had an effort disallowed for offside at the other end early in the second half.

"I can't complain because it was a game with a lot of strong emotions," Luis Enrique said when asked if he regretted Ramos not converting his late opportunity.

"It is difficult to play in that atmosphere, which was incredible. I think the goal early in the game was important for our confidence and I am happy because you can

win or lose a game, but the mentality and ambition that our team shows is incredible."

PSG now know that a draw in Paris next Thursday (3am), will be enough for them to advance to the second Champions League final in their history, a year after they lost to Borussia Dortmund in the last four.

"The players will not get carried away," insisted Luis Enrique, who won the Champions League as coach of Barcelona in 2015.

"They know how difficult it is to win a game like this. We need to try to control our emotions, and play our game in front of our supporters, make the most of the strength they give us. It will be tight, but we will be ready."

PSG will hope that Dembele is fit for the second leg after he had to come off in the second half.

"I don't know if he will be ready. If Ousmane can play it's better, but we will still have a proper team even if he can't play," added Luis Enrique.

"It is about the team above all. It is a great result and it was a great collective performance. We showed the desire we have to get to the final," said playmaker Vitinha. – AFP

Djurgarden eyeing Chelsea upset in Conference League

DJURGARDEN are targeting a seismic Conference League shock against Chelsea tomorrow (3am), when they will become the first Swedish team to play in a European semifinal for 38 years.

They achieved the "unbelievable" feat with a dramatic extra-time victory at Rapid Vienna in the last eight, which was their first quarterfinal in continental competition since a defeat by Hibernian in the 1955-56 European Cup.

The last club from Sweden to reach the semis in Europe was Gothenburg on their way to the 1987 UEFA Cup title.

Trailing 1-0 from the first leg, Djurgarden turned their tie against Rapid around with a 4-1

second-leg victory in the Austrian capital, helped by an early red card for home midfielder Mamadou Sangare.

"It's one of a kind and it's unbelievable to go through from this," coach Jani Honkavaara said.

"I believe in it and I believe the players believe in it. It's an unbelievable feeling."

Japanese teenager Keita Kosugi scored a crucial goal with 13 minutes remaining to force the added half-hour, before a double from Tobias Gulliksen completed the job.

Djurgarden will be hoping to pull off a momentous victory in arguably the biggest game in the club's history when they welcome two-time European champions Chelsea to their

home on the island in central Stockholm.

"I have never played against such a good team. Of course it's going to be a tough game but we can beat Chelsea as a team," insisted Kosugi.

Honkavaara's side have been hit by a series of injuries, with forward Patric Aslund and midfielder Oskar Fallenius among those sidelined, while former Sweden international Albin Ekdal is not part of the Conference League squad.

First-choice goalkeeper Jacob Rinne is also now a doubt after missing training with illness.

"It's difficult to understand that we go – hopefully not with 14 players – against Chelsea," Honkavaara said.

Djurgarden would keep alive their hopes of becoming only the second Swedish team to win a European trophy should they get past Chelsea and set up a final against either Real Betis or Fiorentina in Wroclaw on May 28.

Chelsea will be red-hot favourites, though, and a far tougher proposition than Djurgarden have faced so far.

Their previous beaten opponents in the Conference League this season also include Welsh club The New Saints and Iceland's Vikingur Reykjavik.

But another win this week for a club known for its links with the Swedish nightclub and rave scene would spark quite the party. – AFP

RUBEN AMORIM has bet the house on the Europa League after Manchester United's disastrous Premier League campaign, knowing this season and next hinge on winning the competition.

The Portuguese manager took over from the sacked Erik ten Hag in November, with United a miserable 13th in the table. Now they are 14th.

That the former Sporting Lisbon boss is not under more intense pressure is largely due to a general appreciation of the scale of the task he faces at Old Trafford.

United, so dominant domestically under former manager Alex Ferguson, will finish the season with their lowest points tally in the Premier League era.

But Amorim's team can still rescue their campaign with victory in the Europa League, which brings with

Win or bust for Devils

Only Europa League victory can salvage Amorim's season at United

it a place in next season's Champions League.

A return to Europe's top club competition could transform the future of United in the short term, boosting the coffers and making Old Trafford a more attractive destination for much-needed new recruits.

But United face a tough task in the semifinals against Athletic Bilbao, fourth in La Liga, who have the added incentive of knowing the final will be held at their stadium.

"San Mames will roar. We want to keep this dream alive," Bilbao tweeted this week ahead of tomorrow's (3am Malaysian time) first leg in the Basque Country.

