



US declines tariff talks with Asean as unified group

Washington makes it clear it wants bilateral discussions with individual member countries during meetings between M'sian delegation and United States officials.

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Regal presence at ministry

Her Highness Tun Tunku Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah Sultan Ibrahim discusses community development, environmental sustainability and public improvement partnerships with Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming.

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Tunku Aminah poses for a selfie with Nga and Housing and Local Government Ministry staff during her visit yesterday.
- PIC COURTESY OF HOUSING AND LOCAL GOVT MINISTRY

PUTRAJAYA: Her Highness Tun Tunku Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah Sultan Ibrahim graced the Housing and Local Government Ministry headquarters with her presence yesterday.

She discussed key issues with minister Nga Kor Ming, including on community development, environmental sustainability and strategic partnerships aimed at improving public well-being.

In a statement, the ministry said Tunku Aminah, the daughter of His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim and Her Majesty the Queen of Malaysia Raja Zarith Sofiah, spent nearly two hours at the ministry.

Also present was ministry secretary-general Datuk M. Noor Azman Taib.

Nga also presented the ministry's 2024 performance report card, which highlighted its major initiatives and enabled it to receive the prestigious National Development Award.

Tunku Aminah later toured an exhibition of firefighting assets displayed by the Fire and Rescue Department and attended a luncheon.

1,500 participants expected at annual FT cross country run

Early registration open until May 14 for event that will feature 11 categories, including two open to both men and women.

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Senator calls for stronger law to protect disabled children

Proposal for dedicated 'PwD Child Act' prompted by slap-on-wrist punishment for abuser in recent case.

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Probe into alleged citizenship application scandal

► Suspects, including two Home Ministry officers, summoned to have statements recorded at MACC HQ

■ BY **THESUN TEAM**

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PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has confirmed the arrest of two Home Ministry officers and a civilian to assist in a probe into the alleged "fast-tracking" of citizenship applications.

"The ministry is fully cooperating with MACC's investigation. The three detainees are currently giving their statements at the MACC headquarters," it said in a statement.

At press time, all three individuals, who were detained between 1pm and 5pm on Wednesday, were having their statements recorded at the MACC headquarters.

MACC said the arrests were linked to Ops Outlander, that resulted in the arrest of a civil servant believed to have been the mastermind of a syndicate allegedly registering non-citizen births as Malaysian citizens using fake supporting documents.

On March 11, MACC conducted raids across the Klang Valley and Johor targeting clinics and

law firms, which led to the arrest of 16 individuals aged between 20 and 70.

MACC Deputy Chief Commissioner (Operations) Ahmad Khusairi Yahaya said the operation was masterminded by a medical practitioner with the title "Datuk Seri", who owned several clinics and maternity centres.

He said the doctor is allegedly responsible for issuing fraudulent birth confirmation documents.

Under Ops Outlander, MACC froze 11 bank accounts with a total of RM100,000 and seized 30 documents related to the investigation.

Bribes were allegedly paid to expedite late birth registrations, with some officials receiving up to RM15,000 per certificate.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail previously revealed that the syndicate's *modus operandi* involved individuals posing as birth informants and submitting fake birth documents as official verification from registered private healthcare facilities.

He said the birth certificates are believed to have been sold to parents or guardians of

children without identification documents or Malaysian citizenship.

Saifuddin Nasution said the syndicate is believed to have been operating for more than three years and had obtained over 80 birth certificates through this method.

The syndicate is also suspected of having global connections, and being involved in trafficking children from abroad.

In another development, Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi has denied allegations of his involvement in a corruption scandal related to the Pan Borneo Highway Sabah project.

Bernama reported that in a statement on his Facebook page, he had described the claims, which were widely circulated on a Telegram channel, as slanderous, baseless and malicious in intent against him as a member of the government administration.

"The message contains direct accusations against me as the Works minister, with defamatory, unfounded and malicious claims. I categorically deny all such allegations."

He added that the baseless accusations not only affected his reputation but also tarnished the image of the Works Ministry.

A police report was lodged at the Tun H.S. Lee police station on Wednesday by his senior private secretary to deny the allegations and request an immediate investigation.

Prominent figure under investigation

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has initiated an investigation into a prominent corporate figure bearing the title "Tan Sri" for suspected involvement in money laundering linked to the ownership of shares worth over RM500 million in an oil and gas company.

According to a source, the probe also focuses on elements of corruption involving several investments following the merger of two of the company's subsidiaries.

"Raids have been conducted at several locations, including the company's premises and the individual's residence in Selangor and Kuala Lumpur."

"The Tan Sri was summoned to the MACC headquarters for questioning on May 5 and 6 to assist in investigations. No arrests have been made as of now," the source said in a statement yesterday.

The investigation is also looking into possible offences involving criminal breach of trust, misappropriation of funds and falsification under the Penal Code. — Bernama

Anwar calls for bold education reforms

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has emphasised the need for bold and comprehensive reforms in developing Malaysia's new education strategy ahead of the 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP).

Anwar, in a post on his Facebook page, said existing policies must be reviewed and refreshed to ensure every ringgit invested through 13MP yields a more equitable, forward-looking and sustainable education system to secure a more prosperous and harmonious future for the country.

Earlier, Anwar received a courtesy call from Education Minister Fadhila Sidek and the ministry's top management to discuss new strategies and direction for education.

"Among the issues discussed were preschool education, teacher training and skills enhancement at teacher education institutes, the implementation of continuous professional development as a means to empower educators, and strengthening science, technology, engineering and mathematics subjects to boost future competitiveness," he said.

"Also discussed were Form Six and matriculation studies, student dropout issues, teaching permits in both the public and private sectors and the need to reorganise the National Education Master Plan to better align with current needs."

"The world is changing rapidly and we cannot afford to be complacent, trapped in past nostalgia or shackled by outdated plans that may no longer be relevant," he added. — Bernama



Anwar accompanied by Dzulkefly (left), CRM CEO Dr Akhmal Yusof (right) and Sarawak Deputy Premier Prof Datuk Dr Sim Kui Hian at the event in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Innovative, cost-effective clinical research needed: PM

■ BY **HARITH KAMAL**

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called on Clinical Research Malaysia (CRM) to lead bold regional and local partnerships that deliver innovative, cost-effective clinical research tailored to Southeast Asia's unique healthcare demands.

Speaking at the CRM Trial Connect 2025 conference in Bangsar yesterday, he cautioned against over-reliance on global pharmaceutical giants, warning that it could lead to soaring healthcare costs and place a heavy burden on both the government and patients.

"Our challenge is to ensure medical costs don't skyrocket. CRM has a major role to play and must build synergy with all research institutions."

"At the National Science Council meeting, I gave clear instructions – no institution should

work in isolation. CRM's effectiveness must come through collaboration with all national research bodies and universities."

"One of our key challenges is to stop healthcare costs from spiralling. The sector risks becoming a burden when big corporations put profit before patient access."

Anwar said every medical faculty must contribute to a coordinated national effort to deliver more impactful and inclusive research outcomes.

He highlighted Malaysia's growing stature as a regional research leader, noting that its clinical trial ecosystem now goes well beyond laboratories – having contributed over RM1.5 billion to the economy and created more than 3,000 high-skilled jobs since 2012.

"Malaysia's clinical research ecosystem now spans hospitals, logistics networks, data centres and centralised labs."

"Clinical research is no longer just about

science. It's a catalyst for job creation, technological progress and inclusive growth."

Anwar said the benefits of research must reach all Malaysians, not just those in urban or well-funded areas.

"The challenge is to ensure the vast majority benefit, not just top-tier facilities for the few."

He said Malaysia's current role as Asean chair reflects its commitment to positioning Southeast Asia as a globally competitive and interconnected hub for clinical research.

"But this progress must be matched by courage, tenacity and innovation, especially in these post-normal times," he said, referring to global disruptions affecting healthcare and technology.

CRM chairman and Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said Malaysia's international standing in clinical research continues to grow, with over 2,500 sponsored trials conducted across 260 sites nationwide

since CRM's inception in 2012.

"Clinical research is ultimately about people. It offers patients early access to life-saving treatments, often when no other options remain."

Dzulkefly added that Malaysia's research teams are gaining global recognition for their professionalism, ethical standards and capability to manage complex studies, including early-phase and first-in-human trials.

He also paid tribute to clinical trial coordinators, calling them the "unsung heroes" of the research ecosystem.

The conference also saw the signing of three MoUs between CRM and global partners Gilead Sciences, Kyushu University Hospital (Japan) and BP Healthcare, aimed at deepening international collaboration and investment in research.

The event drew over 1,000 participants from 140 organisations across Asia.

MACC unveils groundbreaking study on corruption risks

PUTRAJAYA: The operational report and findings of the Malaysian Corruption Study (MaCoS) Population Module, presented by the Statistics Department (DOSM) and its consultant team, have opened a new dimension in understanding the country's corruption challenges.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) Deputy Chief Commissioner Datuk Azmi Kamaruzaman said the comprehensive study focused on the experiences of citizens when dealing with both public and private sectors as well as various aspects related to corrupt practices.

"Through this study, MACC can identify at-risk population groups, types of involved public officials and private sector workers, administrative procedures prone to corruption, forms of solicited bribes, as well as reasons and consequences for accepting or rejecting corrupt offers," he said in a statement.

The study also assessed public awareness, knowledge and perceptions regarding corruption issues, providing MACC with detailed insights to shape more effective prevention strategies.

The report was presented during the 2nd MaCoS Steering Committee Meeting for 2025 at the MACC headquarters on Wednesday, attended by representatives of key agencies and academic institutions, Bernama reported.

During the meeting, DOSM delivered the operational report while consultants from UKM Pakarunding Sdn Bhd shared research findings with attendees.

Among those present were MACC Community Education Division director Datuk Nazli Rasyid Sulong, Agency Integrity Management Division director Lim Bee Kean, and DOSM deputy chief statistician for Social and Technical Development Nazaria Baharudin.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Integrity and Ombudsman Unit head Tengku Elmi Azlina Tengku Muda was also in attendance.

The MaCoS study, which involved 15,000 respondents, was conducted between March 1 and June 14 last year.

Azmi added that the study is one of MACC's key initiatives to elevate Malaysia's position to 25th in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) by 2033, in line with the sixth benchmark of the Madani Economic framework.

"These evidence-based findings from actual public experiences should complement existing CPI data, which has traditionally relied solely on public perceptions of corruption," he added.

DPM pushes for strategic plan to uplift rural youths

PUTRAJAYA: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has urged the Rural and Regional Development Ministry to formulate a comprehensive Rural Youth Development Plan to produce a digitally literate, skilled and knowledgeable generation of rural youth capable of meeting the demands of the modern world.

He said the plan would not only create job opportunities through the introduction of rural gig hubs, but also foster leadership by appointing rural youth ambassadors to serve as the voice and representatives of the new rural generation.

"Through this plan, we can also introduce the Asean Rural Youth Exchange Programme offering our young people the opportunity to gain knowledge and experience on an international platform," he said during the ministry's monthly assembly yesterday.

Ahmad Zahid expressed confidence in the ministry's ability to develop the plan with active input from all agencies under its purview, coordinated via a dedicated

➤ Ahmad Zahid calls for digital training leadership roles and global exposure to drive transformation

platform or committee.

"Our goal is clear, I want rural youths to cross borders, explore the world and compete on the global stage. They are not just heirs of the nation, but strategic assets and drivers of Malaysia's future," he said.

Referring to a message from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim delivered during a meeting with the ministry's leadership in March, Ahmad Zahid said Anwar had emphasised the need for rural development projects to be implemented effectively, with outcomes that are visible and appreciated by the public.

"The prime minister also reminded us that monitoring must be conducted diligently and comprehensively, with accurate reports submitted to Cabinet ministers, and that issues should be

resolved without delay."

As a follow-up, Ahmad Zahid proposed the ministry develop a transparent monthly performance schedule to track project progress and delivery of community aid, Bernama reported.

He stressed the importance of having complete, data-driven insights to ensure no target group is left behind in the Rural Transformation Agenda.

"We must move based on data, lead with information and act with confidence. The guidance and direction are already in place, now it's time to deliver real, impactful action on the ground, not just plans that look good on paper."

Meanwhile, he called on the Community Development Department (Kemas) to strengthen engagement with parents and

educators to assess the impact of the Kemas Pre-Tahfiz Programme, which has been in place for a year.

"These engagements are essential to gather feedback and suggestions, including proposals such as establishing a special needs nursery," he said.

He added that initiatives such as these play a vital role in promoting social mobility in rural areas and it is the ministry's responsibility to ensure that every programme introduced delivers meaningful and measurable improvements to people's lives.

Separately, during another event yesterday, Ahmad Zahid - who is also Barisan Nasional chairman - commented on seat allocations for the upcoming Sabah state election.

He said it was still too early to determine how seats would be divided between Sabah BN and Pakatan Harapan, adding that discussions would take place at a later stage.

"It is too early to make a decision on the distribution of seats. We will hold more detailed discussions about this later."



INNOVATIVE FEAT ... Etika Group of Companies CEO Santharuban Thurai Sundaram (left) with the Guinness World Record certificate for the world's thinnest reverse vending machine with a compaction system presented by Guinness World Records adjudicator Sonia Ushiroguchi (right), as Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad looks on at the ministry in Putrajaya yesterday. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH THESUN

MyKiosk project not a 'white elephant'

PUTRAJAYA: Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming has dismissed claims that the ministry's MyKiosk project has become a white elephant.

Speaking to reporters after the ministry's 2024 Excellence Appreciation Ceremony yesterday, Nga said most kiosks have already been taken up, with only a small number yet to begin operations.

"Not true (white elephant allegation). The majority have been filled, only a few are not yet in operation."

"Instructions have already been issued by the Department of Local Government for all 7,000 kiosks nationwide to be fully utilised," he said.

He explained that the project is being implemented through applications submitted to local authorities, with priority given to small traders, particularly those previously operating illegally by the roadside.

"With MyKiosk, we are legalising their businesses by offering free rental for the first six months and a maximum rental rate of RM10 per day," he added.

Earlier, Bersatu information chief Datuk Tun Faisal Ismail Aziz claimed the MyKiosk project was wasteful and had turned into a white elephant.

The initiative is aimed at assisting the B40 group and micro, small and medium enterprises by providing standardised, safe and comfortable business spaces. — Bernama

Malaysia backs trenchless tech for sustainable infrastructure

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is committed to expanding the adoption of trenchless technology as part of its strategy to develop sustainable and low-impact infrastructure, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

He noted that the method has proven effective in enabling faster and safer construction of underground utilities such as sewerage systems, water pipelines and telecommunications networks, particularly in densely populated urban areas.

"Applications such as pipe jacking have made it possible to lay sewer lines in urban and congested areas with minimal surface disruption, playing a key

role in the expansion and modernisation of Malaysia's sewerage systems," he said when officiating at Trenchless Asia 2025 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday.

Fadillah added that the ministry, through its Sewerage Services Department, has implemented several major regional sewerage projects in the Klang Valley.

These projects have successfully connected millions of households to centralised sewage treatment systems, improving effluent discharge standards and helping to protect precious rivers for future generations.

By minimising excavation and

surface disturbance, trenchless methods also help preserve the environment, reduce community disruption and avoid damage to existing infrastructure.

Fadillah stressed that trenchless approaches are not merely alternatives but should be seen as core technologies for sustainable development, aligning with the government's long-term agenda under AIR 2040, a strategic roadmap aimed at transforming Malaysia's water services sector.

"Trenchless technology fits perfectly into AIR 2040, especially in rehabilitating ageing pipelines and integrating smart water solutions, without the delays often associated with conventional methods,"

he added.

He also welcomed collaboration between the International Society for Trenchless Technology and local stakeholders to promote awareness of trenchless applications at the academic level.

Through integration into university curricula and vocational programmes, Malaysia can equip its graduates with the knowledge and skills needed to embrace these modern technologies.

Fadillah urged delegates to translate the ideas and discussions from Trenchless Asia 2025 into meaningful commercial opportunities that contribute to Malaysia's sustainable future. — Bernama



1,500 runners expected at FT cross country run

➤ Annual race to feature 11 categories, including two road divisions open to both men and women

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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KUALA LUMPUR: The Federal Territory Kuala Lumpur Athletic Association Cross Country 2025 is set to be held on July 6 at Padang Merbok in Kuala Lumpur, with about 1,500 participants expected for its 38th edition.

Association president Datuk Seri Dr V. Pulainthiran said the annual race would feature 11 categories, including two road race divisions open to both men and women.

Pulainthiran said the event has seen increasing participation each year.

"The entries for school categories increased to 539 participants last year compared with

2023. We also had 81 foreign participants. So, we are hopeful that this year's numbers will grow."

He was speaking at the official launch of the run at Hotel Olympic yesterday.

"We will also continue to host the 15km road race under categories J and K for those who do not wish to participate in the cross-country run."

Pulainthiran expressed gratitude to STM Lottery for its ongoing support of the event.

"I must state that without your strong commitment, hosting such a large-scale event would not be possible. STM Lottery not only sponsors the annual cross-country run but also provides various prizes for many other events organised by the association."

Present at the launch was STM Lottery Sdn Bhd Community and Sustainability general manager Giam Say Khoon.

This marks the eighth consecutive year that STM Lottery Sdn Bhd has acted as the event's title sponsor.

"STM Lottery is honoured to once again serve as the title sponsor of this event alongside our trusted partner, the Federal

Territory Kuala Lumpur Athletic Association.

"Our support for this event goes beyond sponsorship. It reflects our deep commitment to promoting a healthy lifestyle, nurturing young talent and fostering community spirit through the love of running."

Giam also expressed hope for increased participation this year.

"This year's cross-country promises to be inclusive and exciting, featuring 11 running categories designed for all ages and fitness levels, including the popular 5km Fun Run. More than just a race, this event brings people together, encouraging perseverance, health and unity."

He said more exciting prizes would be up for grabs in this year's lucky draw.

Those interested in registering or learning more about the event can visit RaceXAsia at racexasia.com/event/go-for-it-ftklaa-cross-country-2025-cros25 or CheckpointSpot at v3.checkpointspot.asia/event/FTKLAA-Cross-Country-25.

Early bird registration is open until May 14, with standard rates ranging from RM30 to RM60 per participant.

'Media employees should take advantage of AI'

KOTA KINABALU: Media employees, particularly journalists in Sabah, need to be more proactive in exploring and taking advantage of artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance creativity and improve news reporting quality while maintaining journalistic ethics.

Utusan Borneo Sabah journalist Siti Aisyah Narudin said there are many AI applications and tools that journalists could utilise to streamline their work, including for audio or video transcription and fact-checking purposes.

"AI technology is very beneficial, and journalists should take advantage of AI to further improve their capabilities and creativity in producing news reports," she told Bernama after attending the agency's two-day "AI For Journalism: Transcription and Smart Tools" course on Wednesday, which was attended by 25 local journalists.

Siti Aisyah, who is also Sabah Journalists Association secretary, said such courses could serve as a medium to expand AI knowledge among local media employees through sharing information about application methods.

The Star journalist Stephanie Lee said media employees must always be ready to explore every development in today's technological era, including using AI sophistication in performing their duties as it could help journalists work more efficiently.

"As journalists, we must learn and keep up with current developments. We cannot reject technology but we need to use it so that it can help make work easier. It must not be misused."

The Malaysia Press journalist Yenompiaah Mabin said media professionals must not fall behind in understanding AI and should utilise it wisely without compromising journalistic ethics, while RTM Sabah broadcast journalist Gabriel Michael Staun praised Bernama's initiative, saying the course provided valuable exposure to AI applications in journalism.

"Through this course, I've gained updated information and techniques to produce news content quickly and accurately. I hope such programmes continue to empower Sabah journalists." - Bernama

No infectious diseases found in pigeon carcasses: Vet dept

PUTRAJAYA: The Veterinary Services Department has confirmed that no new infectious diseases have been detected and no deaths reported following the discovery of a large number of pigeon carcasses around a water fountain in Padang Ipoh, Perak recently.

It said the results of post-mortems on three pigeon carcasses found that they all had full stomach contents, with several significant findings, including the discolouration of the liver, the presence of blood clots in the thoracic cavity and bleeding in the trachea and lungs.

"Samples of internal organs such as the liver, heart, kidneys, spleen, lungs, intestines and trachea have been sent for laboratory analysis."

"Preliminary test results for Avian Influenza, Newcastle Disease and Adenovirus returned negative. Tests for poisoning are being carried out by the Chemistry Department to identify the actual cause of death," it said in a statement yesterday.

"As a precautionary measure and to protect public safety as well as the country's livestock sector from the risk of animal-borne diseases, the department will continue to monitor the situation at Padang Ipoh."

It urged the public to call 03-8870 2041 if carcasses of birds or animals that look unusual or suspicious are encountered. - Bernama



Some of the sponsors of the run at the official launch yesterday.
- ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Campaign to safeguard water resources

KUALA LUMPUR: The launch of the Madani Smart Water campaign yesterday marks a turning point in a nationwide movement to safeguard the water resources through a comprehensive, progressive and high-impact initiative, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

He said the campaign is not just a communications initiative but a collective national effort to raise awareness and promote a cultural shift across all segments of society.

"This event is not merely a campaign launch but the beginning of a larger national movement aligned with various regional and global initiatives such as Singapore's 'Every Drop Counts', Europe's 'Water for Life' and the United Nations' 'Water Action Decade'."

"Education on sustainability is no longer optional. It's an urgent necessity. The habits we

adopt today will shape the future of generations to come," he said in his speech at the official launch.

Fadillah, who is also Energy Transition and Water Transformation minister, said the campaign is built on four key pillars, namely sustainability, preservation, advocacy and nurturing, encompassing education, stakeholder engagement and a holistic shift in public behaviour.

He said the campaign empowers individuals as agents of change by making water conservation a shared responsibility, thus strengthening the role of the people in ensuring the nation's water sustainability.

"This campaign serves as a bridge between national policy and behavioural change, aimed at smarter and more effective water management."

"Without a sufficient, clean and safe water supply, the country's development plans will be severely compromised."

He said despite Malaysia being blessed with high annual rainfall, the nation still faces serious challenges such as river pollution, unregulated development and rising water demand due to population growth and urbanisation.

He pointed to climate change as a growing threat, contributing to erratic phenomena such as off-season floods and disruptions to raw water sources.

Fadillah added that the ministry is actively enhancing enforcement against water pollution, including efforts to amend the Water Services Industry Act 2006, expand monitoring systems in strategic areas and roll out various education initiatives and public awareness campaigns. - Bernama

Mounting calls for stronger law to protect disabled children

➤ Senator urges dedicated Child Act after abuse case highlights systemic gaps in current legal framework

BY QIRANA NABILLA
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PUTRAJAYA: Calls are mounting for the government to introduce a dedicated Child Act for children with disabilities, to ensure stronger protections, reinforced rights and swifter justice, particularly following institutional abuse cases.