The winners of the tie will face either troubled Tottenham or Norwegian champions Bodo/Glimt in the final.

United produced a comeback for the ages to see off Lyon in the quarterfinals, scoring three times in seven minutes in front of a disbelieving Old Trafford crowd.

But they have since returned to type, losing to Wolves and drawing at Bournemouth in the Premier League as

Liverpool equalled their record of 20 English top-flight titles.

Amorim, 40, admits winning the Europa League would be a huge shot in the arm for his struggling side.

"In this context, winning something like that is massive for us for our confidence - and then, to the future, to the next season," he said.

"To play in the Champions League (makes the situation) completely different. The environment, the way we are going to face the summer, the budget for the summer - everything is connected with this competition."

Bizarrely, despite their appalling Premier League form, United are the only team unbeaten in the Champions League and Europa League this season.

The Red Devils were in complete control of the second leg of their quarterfinal against Lyon at Old Trafford before familiar frailties returned to haunt them.

They pulled off a miracle to win the second leg 5-4 to seal the tie 7-6 on aggregate but Amorim will know that lightning is unlikely to

strike twice and his side must impose themselves.

One plus for United is that Rasmus Hojlund scored just his second Premier League goal since early December in a 1-1 draw at Bournemouth on Sunday.

Captain Bruno Fernandes, United's top-scorer with 17 goals in all competitions this season, said he hoped that the goal would give the Denmark striker confidence.

"Everyone that plays here who has the qualities to get into the box to score goals has to do it," he told MUTV.

"Everyone is very happy to see a striker scoring and hopefully it's going to give him a little bit of a push for what's coming" - AFP

SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 5960/2025 DATE: 30/04/2025 (WED)

STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD. 196901000099 (84202)

TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

1st Prize 2448

2nd Prize 3695

3rd Prize 1275

Special	Consolation
0770 4606	2193 9332
0338 3994	0349 7654
6244 2263	5745 8448
2243 3699	3083 3550
1382 4924	3168 7963

4D JACKPOT

Jackpot 1 **RM 14,738,858.39**

2448 3695	3695 2448
2448 1275	1275 2448
3695 1275	1275 3695

Jackpot 2 **RM 302,420.24**

Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D Zodiac

1st Prize 2448	+ DRAGON
2nd Prize 3695	
3rd Prize 1275	
4th Prize Special Prize	
5th Prize Consolation Prize	
6th Prize Any 4D drawn number	

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

5D 1ST 4 5 7 1 0

2ND 0 7 6 7 0	4TH 5 7 1 0
3RD 3 1 1 0 8	5TH 7 1 0
	6TH 1 0

6D 1ST 9 3 3 4 3 5

2ND 9 3 3 4 3	or 3 3 4 3 5
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4TH 9 3 3	or 4 3 5
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Star 6/50 Jackpot 2

RM 104,343

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Inaki Williams (left) and Nico Williams. - REUTERS/SPIC



Home final dream for Williams brothers

LED by brothers Inaki and Nico Williams, Athletic Bilbao find Premier League giants Manchester United between them and the San Mames Europa League final they have been dreaming of all season.

The Basque side, who to this day still depend on players who were born or developed in the region, have never lifted a European trophy and to do so in their own stadium would be a day without parallel for Athletic.

Last year, *Los Leones* won the Copa del Rey to end a 40-year wait for a major trophy, beating Mallorca in Seville and then launching the famous "Gabarra" boat on the city's river for the first time since.

An estimated one million fans joined the celebrations, or followed in a flotilla of their own, to get a glimpse of their heroes - and everyone is desperate to do it again.

"This team is stratospheric, like when we got to the Copa final and now this Europa League semifinal," said Nico Williams.

The Spain international believes the celebrations would go even further if Athletic can dispatch United and defeat either Tottenham or surprise package Bodo/Glimt in the final.

"The team is ambitious, we are hungry to do a lot more - Bilbao would ignite and I hope we reach this final," he continued.

"I am living a dream, since I was little I wanted to be here, playing in huge games like these.

"I could not be prouder of the team and the people that are around me."

One of those is his older brother, Ghana striker Inaki Williams. The 30-year-old is enjoying the season of his life at Athletic on the right wing, the opposite flank to Nico, 22.

While the younger sibling's career has just started to take flight, with Nico scoring in the Euro 2024 final against England on the back of his breakout season, winning the Europa League might be the crowning achievement of Inaki's.