Senator Isaiiah D. Jacob criticised systemic failings in the protection of individuals with disabilities, stating that the government had failed to prioritise their welfare in abuse cases involving these children.

His visit yesterday to the Attorney-General's Chambers to submit a memorandum to Attorney-General Datuk Mohd Dusuki Mokhtar underscored grave concerns over what he described as a miscarriage of justice and a breakdown in the child protection system.

He called for a thorough reinvestigation of an abuse case.

"The abuse is not alleged, it is proven. The perpetrator has admitted guilt in open court. Yet instead of being charged under the Child Act 2001, she was charged under a general provision of the Penal Code.

"This raises a deeply troubling question: Are children with disabilities being denied equal protection under our laws? If so, this is not merely a legal oversight, it is institutional discrimination," he said.

The memorandum detailed a confirmed case of physical abuse

involving Adam and Anaqi, both with Down syndrome, who were students at a Community-Based Rehabilitation Centre (PDK) in the area.

Medical reports confirmed that Adam sustained injuries consistent with physical abuse.

Anaqi was subjected to repeated harm at the same centre, including bruises, head trauma and facial swelling.

A teacher from the centre later pleaded guilty in the Magistrate's Court and was convicted under Section 323 of the Penal Code.

She was fined RM2,000, with an alternative option of two months' imprisonment. She opted to pay.

Isaiiah argued that the failure to apply the Child Act 2001 was a serious concern, noting that Section 31(1)(a) allows for up to 10 years' imprisonment, a fine of up to RM20,000 or both, for abuse or neglect.

"We need a special Act to protect children with disabilities. In this case, a child was abused in a rehabilitation centre, yet justice has not been served."

He also urged the ministry to immediately shut down unlicensed and unregistered centres that endanger vulnerable children, stressing that action must not wait until another tragedy occurs.

Isaiiah revealed that while there are 573 registered PDKs across Malaysia, many others could be operating without proper oversight.

"So far, I've personally investigated and identified one such centre. I'll keep visiting every PDK I can. As a



Isaiiah (third from left) at the Attorney-General's Chambers after submitting the memorandum. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

PWD (persons with disabilities) myself, I feel a responsibility to ensure the safety and well-being of those with disabilities.

"I've written to the ministry and that centre is still operating. That is unacceptable. Why hasn't the ministry shut it down?"

He added that many abuse cases go unreported because parents fear retaliation against their children if they speak out.

Isaiiah also called for separate legal provisions for rehabilitation centres, arguing that their nature

differs significantly from regular childcare facilities.

"Children in these facilities are not like other children, so the laws and penalties must reflect that.

"The punishment applied to normal children should not be used for children with disabilities. That is my main point, we need a specific Act to protect children with disabilities."

He urged the Attorney-General's Chambers to review the case thoroughly and ensure that the rights of children with disabilities are fully upheld under the law.

'At least eight involved in Pamela Ling's abduction'

KUALA LUMPUR: Police investigations have revealed that at least eight individuals travelling in five vehicles were involved in the abduction of Datin Seri Pamela Ling Yueh in Putrajaya on April 9.

Kuala Lumpur police chief Datuk Rusdi Mohd Isa said the finding was based on a review of closed-circuit television (CCTV) footage from the area.

"From the CCTV footage, we found that three vehicles blocked the path of the e-hailing car in which Ling was travelling, while two other cars acted as lookouts.

"Three individuals then exited the vehicles that had blocked the e-hailing car, instructed the victim to get out and directed her into one of the waiting vehicles.

"All the cars involved were later seen taking two different routes out of Putrajaya," he said yesterday.

The footage also confirmed that two of the individuals involved were wearing vests resembling those used by police.

However, preliminary investigations found no raids or operations had been conducted by any police unit in the area on the day of the incident.

The suspects are believed to have impersonated police officers to deceive the victim, the public and authorities.

Rusdi said the victim did not appear to resist and the footage showed no signs of a struggle.

She seemed to comply when asked to exit the e-hailing vehicle and enter one of the suspects' cars.

"In fact, the e-hailing driver also complied when ordered to hand over his identity card and to mark the ride as completed. A police report was lodged by the driver because the suspects did not return his identity card," he said.

Police are actively tracking the vehicles involved.

Checks revealed that three of them were cloned cars, bearing the same make, colour and registration numbers as vehicles owned by individuals in Pahang and Kelantan. — Bernama

Parents demand justice over abuse of children

PUTRAJAYA: "Enough is enough, I want justice for my child." This was the heartfelt plea from a parent to authorities over the alleged repeated abuse of children with disabilities at a rehabilitation centre here.

Munirah Salamat, 40, mother to Anaqi — a child with Down syndrome — expressed deep disappointment with the facility after her concerns over signs of abuse were repeatedly dismissed.

She had enrolled her son at the centre from August last year until January, trusting its assurances that Anaqi, who is unable to stand, walk or speak, would receive daily therapy.

"We believed them when they said they could care for our son. The teacher in charge also had a special needs child, so we felt we could trust her.

"But just weeks after enrolling, Anaqi

came home with a split lip and bruises on his body. They told me he fell in the bathroom after being left standing, despite me clearly explaining that he cannot be left alone, let alone standing," she told *theSun*.

Munirah said matters worsened the following month when Anaqi returned home with severe bruising around his eye that had spread across his face.

"Every time we asked the management, they claimed it happened during therapy but the explanation didn't add up. We took Anaqi for a medical check-up and the doctor said the injuries didn't match their account. That's when we decided to lodge a police report."

She added that when another concerned parent requested CCTV footage, the centre's management

claimed the cameras were not functioning at the time.

Earlier, Senator Isaiiah D. Jacob, along with parents of the children involved, submitted a memorandum to Attorney-General Datuk Mohd Dusuki Mokhtar, raising grave concerns over what Isaiiah described as a miscarriage of justice and a breakdown in the child protection system.

Another parent, Nur Athirah Ngah, 38, said signs of abuse were evident since her son Adam was enrolled in 2023, with bruises repeatedly appearing on his arms and chest after each visit.

"Every time we asked, they brushed it off and said they didn't notice anything. Even the supervisor gave the same vague replies."

She added that what pushed her to act was a final incident involving a

distinct cane mark on Adam's hand.

"One teacher told me it was caused by a sliding door, but I wasn't convinced. So I took him to the hospital and the doctor said it looked like it came from a blunt object."

Her fears were confirmed when a teacher privately admitted witnessing a colleague "punishing" Adam, prompting her to file a police report.

Nur Athirah said other parents had also confided in her about similar incidents involving their children but felt helpless.

"They were afraid and didn't know what else to do. Even when we approached the NGO managing the centre, all they said was that they'd monitor the situation. But that was it, no real action." — by **Qirana Nabilla Mohd Rashidi**

Cops nab underwear thief caught on CCTV

IPOH: A 48-year-old man has been arrested for stealing women's underwear after the act was captured on closed-circuit television (CCTV) in the Menglembu area here.

Ipoh police chief ACP Abang

Zainal Abidin Abang Ahmad said the suspect was apprehended at 11am on Wednesday, following a report lodged by a woman the day before.

The 45-year-old complainant had provided CCTV footage showing a

man on a motorcycle stopping in front of her house and stealing undergarments that she had hung to dry on the gate.

The local man, who has no prior criminal record, will be brought to the

Ipoh Magistrate's Court for a remand application.

"We will open an investigation paper under Section 379 of the Penal Code for theft," Abang Zainal said in a statement. — Bernama

Sexual crime cases in Perlis up 31% in 2024

ARAU: Sexual crime cases in Perlis rose by 31% to 51 cases in 2024, compared with 39 the previous year, according to state police chief Datuk Muhammad Abdul Halim.

He revealed that 98% of the cases involved consensual acts between suspects and underage victims.

"More alarmingly, there were schoolgirls aged between 12 and 16 who became pregnant and gave birth at a very young age," he said after officiating the closing ceremony of the state-level Crime Awareness Day programme at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Syed Hussein on Wednesday.

Muhammad attributed the trend to the misuse of social media platforms such as WhatsApp, TikTok, Facebook and Telegram, which some teenagers use to find partners and engage in romantic relationships.

"These brief connections led to sexual activities between the victims and suspects, and eventually, sexual offences." — Bernama

Risks of natural delivery

➤ Having procedure despite opposing medical advice could endanger both mother and child: Obstetrician

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Expectant women are advised to prioritise medical advice and not risk their own health or their baby's in opting for natural delivery.

Delaying hospital care or ignoring professional recommendations can pose serious risks, especially when procedures such as caesarean sections are advised.

Universiti Putra Malaysia obstetrician and gynaecologist Dr Nurul Iftida Basri said proceeding with natural birth against medical recommendations could endanger both the mother and child, leading to life-threatening complications, including uterine rupture, severe bleeding or death.

"In general, forcing natural birth can result in obstructed labour. This puts the mother at risk of complications such as uterine rupture, exhaustion, and excessive bleeding," she said.

Her warning follows a tragic case in Indonesia involving a woman who declined surgical intervention despite medical advice against natural delivery due to health concerns.

She sought assistance from a well-known midwife and endured five days of labour without medical supervision.

Eventually, she developed breathing difficulties and was rushed to a hospital. Although she delivered the baby, the child tragically died five hours later.

"I didn't even get the chance to see my baby's face," she was quoted as saying.

Nurul Iftida added that babies delivered under such high-risk circumstances face numerous dangers, including scalp injuries, reduced oxygen to the brain (hypoxia), cerebral palsy, shoulder dystocia (in which the baby is stuck at the shoulders during delivery) and in the worst cases, death.

She emphasised that delayed decision-making during labour significantly decreases survival chances for both mother and baby.

"When obstructed labour occurs, the mother can become severely dehydrated, exhausted or suffer internal bleeding. Infection can also set in and spread throughout the



Nurul Iftida said social media has also contributed to the misinformation surrounding childbirth, adding that some women request natural births out of fear of surgery. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

body, leading to sepsis – a life-threatening condition."

She said certain warning signs should prompt immediate medical intervention, including abnormal bleeding, unusual odours in the amniotic fluid (liquor) or a sudden weakening of contractions.

"For the baby, changes in foetal heart rate or meconium-stained liquor are serious red flags," she said, adding that any delay in recognising these signs could jeopardise the baby's oxygen supply and chances of survival.

She also cautioned mothers considering alternative birthing centres, reminding them that in Malaysia, it is illegal for such centres to operate without a registered doctor.

Although midwives are legally recognised, they must work under a doctor's supervision.

"In many cases, the term 'midwife' is used to describe traditional birth attendants or 'bidan kampung' who are not registered, or 'doulas', who lack medical training to assist with deliveries.

"In general, women should not seek delivery services from 'bidan kampung', and it's important to understand that the role of a

'doula' is limited to emotional and physical support during labour, not the delivery itself."

Nurul Iftida said social media has also contributed to the misinformation surrounding childbirth, adding that some women request natural births out of fear of surgery, concerns that could be managed through proper consultation, pain relief options and psychological support.

"Some advocate natural birth as the best way to deliver. Some 'doulas' on social media tell the public that doctors are doing it wrong, which misleads the public."

However, she said the trend today is not one-sided, with some women opting for caesarean sections without any medical need.

For those who prefer natural birth, doctors typically schedule follow-up consultations to reassess the situation and provide appropriate counselling for both mother and baby.

"Unfortunately, many women who initially request natural births despite medical contraindications fail to attend follow-up appointments. Instead, they return in labour, insisting on natural delivery, even when it poses serious risks," she said.

Honour in service to guests of Allah

MECCA: Serving as a Haj officer demands dedication, patience and sincerity to serve the millions of Duyufurrahman (guests of Allah) who gather in the Holy Land each season.

This has been the lifelong journey of Tabung Haji (TH) field services manager Mohamad Zamry Mohd Noor, 60, who has been in over 30 Haj operations throughout more than four decades of service.

To him, the blessings of this sacred duty extend beyond effort and responsibility – they lie in the prayers of the Duyufurrahman offered after fulfilling the fifth pillar of Islam.

"Whenever pilgrims are preparing to return home, I would board the bus and deliver a short speech on behalf of all TH staff to thank them for their cooperation, apologise for any shortcomings, and offer a shared prayer that we may be chosen again as Allah's guests the following year.

"It may sound like a simple farewell, but I truly believe those words carry powerful, sincere prayers," he said when met recently.

For Mohamad Zamry, the true measure of a Haj officer's success lies not just in getting the job done, but in how sincerely and compassionately they care for the pilgrims.

"We must be honest, trustworthy and approachable. These pilgrims are guests of Allah. When we serve them with genuine sincerity, they pray for us, often without us even realising. I believe those prayers are what have brought me back to the Holy Land year after year," he shared.

During the 1445H/2024M Haj season, Mohamad Zamry served as Masyair operations director, overseeing the critical phases in Arafah, Muzdalifah and Mina. Over the years, his service has been marked by many unforgettable events.

Among them were the tragic Mina tunnel incident in 1990, the Mina tent fire in 1997 and the crane collapse at Masjidil Haram in 2015, all of which he experienced first-hand.

"I remember my first posting during the 1407H Haj season, when I was only 20. I didn't speak Arabic then, but I eventually mastered the Meccan dialect and that has helped me in managing pilgrims effectively," he said.

Now approaching the end of his service, this year's Haj marks his final duty with TH. He hopes the next generation would carry on with dedication, and continue to strengthen the bond between Haj officers and pilgrims to ensure smooth and meaningful pilgrimages in the years to come. — Bernama

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North Korea fires short-range missiles

► Clear act of provocation that poses threat to peace and stability: Seoul

SEOUL: North Korea fired multiple types of short-range ballistic missiles yesterday, around a week after its leader Kim Jong Un tested a new weapons system for his latest warship, said South Korea's military.

The missiles were "fired from the Wonsan area of North Korea into the East Sea between 8.10am and 9.20am today (from 2310 GMT Wednesday)," said its Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), referring to the body of water also known as the Sea of Japan.

The JCS said the missiles flew up to about 800km before splashing down in waters to the east of the peninsula, adding that it condemns

the North for a "clear act of provocation that poses a serious threat to peace and stability."

"Our military, under the strong South Korea-United States combined defence posture, is closely monitoring various North Korean activities to prevent any misjudgment (by the North)."

The launch, which was the nuclear-armed North's first missile test since March, came about a week after Kim oversaw the test-firing of a new warship weapons system.

Pyongyang unveiled the 5,000-tonne destroyer-class vessel named Choe Hyon last month.

North Korea claimed that the vessel was equipped with the "most powerful weapons" and would "enter into operation early next year."

Some analysts said the ship could be equipped with short-range tactical nuclear missiles, although North Korea has not proven it has the ability to miniaturise its nukes.

The South Korean military said

the destroyer could have been developed with Russian help, possibly in exchange for Pyongyang deploying thousands of troops to help Moscow fight Kyiv.

Russia and North Korea recently announced that they have started building the first road bridge linking the two neighbours.

North Korea launched a flurry of ballistic missiles last year in violation of United Nations sanctions.

Experts have long warned that the North may be testing weapons for export to Russia for use against Ukraine.

The launch also came as Russia prepared to hold World War II Victory Day commemorations, with world leaders expected to attend but not Kim.

The missile launch yesterday appears to "serve as a reminder of North Korea's contribution and stake in Russia's apparent efforts to commemorate Victory Day as a triumph over Ukraine," said Seoul's

University of North Korean Studies president Yang Moo-jin.

Japan's Defence Ministry said there was no impact on Japan from the North Korean missiles, according to public broadcaster NHK.

Kim earlier this week inspected shell manufacturing at munitions factories, with state media claiming that the country's shell output has increased in recent months.

Given the latest development, it is "entirely possible" that the missile launch "served as a test-firing prior to potential export to Russia," said North Korean studies scholar Ahn Chan-il.

South Korea's military said in March the North fired "multiple unidentified ballistic missiles"; the same day Seoul and Washington began a major annual joint military drill known as Freedom Shield.

Pyongyang also carried out a test-launch of strategic cruise missiles in the Yellow Sea in February, which it said showed off "counterattack capabilities."

Washington has in recent years ramped up joint military exercises and increased the presence of strategic US assets, such as an aircraft carrier and a nuclear-powered submarine, in the region to deter the North.

Pyongyang has repeatedly declared itself an "irreversible" nuclear weapons state and routinely denounces joint US-South Korea drills as rehearsals for invasion.

The two Koreas are technically still at war as the 1950-1953 conflict ended in an armistice rather than a peace treaty.

With relations souring, the North last year blew up roads and railways connecting it to the South and fortified areas of the border with more mines.

In April, South Korea's military said its troops fired warning shots when around 10 North Korean soldiers briefly crossed the heavily fortified border that divides the peninsula. - AFP



SACRED CONGREGATION ... Cardinals on Wednesday praying in the Sistine Chapel ahead of the conclave to elect the next pope at the Vatican. - REUTERS/SPIC

Seoul presidential candidate claims being forced out

SEOUL: Just weeks ahead of a snap election slated for June 3, South Korea's right-wing presidential candidate Kim Moon-soo accused his party yesterday of trying to force him out and threatened to take legal action.

He said the party leadership was trying to "bring him down" in favour of another candidate, former prime minister Han Duck-soo, although he had been chosen as the party's "legitimate" nominee.

The People Power Party (PPP) selected Kim as its candidate on Saturday through primaries but has since demanded that Kim and Han discuss which one of them would represent the party in the election.

Han, who resigned as acting leader last week to run in the polls, is

not a PPP member but was prime minister under ousted president Yoon Suk Yeol, who was from the party.

Unifying the conservative candidates is seen as one of the few options available to stand a chance against Democratic Party frontrunner Lee Jae-myung in the election.

In a two-way race, Lee has 44% support against Han with 34% while Lee leads 43% against Kim's 29%, according to a National Barometer Survey released yesterday.

Han was the preferred candidate among 53% of PPP supporters versus 32% who backed Kim.

Conservative leader Yoon was removed from office in April over his shock martial law order, prompting the snap election.

Efforts to form a unity ticket among conservatives have proved difficult.

"The forced unification process that is underway is a forceful candidate replacement and an attempt to bring me down, so it could lead to legal disputes," said Kim.

His supporters filed an injunction to stop the party from holding a convention this weekend to officially pick either Kim or Han as a candidate, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The feud has overshadowed the conservative party's already uphill battle to retain the presidency and policy debate has taken a back seat.

Meanwhile, Lee has met business leaders to discuss job creation and deregulation, and urged North Korea to stop military provocation and

come to dialogue.

Senior PPP leaders and Han's campaign are pressuring Kim to come to an agreement before Sunday when the registration for presidential candidates closes.

Kim has rejected the calls and proposed a one-week campaign for each candidate and a public survey afterwards to pick a unified candidate.

In response, PPP floor leader Kwon Seong-dong said Kim was trying to keep his candidacy in a "pathetic" way, pointing to opinion polls that show him trailing Han.

Kwon began a hunger strike on Wednesday night along with other senior party leaders, increasing pressure on Kim to quickly unify his candidacy with Han. - Reuters

BRIEFS

MANILA, BEIJING CLASH OVER SOUTH CHINA SEA

MANILA: The Philippines and China gave conflicting versions yesterday of a maritime confrontation around the Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, the latest incident in a long-standing dispute between them. A Philippine navy patrol encountered "aggressive and unsafe" movements by two Chinese navy vessels earlier this week, the Philippine military said. China's military accused the Philippine frigate of "attempting to invade" the waters around the feature and said it had organised naval and air forces to track and expel the vessel, its Southern Theatre Command said. - Reuters

VIETNAM INVESTS IN AI-POWERED SYSTEM TO TREAT CANCER

HO CHI MINH CITY: The FV Hospital here on Wednesday announced its investment in a cutting-edge robotic radiosurgery device integrated with artificial intelligence (AI), the first of its kind in Vietnam. According to the Vietnam News Agency, the CyberKnife S7 system enables the treatment of tumours anywhere in the body without surgery, marking a major advance in non-invasive, highly precise cancer therapy. Notably, the treatment is covered under Vietnam's health insurance scheme. - Bernama-VNA

300 FLEE TO THAILAND AFTER STRIKE ON MYANMAR MILITARY

BANGKOK: More than 300 people in Myanmar fled into Thailand after an assault on the military by ethnic armed groups, Thailand said yesterday, days after the military government extended a post-earthquake ceasefire. The attack by the Karen National Liberation Army and its allied Karen National Defence Organisation targeted a military base in Kayin state, about 2.5km from the Thai border, according to the Thai military. - AFP

TEMPERATURES PERSIST AT NEAR-RECORD HIGHS GLOBALLY IN APRIL

PARIS: Global temperatures were stuck at near-record highs in April, climate change monitor Copernicus said yesterday, extending a prolonged and exceptional heat streak that has lasted nearly two years. "Globally, last month was the second-hottest April on record", continuing the long sequence of months with temperatures more than 1.5°C above the pre-industrial baseline, said Samantha Burgess from the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, which runs Copernicus. – AFP

BILL TO BAR CORRUPTION CONVICTS FROM PUBLIC OFFICE REJECTED

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina's Senate voted down a bill on Wednesday that would have barred individuals convicted of corruption from holding public office. The legislation, which opposition figures said was aimed at sidelining former president Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner from future national races, was backed by 36 senators while 35 voted against. It fell short of the 37 votes required to become law. – Reuters

No media freedom in Greece: NGO

ATHENS: Human Rights Watch (HRW) yesterday criticised the Greek government for "state actions that undermine" the right to information, noting that press freedom in the country has seen "significant deterioration" since the conservatives came to power in 2019. In a report titled "From Bad to Worse", the rights group highlighted intimidation and harassment of journalists, encouragement to self-censor, as well as increased control of the media.

Based on 26 interviews with journalists and experts, the report said journalists "have become targets in various ways", including online harassment that is "often orchestrated or encouraged" by pro-government actors.

"Widespread and deliberate constraints against journalism in Greece has created an environment in which critical reporting is stifled and self-censorship becomes the norm," said HRW Europe and Central Asia director Hugh Williamson in a statement.

The group has called for "stronger action" from the European Commission.

HRW pointed to a 2022 illegal phone tapping scandal in which journalists and politicians were targeted with spyware named Predator, a case that ultimately engulfed the conservative government of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis.

The report also highlighted what it deemed abusive lawsuits by companies and politicians against journalists, noting the absence of legal measures against this in Greece.

The New Democracy government also used state advertising funds to favour pro-government media, the group said.

Media watchdog Reporters Without Borders ranked Greece 89th out of 180 countries in its global press freedom index for this year.

Among the 27 European Union member states, Greece came last for the fourth year in a row.