"Only Oscar (De Marcos, Athletic defender) has had the chance to play in a Europa League semifinal (before)," said Inaki.

"Everyone else - we are really waiting for it to come, we have had many spectacular nights in San Mames in Europe.

"We have to face this game with maximum desire and maximum respect." - AFP

WINNING NUMBERS

PAYMENT GUARANTEED IN FULL

Draw Date: 30/04/25 (Wed) Draw No: 5907/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

1+3D SUPER1+3D

1st Prize 0653

2nd Prize 1314

3rd Prize 7418

Starters	Consolation
9564 6996	4918 6774
2822 9487	9518 4930
5875 7075	9769 2786
7808 2200	1713 1010
4877 5687	1699 7287

1+3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 RM25,253,162.80

0653 + 1314	1314 + 0653
0653 + 7418	7418 + 0653
1314 + 7418	7418 + 1314

Jackpot 2 RM334,937.30

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

3+3D Bonus

1st Prize 150 653 + SNAKE	1st Prize Bonus RM140,000.00
2nd Prize 961 314 + TIGER	2nd Prize Bonus RM982,611.00
3rd Prize 087 418 + BOAR	3rd Prize Bonus RM2,051,506.00

Starters	Consolation
749 564 656 996	184 918 846 774
292 822 439 487	369 518 754 930
165 875 777 075	069 769 592 786
577 808 592 200	281 713 891 010
034 877 155 687	261 699 507 287

3D

1st Prize 653	2nd Prize 314	3rd Prize 418
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3D Jackpot

Jackpot RM610,225.90

653 + 314 + 418	314 + 418 + 653
653 + 418 + 314	418 + 653 + 314
314 + 653 + 418	418 + 314 + 653

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

HSSB 1+3D1RM747k, 1+3D2RM277k&3D1RM1.150m won on 29/4/25!

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TOUCHLINES

CHELSEA are interested in a summer move for Aston Villa forward Morgan Rogers, 22, as they want the England international to bolster their attack.

REAL MADRID have made Arsenal's French defender William Saliba, 24, their top defensive target this summer.

LIVERPOOL want Bournemouth defensive duo Dean Huijsen, 20, and Milos Kerkez, 21, plus Eintracht Frankfurt striker Hugo Ekitike, 22, to bolster their squad and help defend their Premier League title.

ITALY midfielder Sandro Tonali is planning to stay at Newcastle United for the long term, despite the 24-year-old being linked with a return to his homeland.

MANCHESTER CITY do not intend to let 29-year-old England midfielder Jack Grealish leave the club on loan in the summer.

CITY and Liverpool are interested in signing Italy right-back Andrea Cambiaso, 25, who appears set to leave Juventus this summer.

MARCUS RASHFORD could return early to Manchester United from his loan spell at Aston Villa after the 27-year-old England forward suffered a potentially season-ending hamstring injury.

Rudiger given six-game ban for throwing ice at ref

REAL MADRID defender Antonio Rudiger has been given a six-match ban for throwing an object at the referee during their Copa del Rey final loss to Barcelona.

Rudiger and Real teammate Lucas Vazquez, who had both been substituted, were shown straight red cards in Seville for angrily reacting to a foul given against Kylian Mbappe shortly before the final whistle.

Referee Ricardo de Burgos Bengoetxea said in his report that centreback Rudiger, 32, was dismissed for "throwing an object from the technical area, which missed me".

BBC Sport columnist Guillem Balague reported that Rudiger threw an ice cube at the official, external.

The report by the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF), external said the Germany defender had been given a six-game suspension "for minor violence against the referees".

All six games of Rudiger's suspension will be served in league matches, meaning that it will extend until the start of next season.

He will be banned for the final five games in La Liga this campaign, and for the opening game of the 2025-26 campaign.

"There's definitely no excuse for my behaviour last night. I'm very sorry for that," Rudiger said on his social media accounts after the match.

"We played a very good game from the 2nd half on. After 111 minutes I was not able to help my team anymore and before the final whistle I did a mistake. Sorry again to the referee and to everyone I have disappointed last night."

According to the RFEF, this apology was used as attempted mitigation by Real for a reduction in Rudiger's ban. - Agencies

Upbeat despite defeat

Sivasangari hopes to carry Zurich momentum into World Championships

NATIONAL SQUASH player S. Sivasangari believes her runner-up finish at the Grasshopper Cup 2025 in Zurich, Switzerland, on Sunday is a step in the right direction as she continues to grow in the understanding of her game.