The European Parliament last year adopted a resolution expressing "serious concerns about the deterioration of the rule of law and media freedom in Greece".

The government dismissed these criticisms, calling them "exaggerated" and lacking concrete evidence. – AFP

Chief justice highlights defence of US judiciary

BUFFALO: US chief justice John Roberts underscored his defence of the American judiciary on Wednesday amid verbal attacks by President Donald Trump and his allies on judges who have impeded aspects of his sweeping agenda, stating again that impeachment is an inappropriate response to unfavourable rulings.

Trump, some fellow Republicans in the House of Representatives and his billionaire adviser Elon Musk have advocated impeaching some judges who have issued decisions against Trump's policies since he returned to office in January.

"Impeachment is not how you register disagreement with decisions," said Roberts during remarks at a judicial event in Buffalo, New York.

Roberts, who leads the Supreme Court and its 6-3 conservative majority, did not mention Trump by name but his comments echoed his rebuke of Trump in March after Trump called for the impeachment of a judge who had ordered his administration to halt the removal of Venezuelan migrants under the Alien Enemies Act 1798.

Trump had labelled the judge a

'Impeachment is not how you register disagreement with decisions'

"radical left lunatic".

The Supreme Court is increasingly being called upon to intervene in major legal disputes involving Trump, whose aggressive agenda and flurry of executive orders have often been stymied by lower courts.

Critics have accused the administration of defying lower court orders and even a Supreme Court ruling involving Trump's crackdown on immigration.

Roberts indicated that the appeals process is the proper way to deal with adverse rulings.

He also spoke about the importance of the independence of judges in the US system of government that separates the powers of the president, Congress and the judiciary.

"This job is to obviously decide cases but also, in the course of that, to check the excesses of Congress or the executive, and that does require a degree of independence," he said, drawing applause from the crowd.

He engaged in a wide-ranging conversation addressing numerous subjects, including the relationship among the court's nine justices, which he said were strong despite sometimes sharp words being exchanged by those in the majority and in dissent in major cases.

Members of the court's conservative and liberal blocs often are on opposite sides in the most important decisions.

Trump's administration is contending with more than 200 lawsuits challenging his policies. His Justice Department has in turn flooded the Supreme Court with requests seeking emergency relief to enforce his policies. It has filed 13 such requests in just over 15 weeks since Trump returned to office.

That number is unprecedented and shows no signs of abating, said Georgetown University law professor Stephen Vladeck, who has studied the Supreme Court's emergency docket.

The court on Tuesday handed

Trump a major victory when it allowed his ban on transgender people serving in the military to take effect.

It has also permitted the administration to cut millions of dollars in teacher training grants, part of Trump's crackdown on diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, and to fire thousands of probationary employees as he moves to slash the federal workforce.

However, the justices declined to let the administration withhold payment to foreign aid organisations for work they already performed for the government and required it to "facilitate" the release from custody in El Salvador of a man wrongly deported there.

The justices also issued a decision to halt deportations of Venezuelan migrants to El Salvador under the Act after lawyers reported that the government was poised to imminently remove some in violation of the Supreme Court's prior order.

The court is scheduled to hear arguments on May 15 in Trump's bid to broadly enforce his executive order to restrict automatic birthright citizenship. – Reuters

India and Pakistan trade fire after deadly escalation

SRINAGAR: Indian and Pakistani soldiers exchanged gunfire overnight in Kashmir, New Delhi said yesterday, a day after the worst violence between the nuclear-armed rivals in two decades.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif vowed to retaliate after India launched deadly missile strikes on Wednesday, with days of repeated gunfire along their border escalating into artillery shelling.

India said it has destroyed nine "terrorist camps" in Pakistan in "focused, measured and non-escalatory" strikes, two weeks after New Delhi blamed Islamabad for backing an attack on tourists in the Indian-administered side of disputed Kashmir, a charge that Pakistan denies.

At least 45 deaths have been reported from both sides following Wednesday's violence.

Islamabad said 31 civilians were killed by Indian strikes and firing along the border.

New Delhi said 13 civilians and a soldier were killed by Pakistani fire.

Pakistan's military said five Indian jets were downed across the border but New Delhi has not responded to the claims.

An Indian senior security source, who asked not to be named, said three of its fighter jets crashed on home territory.

The largest Indian strike was on an Islamic seminary near the Punjabi city of Bahawalpur, killing 13 people, according to the Pakistan military.

On Wednesday, Pakistan military



Workers in Srinagar painting a red cross on the roof of a hospital as a preventive measure amid the border tensions. – AFPIC

spokesperson Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry reported firing across the Line of Control, the *de facto* border in Kashmir, and said the Armed Forces have been authorised to "respond in self-defence" at a "time, place and manner of its choosing".

India's army yesterday reported firing "small arms and artillery guns" in multiple sites overnight, adding that its soldiers have "responded proportionately", without giving further details.

India and Pakistan have fought multiple times since the violent end of British rule in 1947, when colonial officers drew straight-line borders

on maps to partition the nations, dividing communities.

Muslim-majority Kashmir, claimed by both India and Pakistan, has been a repeated flashpoint.

Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said the operation was New Delhi's "right to respond" following the attack on tourists last month when gunmen killed 26 people, mainly Hindu men.

New Delhi blamed the Pakistan-based group Lashkar-e-Taiba, a United Nations-designated terrorist organisation, and the nations traded days of threats and diplomatic measures.

India yesterday braced for Pakistan's threatened retaliation.

Diplomats and world leaders have pressured both countries to step back from the brink.

Analysts said they fully expect Pakistani military action to "save face" in a response to India.

"India's limited objectives are met," said New Delhi-based think tank Council for Strategic and Defence Research director Happymon Jacob.

"Pakistan has a limited objective of ensuring it carries out a retaliatory strike to save face domestically and internationally," – AFP

US slams Moscow for protecting North Korea

NEW YORK: The United States on Wednesday denounced Russia for "cynically obstructing" the monitoring of North Korea's compliance with United Nations sanctions, saying Moscow was trying to dodge criticism for using Pyongyang's weapons in its war with Ukraine.

Several Security Council members, including the United States and South Korea, convened a meeting on the issue to heighten awareness of Moscow's potential sanctions-busting actions, said interim US envoy Dorothy Shea.

"Today's briefing shows that the council will continue to ensure member states are aware of sanctions violations and evasion activity that generate revenue" for North Korea's "unlawful" weapons programmes "despite Russia's veto", she said.

"North Korea continues brazenly to violate the council's resolutions by exporting coal and iron ore to China, the proceeds of which directly fund its unlawful weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missile programmes".

She said since September 2023, North Korea has transferred "over 24,000 containers of munitions and munitions-related material, and well over 100 ballistic missiles to Russia for use against Ukraine".

"It is clear from evidence presented today that Russia is cynically obstructing the council on North Korea sanctions implementation to try to escape reproach for its own violations."

South Korean ambassador Joonkook Hwang agreed, denouncing the "illegal military cooperation between Russia and North Korea". – AFP

Israeli strike kills five in Gaza

GAZA: An Israeli air strike killed five people in the north of Gaza yesterday, said its civil defence agency.

The Israeli military has yet to comment on the reported strike.

It followed an Israeli bombardment a day earlier that rescuers in Gaza said killed 59 people.

The strikes on Wednesday were among the deadliest since the resumption of Israel's offensive on Gaza after a two-month ceasefire collapsed on March 18.

United Nations agencies earlier warned of a humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza, which has been devastated by 19 months of war.

Israel's broader offensive, approved by the government amid a two-month aid blockade on Gaza, would include displacing "most" of its residents, its military said.

The Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said on Wednesday at least 2,545 people have been killed since Israel resumed its campaign, bringing the war's overall toll to more than 52,650. – AFP

Three-day ceasefire by Russia goes into effect

➤ Ukraine calls move ruse by Putin to create impression of wanting end to war

KYIV: A three-day ceasefire declared by Russia came into effect yesterday and skies over Ukraine's major cities were quiet, in a change from successive nights of heavy attacks by Russian drones and ballistic missiles.

Ukraine's Air Force reported that after the start of the Kremlin-sponsored ceasefire, Russian aircraft twice launched guided bombs on the Sumy region of northern Ukraine.

There was no word on damage and Reuters could not independently verify the attacks.

The Russian ceasefire went into

effect at midnight Moscow time (2100 GMT).

Ukraine has not committed to abide by the Kremlin's ceasefire, calling it a ruse by Russian President Vladimir Putin to create the impression that he wants to end the war.

Ukraine launched successive drone attacks on Moscow this week, which forced the closure of airports in the Russian capital and the grounding of airliners.

Apart from the reports on the two launches of guided bombs, there were no reports in Ukraine of any Russian long-range drones or

missiles being launched on Ukrainian cities yesterday.

As of 3.45am (0045 GMT), the capital Kyiv was quiet, in contrast to 24 hours earlier when the city reverberated with the sound of explosions from waves of Russian airborne attacks and outgoing Ukrainian anti-aircraft fire.

It was not immediately clear if there was a pause in fighting on the frontlines between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

A Reuters witness near the front in eastern Ukraine said yesterday he could hear no sounds of fighting.

On Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said his country stood by its offer to observe a 30-day ceasefire.

"We are not withdrawing this proposal, which could give diplomacy a chance."

He said Russia had made no response except for new strikes.

Zelensky also appeared to acknowledge the numerous drone attacks that have been targeting Russian sites, including the city of Moscow.

"It is fair that Russian skies, the skies of the aggressor, are also not calm today," he said on Wednesday.

Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyannin, in a series of posts on Telegram over a five-hour period, said 14 drones headed for the capital had been repelled or destroyed.

This happened before the three-day ceasefire took effect.

The United States proposed the 30-day ceasefire in March and Ukraine agreed.

Russia said such a measure could only be introduced after mechanisms to enforce and uphold it were put in place.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova expressed surprise at remarks from US envoy Keith Kellogg that Putin may be obstructing a comprehensive ceasefire.

"The only obstacle to the ceasefire is Kyiv, which violates agreements and is unwilling to seriously discuss the terms of a long-term ceasefire." – Reuters

Pro-Palestinian protest erupts at Columbia University

NEW YORK: Dozens of protesters stood on tables, beat drums and unfurled pro-Palestinian banners in the reading room of Columbia University's main library on Wednesday in one of the biggest campus demonstrations since last year's student protest movement against the war in Gaza.

Videos and photographs on social media showed protesters with banners saying "Strike For Gaza" and "Liberated Zone" in the Butler Library.

US President Donald Trump has

claimed that the protests last year were antisemitic and showed a failure to protect Jewish students.

Columbia's board of trustees has been negotiating with the administration, which in March cancelled hundreds of millions of dollars of grants to the university for scientific research.

The university said it has worked to combat antisemitism and other prejudice on its campus while fending off accusations from civil rights groups that it is letting the government erode academia's

free-speech protections.

On Wednesday, it said its public safety staff asked students to show identification and ordered protesters to disperse.

Those who did not comply would be disciplined for breaking school rules and face "possible arrest", it added.

A Reuters witness saw campus security escort people out a door and hand them over to police officers outside.

Police arrested at least 75 individuals for trespassing.

A New York Police Department spokesperson said the department was monitoring the situation and its personnel were "within the vicinity of the university".

At one point, more people were seen trying to enter the library, according to the Reuters witness.

Public safety staff locked a door and shoving and pushing ensued.

A student organisation representing the protesters said school security had assaulted demonstrators and the activists had refused to show their identification to officials "under militarised arrest".

New York City mayor Eric Adams said Columbia officials had asked for help and the department had sent officers to the campus.

Columbia University Apartheid Divest, a collection of student groups, recirculated on social media long-standing demands that the university no longer invest its US\$14.8 billion (RM63 billion) endowment in weapons makers and companies that support Israel.

The protesters also demanded the release of Mahmoud Khalil, a Palestinian activist and Columbia graduate student who remains in a Louisiana immigrants jail after he was among the first to be arrested.

Trump, a Republican, has called the pro-Palestinian student protests across college campuses antisemitic and anti-American.

Student protesters at Columbia, with Jewish organisers among them, said the government is unfairly conflating pro-Palestinian protests and antisemitism. – Reuters



Protesters being escorted out of the library after their arrest. – AFP/PPIC

China vows support for Kremlin in face of 'hegemonic bullying'

MOSCOW: Beijing will stand with Moscow in the face of "hegemonic bullying", Chinese President Xi Jinping told Russian leader Vladimir Putin during a visit to the Kremlin yesterday.

Xi is the highest profile guest for Moscow's Victory Day celebrations to mark the defeat of the Nazis.

Russia has become increasingly

economically reliant on China during its Ukraine offensive.

Beijing has portrayed itself as a neutral party throughout the conflict but the West accuses it of enabling Russia economically and diplomatically.

"In the face of the international counter-current of unilateralism and

hegemonic bullying behaviour, China will work with Russia to shoulder the special responsibilities of major world powers," Xi told Putin, hailing strengthening ties with Moscow.

"The political mutual trust between China and Russia is becoming deeper, and the ties for cooperation are becoming stronger."

Putin said Russia and China were "developing our ties for the benefit of the peoples of both countries and are not opposed to anyone".

Commenting on the Victory Day celebrations, he said the two countries would not forget the "27 million lives that the Soviet Union lay on the altar of the fatherland and the

altar of victory, and the 37 million lives that the war took away from China for its freedom and independence".

Both countries defend "historical truth", said Putin, who has long accused the West of downplaying Moscow's part in World War II and argued that the Soviet Union was the main victor in the conflict. – AFP

Recognising each child's uniqueness

UNDER ONE ROOF

Q: Our second child is almost three years old and doesn't respond to the same parenting strategies that worked well with our older daughter. We are feeling stressed and unsure. What could we be missing or doing differently?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: This is really about recognising and adapting to individual differences. Many parents think raising children is like following a baking recipe – use the same ingredients and expect the same results. However, this is not quite the case.

Each child is unique, with individual talents, aptitudes and perceptions. Just because one daughter excels academically does not mean her sibling will follow the same path.

One child may shine in athletics while another may have a gift for music.

Moreover, one daughter may be a great athlete but her sister may be a brilliant musician.

Each child has their own way of viewing, interpreting and engaging with the world.

As parents, treating each child the same may feel like the fairest approach but it is not always the most effective.

While core values like honesty and respect should be consistent expectations for everyone in the home, there is still plenty of room to tailor your parenting to each child's individual personality, needs and strengths.

While pushing some children to work harder in school may lead some to rise to the challenge, others

may struggle even more.

Likewise, certain children thrive under clear rules and structure while others may resist even gentle discipline and need a more creative, personalised approach.

That is why it is important to understand each of your children as individuals. Take the time to study their personalities, invest in the relationship and guide them in ways that align with what motivates and resonates with them.

A great place to start is with the research-based and reliable "7 Traits of Effective Parenting" assessment. You can take it for free on our website.

Q: My husband and I are going through a challenging time in our marriage. We are both committed to making things work, but we are feeling overwhelmed and uncertain about where to begin. We know we need help and are ready to seek support.

Focus on the Family Malaysia:

When your marriage is in crisis, the weight of it can feel overwhelming. You and your spouse may have a long list of unresolved grievances, unsure how to move forward or even if it is worth trying.

Our suggestion: don't start with how to fix things; start with why you want to.

Yes, the how matters. We all need practical tools and strategies but those alone can rarely breathe new life into a struggling relationship.

Alongside the practical steps, give special attention to your why. Reflect together on why you fell in love in the first place. What were the dreams you once shared for your life together? And what do you envision your marriage could look like if it were healthy, whole and thriving?

The answers to those why questions are what will reignite the desire between a husband and wife. They will also provide the motivation couples need to put in the hard work

of healing and rebuilding their relationship. As the old saying goes, "Where there is a will, there is a way".

Once that foundation is re-established, then focus on the how. We offer a variety of tips and resources on our website, including the free Focus on Marriage assessment. It takes about 10 minutes to complete, and evaluates the strength of 10 key traits essential to a healthy relationship.

For couples who need help navigating their relationship or who may be on the brink of divorce, we also offer counselling services.

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

Warren Buffett: Billionaire with simple tastes

COMMENT

ADMIRER for his investing prowess and a taste for the simple things in life rather than luxury, billionaire Warren Buffett has won public affection even as he amassed a fortune for the ages – riches that the "Oracle of Omaha" has pledged to give away.

Buffett studiously rejected exotic financial vehicles, as well as the brass-knuckle tactics of corporate raiders, adopting instead a buy-and-hold strategy of long-term investments.

His legacy: Berkshire Hathaway, the Nebraska-based conglomerate whose diverse holdings range from Duracell batteries to insurer Geico to paint brands to diamonds.

The company also holds carefully selected equity stakes in US corporate giants such as Coca-Cola and Chevron.

Now, at age 94, he is ready to step away from the company he built, announcing on Saturday that he plans to step down at year's end and will recommend that his chosen successor Greg Abel take his place as Berkshire CEO.

According to *Forbes* magazine's real-time rich list, as of Saturday, his net worth is US\$168.2 billion (RM711.73 billion) – the fifth biggest fortune in the world.

Buffett has nevertheless avoided the trappings of the oft-maligned "one per cent", eschewing big-ticket art collecting or fancy mansions around the world.

He still lives in the same house in a quiet neighbourhood of Omaha that he bought in 1958 for US\$31,500.

His gastronomic tastes are decidedly humble, including McDonald's Chicken McNuggets at least three times a week, potato chips for snacks, ice cream for dessert and an average of five cans of Coca-Cola per day.

His hobbies include bridge and playing the ukulele.

"I don't need fancy clothes," Buffett told CBS in 2013. "I don't need fancy food."

Yet, he did acknowledge in 2006 that he owned a private jet, saying the splurge made his life easier.



Buffett has won public affection even as he amassed a fortune for the ages.

– REUTERS/PIC

Philanthropy

That same year, Buffett announced that he would donate 99% of his fortune to philanthropic causes.

Joined by his friend and bridge partner Bill Gates, Buffett subsequently persuaded other billionaires to pledge to also donate at least half their wealth away.

Such campaigns have made Buffett a beloved figure within US society, helping to draw small investors to Berkshire's annual meeting each spring in Omaha, a gathering that has been dubbed a sort of "Woodstock for capitalists".

The investor has often used his platform to comment on economic policy or to express pique on a wealth of topics, from the questionable value of bitcoin to US President Donald Trump's trade policies.

Buffett has been open in the past about supporting the Democratic Party, while also frequently expressing the view that his taxes should have been higher, given his wealth.

Early business instincts

Born on Aug 30, 1930 in Omaha as the

second of three children, Buffett discovered an early taste for business after reading the book *One Thousand Ways to Make US\$1,000* as a young boy.

Buffett's childhood was not easy. He has described going through a shoplifting phase and being forced to navigate around his abusive mother Leila, who used to berate his sister Doris as "stupid".

He had planned to abandon his studies, but that idea was vetoed by his father, a businessman and politician who served in Congress.

He attended the University of Pennsylvania as an undergraduate before transferring to the University of Nebraska, where he graduated with a business degree. He later received a Master's degree in economics from Columbia University in New York in 1951.

Buffett worked on Wall Street in the 1950s, establishing the Buffett Partnership, which merged in 1965 with Berkshire Hathaway, then a textile firm.

An avid reader of the financial press and beyond, Buffett gravitated toward investments that he believed were undervalued, holding them until they paid off.

He transformed Berkshire into a far-flung conglomerate known for investments in nuts-and-bolts sectors such as energy, banking, air travel and food. His holdings also include Citigroup, Kroger, Apple and American Express.

Active in his 90s

Donning classic gray suits, glasses and coloured ties, the white-haired Buffett has remained a vibrant player on the US business scene into his 90s.

He long ran Berkshire with his longtime vice chairman Charlie Munger, six years his senior.

Then in 2021, as Buffett turned 90, Berkshire officially designated Abel as his successor – a plan that appears now to be set into motion.

Buffett married his first wife Susan in 1952. They had three children. Though they lived apart for decades, they remained married until her death in 2004.

He subsequently married his long-time partner Astrid Menks in 2006. – AFP

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

School takes backseat to survival for Orang Asli children

A RECENT article highlighted a growing issue in Kampung Sungai Temun, where Orang Asli children are skipping school to work and help support their families.

This reflects how poverty impacts not only these children's childhoods but also their parents' lives, trapping them in a cycle that is hard to escape.

While the immediate financial relief from children working may seem necessary, the long-term effects are damaging.

The lack of education limits these children's future opportunities, perpetuating the same cycle of poverty for the next generation.

If the current education system is failing the children, then education should be extended to the parents.

This is crucial as the problem is not just about parents not sending their children to school; it reflects a system that has not provided enough support to help them make informed decisions.

Parents may not fully realise the value of education in breaking the poverty cycle. In their struggle for survival, sending a child to school may seem less urgent than getting them to work.

Therefore, educating parents on the long-term benefits of schooling can change how they view their children's futures and encourage better decisions.

Communities like Kampung Sungai Temun show that local leaders, such as village head Salim Palon, are already aware of the importance of education.

What is needed now is to

build on this awareness and work with the community in an inclusive, collaborative way.

Instead of imposing external solutions, it would be more effective to partner with local leaders who can spread the message about education in a way that resonates with parents.

Involving the community increases the chances of creating lasting changes.

To help parents understand education's value, it is essential to provide not just information but also practical support to ease their immediate financial pressures.

Financial incentives for school attendance, such as small stipends or subsidies for school meals, can help make school a more viable option.

Teachers can be offered hardship allowances to encourage them to work in underserved areas.

Additionally, local Orang Asli leaders, trusted figures within their communities, could offer after-hours tutoring or mentorship, giving children the chance to catch up on studies while parents learn about the long-term benefits of education.

Ultimately, sustainable, community-driven solutions are key to breaking the poverty cycle.

By shifting focus from child labour to meaningful educational opportunities, we can support both children and their families, helping them break free from poverty.

Tee Hooi Ling
Wanita MCA National Deputy Chairperson



the Sun **LYFE**

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Hospitality outlets need to be more attuned to female travellers' needs.



More women are opting for solo adventures, with females in Hong Kong and Thailand the most likely in Asia to do so.



Travelling with friends is another area where women outpace men.

Girl power in tourism

► Women's travelling preferences, habits drive new hospitality trends

WOMEN travellers are becoming an increasingly powerful presence in the travel industry, making 82% of travel decisions worldwide and charting a different course than their male counterparts when it comes to holiday plans.

From a stronger appetite for new destinations to a preference for traveling with family and friends, women travellers are reshaping travel preferences in ways that are directly influencing the hospitality landscape. These insights remind hoteliers of the need to constantly adapt to an increasingly dynamic and diverse market.

Looking for cultural immersion

According to Agoda's latest report, 60% of women in Asia prioritise exploring lesser-known and culturally immersive destinations. Indian and Indonesian women are leading this trend, with 80% and 69% respectively eager to discover new places that offer different cultural experiences.