Although she fell short in the final against world No. 1 Nouran Gohar of Egypt, 7-11, 12-14, 9-11, the World No. 9 hopes to carry the momentum into the 2024-2025 PSA (Professional Squash Association) World Championships to be held in Chicago, the United States from May 9-17.

"I want to take this momentum and work hard these few days, and hope to do well there," she said in a statement on Tuesday.

The 26-year-old will open her World Championships campaign against Spanish player Marta Dominguez.

This will be the first meeting between both Sivasangari and Dominguez, ranked 53rd in the world.

Meanwhile, Sivasangari also said she was encouraged by her

performance throughout the Grasshopper Cup 2025 and is taking valuable lessons from the 42-minute final battle at Zurich Hauptbahnhof's glass court.

"I am happy with the way I played at the Grasshopper Cup. But obviously, I feel I could have done better in the finals," she added.

Sivasangari, who's had been impressive in the lead up to the final, made a spate of mistakes in the first game but the Malaysian reduced the error count in the second as she stood toe-to-toe with the world champion.

Sivasangari had three game ball chances but couldn't convert any of those as she aimed to level the match.

A stroke decision in favour of Nouran in the tiebreak saw her double her match lead after Sivasangari failed to seize on her opportunities.

Trailblazing by two games, Sivasangari stormed in an early lead in the third but Nouran displayed her qualities to overturn the deficit and secure the first Grasshopper Cup of her career.

"The second game was crucial.



Jazeman to pilot Aston Martin at Super GT Series

MALAYSIAN motorsport star Jazeman Jaafar is set to make an exciting debut in the SUPER GT series at the Sepang International Circuit, Sepang, from June 26-28.

Jazeman, in a statement on Tuesday, said that he will be partnering with rising Chinese driver Kerong Li under the Earl Bamber Motorsport (EBM) banner.

The duo will pilot the formidable Aston Martin Vantage GT3 EVO, marking a significant and thrilling entry for EBM in the highly competitive GT300 class.

"The biggest challenge is understanding the tyres. In SUPER GT, the tyre regulations are open, so having Michelin onboard gives us a strong package.

"I've driven the Aston Martin Vantage

before, but not with the updated EVO kit. I've been made to understand the aerodynamics has seen huge improvements, and we're ready to take on the challenge at our home race, flying the Malaysian flag high," he said.

Jazeman, one of Malaysia's most decorated international racers, boasts an impressive resume that includes campaigns in the FIA (International Automobile Federation) World Endurance Championship, the 24 Hours of Le Mans, and the GT World Challenge, as well as serving as a Development Driver for the Mercedes-AMG Petronas Formula 1 Team.

SUPER GT returns to Malaysia after a 12-year absence, and the race weekend is expected to attract 162 million broadcast and online viewers worldwide. - Bernama

Big draw for Muaythai tournaments in Kuching

MUAYTHAI exponents from seven other countries are among the 250 participants entered for the 2025 Borneo Cup Muaythai Championship held simultaneously with the Sarawak TYT (Yang Dipertua Negeri) Cup Muaythai Championship from today to Sunday at the Kuching Waterfront.

Tournament organiser Sarawak Muaythai Association (PMNS) said the foreign fighters, from Indonesia, Brunei, the Philippines, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Yemen and Iran, will face formidable bouts against Malaysians.

"They will fight in 130 bouts in the Muaythai Muaysport category and 16 Superfight Pro matches, which will feature a line-up of great fighters," said PMNS president Jumaat Ibrahim in a press conference in Kuching on Tuesday.

According to him, the introduction of the

2025 Borneo Cup provides something different for this year's event, and it is open to all participating clubs, while the Sarawak TYT Cup, in its ninth edition, is for clubs in Malaysia.

He said the tournament, which has international endorsement, is also the best platform for exposure of Malaysian exponents, notably from Sarawak, to hone their skills on the international stage.

Jumaat said the tournament will kick off with an introduction session for participants and teams as well as martial arts performances starting at 7pm today. The Muaysport, semi-pro and several professional matches start at 8am tomorrow.