Group travel preferred

The data also highlights a strong preference for group travel among women. Some 40% of Asian women prefer to travel with family, compared to just 28% of men. In markets such as Indonesia, an impressive 68% of women favour family trips – underscoring the importance of multi-generational travel and spending quality time with loved ones. Travelling with friends is another area where women outpace men – just under a third of Japanese women (29%) prioritise this, followed by a quarter of Indian women (25%).

Growth in solo travel

While group travel is popular, solo



Ladies-only tour groups are becoming more and more common.

adventures are also an important part of women's travel trends. The study found that men still take more solo trips than women (24% of men vs 15% of women). However, there are pockets of growth in solo women travel. Women in Hong Kong and Thailand are the most likely in Asia to embark on solo journeys. Other reports reveal that 62% of women aged 18 to 25 are drawn to solo travel as a way to step beyond their comfort zones. According to government travel advisories, top-ranked countries for safe solo women travel include Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Nordic countries, Spain, Singapore and the UK.

Short trips

Research also showed women travellers are increasingly choosing to book short trips more frequently rather than long annual breaks. An industry report indicated the percentage of women taking two

trips in the first quarter of 2025 has nearly doubled to 35%, from just 18% in early 2020. This points to women using long weekends and off-peak periods to get away more often, rather than saving all travel for a single annual vacation.

Tips for hoteliers

The report made it clear that adapting to women travel trends is not just about good service – it is about aligning with what is now a core driver of the travel economy. Hoteliers should consider the following focus areas, informed by the latest insights:

- Develop experiences involving unique local activities and showcase lesser-known attractions. Women's interest in discovering new destinations signals demand for boutique tours, cultural workshops and "hidden gem" recommendations beyond the typical tourist itinerary.
- Highlight emerging tour products



Research shows that women travellers are increasingly choosing to book short trips more frequently rather than long annual breaks. — PICS FROM PEXELS

such as premium women-only tours. For instance, tour operators are now designing experiences exclusively for women travellers. One such tour takes participants to Peru, where they can meet Quechua weavers in the Sacred Valley. Another itinerary in Morocco features a baking class at a local women's cooperative, empowering female chefs and offering an immersive cultural experience.

➤ Build trust with solo women travellers by ensuring a 24/7 security presence, well-lit common areas, secure access floors and options such as women-only floors or female dormitories in hostels. Training staff to be attentive to solo female guests' needs and offering

concierge guidance for safe local exploration can further set your property apart. Additionally, consider offering more safe and reliable transfer options with trusted providers for women travelling solo, especially after-dark airport transfers.

➤ Women often invest more in personal care essentials from hair and skincare to fragrances and beauty tools. Stock up on popular items such as hair straighteners, curlers and high-powered dryers, along with everyday must-haves such as quality irons, make-up and nail polish removers. Consider making a feature of high-quality complimentary soaps and shampoos.



BNM reduces SRR ratio to 1% effective May 16

KUALA LUMPUR: Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) will lower the Statutory Reserve Requirement (SRR) ratio by 100 basis points, from 2% to 1%, effective May 16.

BNM said the decision to reduce the SRR is part of its continuous efforts to ensure sufficient liquidity in the domestic financial system.

"This will facilitate banks to better manage liquidity in an environment of greater financial market volatility and provide continued support for financial intermediation activity."

"The SRR reduction will release RM19 billion worth of liquidity into the banking system," BNM said in a statement yesterday.

The central bank said the SRR is an instrument to manage liquidity and is not a signal regarding the monetary policy stance.

Separately, BNM announced that Malaysia's international reserves expanded to US\$118.70 billion (RM507.62 billion) as at April 30, from US\$118.40 billion on April 15.

The central bank said the reserves position is sufficient to finance five months of imports of goods and services and is 0.9 times the total short-term external debt.

The main components of the reserves were foreign currency reserves (US\$105.5 billion), International Monetary Fund reserves position (US\$1.3 billion), special drawing rights or SDR (US\$5.8 billion), gold (US\$3.8 billion) and other reserve assets (US\$2.3 billion).

Total assets amounted to RM639.84 billion. They comprised gold and foreign exchange and other reserves, including SDRs (RM526.27 billion), Malaysian government papers (RM12.81 billion), deposits with financial institutions (RM7.59 billion), loans and advances (RM26.89 billion), land and buildings (RM4.58 billion), and other assets (RM61.67 billion), it added. — Bernama

OPR stays at 3% — Page 14

US declines tariff talks with Asean as a group

■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: The United States has declined to engage in tariff negotiations with Asean as a unified bloc, opting instead to pursue bilateral discussions with individual member states, the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (Miti) revealed.

The US made its stance clear during a Malaysian trade delegation's meetings with the US Trade Representative and the US Department of Commerce that were held in Washington recently, said Miti director of bilateral economic and trade relations Raveendran Nair, who was part of the team.

➤ Washington prefers bilateral discussions with individual member states, says negotiations can proceed: Miti official

"The US has made it clear that it does not wish to engage in negotiations with us as a bloc. Instead, it prefers bilateral discussions. Approaching them as a group could be perceived as an attempt to gang up against the US, leaving us with little choice," he said during a panel discussion at the "Beyond the Headlines on US Tariffs: What's Next for Malaysian Businesses and the Global Economy?" forum

organised by Hong Leong Bank Bhd yesterday.

Raveendran said that while Asean operates as a regional bloc, each member state has its own economic interests, product focus and tariff structures, necessitating bilateral negotiations.

"We convened the Asean Economic Ministers Meeting to establish a common position, which was then communicated to the US.

However, the US remained firm in its preference for bilateral negotiations. As such, our options in this matter are limited," he added.

Raveendran said Malaysia raised concerns about the impact of tariffs on US-owned companies operating in Malaysia, especially in the electrical and electronics sectors.

"To a certain extent, they do understand our position. But as I mentioned earlier, their stance is rooted in the 'Make America Great Again' agenda. Their priority is to bring manufacturing back to the US and encourage reinvestment within their own borders."

He said the delegation conveyed the message that relocating operations is not as simple as shutting down and restarting elsewhere. "Such a move would have significant repercussions on the global supply chain."

However, Raveendran said the US indicated that negotiations could proceed but the details remain confidential.

"I can't disclose any of the contents because we signed a non-disclosure agreement."

Raveendran said the talks are still at a very early phase.

"Hopefully, we're looking at a positive outcome. But just to indicate, SOC (Secretary of Commerce) did mention that most probably, the 10% tariff will remain for the entire world as the best-case scenario," he added.

The focus now, Raveendran said, is on negotiating modifications to reciprocal tariffs.

Malaysia is also watching how other Asean members and global players are positioning themselves under the new tariff environment, he said. "Among Asean, we're currently number three. So there's a slight advantage for Malaysia."



From left: Hong Leong Bank managing director of global markets Hor Kwok Wai, Samenta chairman of international trade Eugene Tan, Hong Leong Investment Bank chief economist Felicia Ling, PwC Malaysia director of tax Chandrasegaran Perumal and Raveendran during the panel discussion.

M'sian SMEs 'very concerned' as trade disruptions, cost pressures mount

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian small and medium enterprises are "very concerned" about the potential fallout from US tariffs, with exporters already seeing orders delayed and joint ventures suspended, while non-exporters fear a surge of dumped goods from China that could disrupt the domestic market.

Small and Medium Enterprises Association (Samenta) chairman of international trade Eugene Tan said domestic SMEs that directly export to America are already experiencing disruptions in trade flows and cost pressures.

"The situation is a significant concern for those directly exporting to the US. The tariff represents a direct cost."

"Importers bear the cost, but many

American buyers push exporters here to reduce prices to offset the tariff impact. Ultimately, the burden falls back on us," he said during a panel discussion at the "Beyond the Headlines on US Tariffs: What's Next for Malaysian Businesses and the Global Economy?" forum hosted by Hong Leong Bank Bhd yesterday.

Tan stated that the primary concern for SMEs not directly exporting to the US is the broader economic outlook.

He emphasised the risk of a potential slowdown, exacerbated by an influx of dumped goods from China flooding the Malaysian market. "Local SMEs are significantly smaller in scale compared to Chinese competitors. If China begins flooding the market with dumped goods and services, we won't

be able to compete."

Tan said domestic SMEs are looking at whether Malaysia has regulations in place to protect local businesses from the impact of the dumping. "Is there some kind of regulation to protect the local industry, like the services and retail sectors, which are already feeling the brunt of this kind of goods (and services) dumping?"

Tan confirmed that a slowdown is already being felt, which signals declining trade activity among SMEs.

"There has been an immediate reduction in volumes. We are witnessing orders being put on hold, collaborations suspended indefinitely, and joint ventures delayed. Orders have slowed down across the board. Essentially, all the expected challenges

are unfolding right now," he said.

The government recently announced *Skim Jaminan Pembiayaan Perniagaan* for the manufacturing sector, but Tan said there was no mention of similar support for the services sector.

"One of the biggest concerns among Samenta members is, 'What about us?' Many of them provide services, and the Americans are also cutting back on those. How can we navigate these challenging times if support is only extended to manufacturers and not the services sector?" he said.

Hong Leong Bank group managing director and CEO Kevin Lam said that while the new global trade order presents challenges, it also unveils opportunities for businesses

prepared to embrace change and reposition themselves.

He noted that the initial uncertainty following the "new trade world order" that began on April 2 was followed by the dynamism and adaptability of Malaysian entrepreneurs in seeking new avenues and innovative solutions.

"During such challenges, decisive leadership and strategic foresight become indispensable for fostering resilience and entrepreneurial responses to potentially significant shifts in the global environment."

"Our collective responsibility is to proactively equip SMEs with the knowledge, resources and support necessary to navigate these complexities," he said. — by HAYATUN RAZAK

Bank Negara holds OPR, flags risks from US tariffs

➤ Global outlook subject to uncertainties that could lead to greater volatility in world financial markets, says central bank

PETALING JAYA: Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has maintained the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3%, citing continued global growth and trade, supported by domestic demand and front-loading activities, as reflected in the latest indicators.

The central bank noted that the global growth outlook would remain supported by positive labour market conditions, less restrictive monetary policy and fiscal stimulus. However, the tariff measures announced by the United States and retaliations have weakened the outlook on global growth and trade.

"This outlook remains subject to considerable uncertainties, which include outcomes of trade negotiations and geopolitical tensions. Such uncertainties could also lead to greater volatility in the global financial markets," the central bank noted in a statement.

BNM said that for Malaysia, economic activity expanded further in the first quarter, driven by sustained domestic demand and continued export growth.

"Moving forward, the escalation in trade tensions and heightened global policy uncertainties will weigh on the external sector. The continued demand for electrical and electronic goods and higher tourist spending,

however, will provide some cushion to exports," it said.

Overall, BNM said, growth is expected to be anchored by resilient domestic demand, with employment and wage growth, particularly within domestic-oriented sectors, and income-related policy measures, will support household spending.

"The expansion in investment activity will be sustained by the progress of multiyear projects in both the private and public sectors, the continued high realisation of approved investments, as well as the ongoing implementation of catalytic initiatives under the national master plans."

The central bank said the balance of risks to the growth outlook is tilted to the downside, stemming mainly from a deeper economic slowdown in major trading partners, weaker sentiment amid higher uncertainties affecting spending and investments, and lower-than-expected commodity production.

BNM noted that favourable trade negotiation outcomes and pro-growth policies in major economies, as well as more robust tourism activity could raise Malaysia's growth prospects.