There will also be electronic sports matches with 256 participants, in addition to a wrestling showcase and the TYT Cup Muaythai Fun Walk as side events. - Bernama

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Winning Results

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Draw No: 197/25

Date: 30/04/2025

4D Classic

1st Prize	1856
2nd Prize	8849
3rd Prize	5903

SPECIAL	CONSOlation
8659 4151	3937 4756
4719 5878	3245 5208
3097 5093	5049 7464
4366 6086	9145 0804
2184 0958	2566 5307

4D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 **RM10,466,990.32**

1856 + 8849	1856 + 5903
8849 + 1856	8849 + 5903
5903 + 1856	5903 + 8849

Jackpot 2 **RM143,016.94**

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2nd Prize

RM1,000 EVERY DAY for 100 days

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Jackpot 1 **RM11,489,278.39**

Jackpot 1 - Group 1 + Golden Number

Jackpot 2 **RM100,000.00**

Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

GROUP 1	5 6 4 9 0 3
GROUP 2	5 6 4 9 0 OR 6 4 9 0 3
GROUP 3	5 6 4 9 OR 4 9 0 3
GROUP 4	5 6 OR 9 0 3
GROUP 5	5 6 OR 9 0 3
	OR 4 9
GOLDEN NUMBER	0 8

All jackpot amounts stated above are for this Draw. Subject to T&Cs of the Scheme. Please visit to www.magnum4d.my for more info. THE BIGGER PLAY IS TO PLAY RESPONSIBLY.



Arsenal's Mikel Merino (left), Paris Saint-Germain's Desire Doue (centre) and Jakub Kiwior fight for the ball during their Champions League semifinal first-leg match. - AFP/PIC

'Only half-time'

Arteta insists Arsenal can 'do something special' in second leg

MIKEL ARTETA insisted Arsenal are capable of producing a special moment to overturn their first-leg defeat against Paris St Germain and reach the Champions League final.

Arsenal will head to the French capital next week trailing by a single goal in the last-four fixture after Ousmane Dembele stunned the Emirates when he struck inside four minutes.

Although Mikel Merino had a second-half goal ruled out for offside, PSG substitute Goncalo Ramos struck David Raya's crossbar in the closing minutes and Arteta's men might count themselves fortunate to still be in the tie.

But Arteta said: "We are at half-time, and my message is exactly the same as it was after we beat Real Madrid 3-0 in the first leg of the quarterfinal.

"We have to go to Paris and win the game, and we are more than capable of doing it.

"If you want to win the Champions League final, you have to do something special, and we are going to have to do something special in Paris to be there. We still have a lot of chances to be in that final."

Arsenal secured a comfortable 2-0 win against PSG back in October, but Luis Enrique's reformed side raced out of the blocks yesterday and totally dominated the majority of the opening period.

Arteta said he was forced into a tactical switch, which he would not disclose, midway through the first half, and Arsenal improved with Gabriel Martinelli forcing a fine save from Gianluigi Donnarumma before Merino's header just 90 seconds after the interval was chalked off by VAR.

Leandro Trossard tested Donnarumma again, but Bradley Barcola almost added a second for the visitors with 10 minutes to go when his shot fell narrowly wide and Ramos then struck Raya's woodwork.

"We had two one-on-ones with Donnarumma and if they go in, it is a different story," added Arteta.

"But he made the saves, and that's the difference in the Champions League. The margins are so small, and it

didn't go our way."

"Disappointed with the result," he said. "We put so much into the game. We struggled in the first 10-15 minutes to get momentum and dominance. Disappointed not to get a draw at least.

"That is always the danger, credit to them. They get out of a situation that is close. We had seven players behind the ball and they were clinical, sometimes you just have to recognise the talent of the individual."

Keeper Raya insists Arsenal can still reach the Champions League final despite yesterday's disappointment.

"They started quick with a goal and they dominated the first 15 or 20 minutes but after that we dominated most of the game, created the chances. Donnarumma made some good saves," Raya said.

"It's only half-time, we take positives. They are a top team but credit to the players for the effort. We could have won the game.

"We know they keep possession a lot and are good at that. They had that chance and put it in the net. We had chances to score but we didn't manage to."

Arsenal failed to score in a home Champions League game for the first time since a 2-0 defeat to Barcelona in the last 16 in 2016.

It was also their first defeat at the Emirates in 18 European matches.

But the north Londoners will have Ghana midfielder Thomas Partey back from suspension for the second leg, which will allow Declan Rice to play a more attacking role.

Raya is convinced Arsenal, who knocked out holders Real Madrid in the quarterfinals, can defy the odds again as they bid to reach their second Champions League final and win the tournament for the first time.

"We showed from the 25th minute of the first half that we can win against any team. We have showed in the season we can win away games too, so we'll go to Paris next week trying to win," he said.

"We have to approach the game the same way. We played well, we put them on the back foot and hurt them. Let's go next week in Paris." - AFP

Win or bust for Devils



Story on page 30