Headline and core inflation averaged 1.5% and 1.9% in the first quarter of 2025 respectively.

Inflation in 2025 is expected to remain manageable, amid moderate global cost conditions and the absence of excessive domestic demand pressures, the central bank said.

Global commodity prices are expected to continue to trend lower, contributing to moderate cost conditions.

In this environment, BNM said, the overall impact of the announced domestic policy reforms on inflation is expected to be contained.

Risks to inflation would be dependent on the extent of spillover effects of domestic policy measures, as well as external developments surrounding global commodity prices, financial markets and trade policies.

"The ringgit performance will continue to be primarily driven by external factors. Malaysia's favourable economic prospects and domestic structural reforms, complemented by ongoing initiatives to encourage flows, will continue to provide enduring support to the ringgit," BNM said.

At the current OPR level, the central bank said, the monetary policy stance is consistent with the current assessment of inflation and growth prospects.

"Recognising that there are downside risks in the economic environment, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) remains vigilant to ongoing developments to inform the assessment on the domestic inflation and growth outlook. The MPC will ensure that the monetary policy stance remains conducive to sustainable economic growth amid price stability," BNM said.

Malaysia's IPI up 3.2% year-on-year in March, driven by manufacturing and mining

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's Industrial Production Index (IPI) recorded year-on-year growth of 3.2% in March, driven by the output growth of the manufacturing and mining sectors.

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the increase was contributed by output growth in the manufacturing and mining sectors of 4% and 1.9%, respectively. Meanwhile, the electricity sector's output remained in the negative range at -2.7%.

In terms of monthly comparison, the IPI recorded an increase of 9.3% compared to -6.8% posted in February.

The increase in manufacturing sector production in March was supported by production in export-oriented industries, which grew to 4.8% compared to 5.7% recorded in February. This was primarily underpinned by growth in the manufacture of computers, electronic and optical products, which recorded an increase of 9%, followed by the manufacture of oils and fats from vegetables and animals (10.6%).

Manufacturing chemicals and chemical products also contributed at a rate of 4.9%. In addition, export-oriented industries grew by 10.1% compared to -5.6% in the previous month.

Domestic-oriented industries grew 2.3% in March, compared to the 2.9% growth recorded in the previous month. This increase was contributed by manufacture of food processing products (7.8%), manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment (4.2%), and manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products (3.7%).

Compared to the previous month, domestic-



The increase in manufacturing sector production in March was supported by production in export-oriented industries. — BERNAMAPIC

oriented industries' output increased by 1.3%.

Mohd Uzir said the 1.9% growth in the mining sector in March was driven by increase in the output of crude petroleum and condensate, and the production of natural gas, which respectively recorded increases of 2.2% and 1.8%.

"In terms of monthly comparison, the mining index increased to 17.8% compared to negative 12.5% recorded in February 2025," he added.

Meanwhile, the electricity index remained at a negative rate of 2.7% in March compared to the negative 2.8% recorded in the corresponding month of last year. In a month-on-month comparison, the electricity index increased by 11.2%.

The IPI recorded a slower growth of 2.3% in the first quarter of 2025, compared to the 3.4% recorded in the fourth quarter of 2024. In a quarterly comparison, the IPI recorded negative 2.1%.

Fibromat makes lacklustre debut on ACE Market

KUALA LUMPUR: Fibromat (M) Bhd made a lacklustre debut on Bursa Malaysia's ACE Market yesterday, following its transfer from the LEAP Market.

The geotechnical services firm opened at 46 sen, 16% below its initial public offering (IPO) price of 55 sen per share. Its shares ended at 49.5 sen, 10% below the IPO price.

Fibromat specialises in the design, manufacturing, installation and trading of geosynthetics and erosion control products.

Executive director Wallace Ng Chun Hou said the company may need to strengthen its performance further to build investor confidence.

"We grew from a small company into a more integrated geotechnical solutions provider, and today, many of our customers, including developers and government agencies, believe in us. But from a capital market perspective, we acknowledge there is still room for improvement. We need to continue delivering strong performance to build investor confidence over time," he said at a press conference in conjunction with the listing.

Fibromat is the latest ACE Market listing to underperform, with all eight debuts since March closing below their IPO prices on the first day.

Wallace suggested that the weak market performance may be due to limited public awareness and understanding of the value of its specialised work.

"When the public sees greenery along highways, they do not know the engineering behind it. We are proud of our contributions, but we also recognise the need to raise awareness – and we believe this will help better reflect our value in the capital market," he said.

Meanwhile, Fibromat's managing director and chief executive officer, Ng Kian Boon, said the IPO raised RM17.8 million.

"With the RM17.8 million raised from the initial public offering, we plan to use about RM7.6 million to purchase two jute-based erosion control blanket stitching machines and four dust collectors with ducting. All the new machines will be installed at our factory located in Rasa, Selangor, to expand our production of erosion control blankets," he said. — Bernama

Japan certifies ExecuJet's M'sian arm to maintain Falcon 2000EX aircraft

KUALA LUMPUR: ExecuJet MRO Services Malaysia, a Dassault Aviation company, has been certified by the Japan Civil Aviation Bureau (JCAB) to perform line and heavy maintenance on Japan-registered Falcon 2000EX aircraft.

It said in a statement yesterday that this marks the first time JCAB has approved ExecuJet MRO Services as an overseas maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) organisation.

The Falcon 2000EX is a super mid-size aircraft that is popular in Japan due to its range and ability to do steep approaches and access short runways.

Its regional vice-president Ivan Lim said ExecuJet sees potential in Japan, as it is a sizeable business jet market, and because operators there want to send their aircraft to an original equipment manufacturer-owned MRO organisation that is certified nationally and internationally.

Besides Japan, ExecuJet MRO Services Malaysia is certified by 15 other regulators including the Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia, United States Federal Aviation Administration and the European Aviation Safety Agency. — Bernama



From left: Majestic Gen Sdn Bhd executive director Ta Wee Dher, Hoo, Tee and Kerjaya Prospek (M) Sdn Bhd senior contract manager Chia Sow Teck.

Kerjaya Prospek, Majestic Gen in **RM162m** Johor deal

► Contract covers main works for Gen Rise, a 47-storey serviced apartment near the CIQ and Bukit Chagar RTS

KUALA LUMPUR: Construction company Kerjaya Prospek Group Bhd's wholly owned subsidiary Kerjaya Prospek (M) Sdn Bhd has accepted a letter of award from Majestic Gen Sdn Bhd for a building contract worth RM162 million in Johor Bahru.

The contract entails main building works for Gen Rise, a 47-storey transit-oriented serviced apartment development near the customs, immigration and quarantine (CIQ) and Bukit Chagar Rapid Transit System (RTS).

The project comprises a single block with 732 units, nine levels of podium parking, and other supporting facilities.

Construction, scheduled to commence on Aug 1, is expected to be completed within 36 months.

Kerjaya Prospek CEO and executive director Tee Eng Tiong said the construction of Majestic Gen's is the company's maiden project in Johor and its first contract win in the state for 2025.

"Geographically, our focus remains on three growth regions namely Klang Valley, Penang and Johor, where we see strong demand and vibrant development activities continue to shape the future of urban living.

"With this latest RM162 million job, our year-to-date new contract wins have reached

RM870.3 million, placing us well on track to achieve our RM1.6 billion target for the year," he said in a statement.

Tee said the total outstanding order book now stands at RM4.6 billion, providing healthy earnings visibility and a solid foundation for continued growth over the next four financial years.

Majestic Gen CEO Datuk Hoo Kim See said the company had appointed Kerjaya Prospek, a reputable construction firm, to build Gen Rise – its first project in Johor.

"This is a truly momentous occasion for both companies as we aim to deliver quality and sustainable products to our esteemed buyers.

"We hope that this collaboration will further boost the market's confidence in our current and future developments with an estimated GDV of RM3.7 billion," he said.

10 M'sian SMEs to take part in Philippine expo

KUALA LUMPUR: Ten Malaysian companies will showcase their products and services in Malaysia's inaugural participation at the 16th Philippine SME Business Expo (PHILSME) through a national pavilion at the SMX Convention Centre in Manila from May 9-10.

The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) will lead the companies that represent a wide range of sectors including ICT and digital solutions, halal consumer products, food and beverage, franchising, and business support services.

The national pavilion will showcase Malaysia's innovative and high-quality offerings, while fostering opportunities for partnerships, distributorships and joint ventures with Filipino counterparts.

According to Matrade, Malaysia's participation marks the first time the trade agency is coordinating a unified Malaysian presence at PHILSME, one of the Philippines' most significant and most established business-to-business trade events focusing on small and medium-sized enterprises (SME).

Having a national pavilion in PHILSME 2025 demonstrates Malaysia's firm commitment to strengthening trade and business ties with the Philippines, particularly within the SME segment.

"Matrade's debut at PHILSME reflects a significant step in our strategic efforts to strengthen trade ties with the Philippines, one of our key trading partners within Asean," Matrade CEO Datuk Mohd Mustafa Abdul Aziz said.

"We are confident that Malaysian SMEs bring valuable solutions and competitive advantages that align well with the evolving needs of the Philippines' market," he said.

PHILSME 2025 comes at a time of strong economic momentum in the Philippines.

The country's GDP is projected to grow 6% in 2025 and 6.1% in 2026, supported by strong domestic demand and public investment.

In tandem with this momentum, trade between Malaysia and the Philippines grew by 12.6% in the first quarter of 2025 to US\$2.05 billion (RM9.12 billion), compared to US\$1.82 billion in the same period of 2024.

Malaysia's exports rose 12.5% to US\$1.48 billion, while imports from the Philippines increased by 12.9% to US\$0.57 billion, indicating a positive trend in bilateral trade recovery and growth.

As members of the Asean Economic Community, Malaysia and the Philippines enjoy smoother trade facilitation and regulatory cooperation, creating a favourable environment for bilateral commercial activities.

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KUALA LUMPUR: Efforts to increase women's participation on boards have demonstrated progress globally, but this momentum must be continued, Securities Commission (SC) chairman Datuk Mohammad Faiz Azmi said.

He said that as of October 2023, 41.2% of large- and mid-cap listed companies in developed and emerging markets met the threshold of 30% female directors but only a third of these managed to sustain this level for at least three consecutive years.

He said more worryingly, the data show that other public-listed companies (PLCs) outside this group either had few or no women directors.

"This means, on average, women only occupy slightly more than a quarter of board seats on highly liquid listed companies.

"A sobering reminder that the work is far from done.

"This is also the case for Malaysia.

"In 2011, 56% of our listed companies had all-male boards, with women only holding 7% of board positions," he said in his keynote address at the 30% Club Malaysia 10th Anniversary Celebration yesterday.

Mohammad Faiz said that since 2012, the Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance

More women needed on company boards

➤ Efforts to uphold gender diversity far from done, says SC chairman

(MCCG) has recommended a target of 30% women on the board for large PLCs.

In 2021, this was extended to all listed companies. Subsequently, the mandatory one-woman director listing requirement was introduced by Bursa Malaysia in 2022 and has been fully enforced since June 2023.

"Significantly, the overall percentage of

women on boards has grown to double digits and reached 33% as of April 1, 2025.

"However, challenges remain," Mohammad Faiz said.

He pointed out that there are currently seven PLCs with all-male boards despite the one-woman director rule.

He said this highlights the challenge for companies outside the Top 100 to try harder to meet this requirement.

"It is a slightly different issue for 35 of our Top 100 PLCs. They have already met the mandatory one-woman director rule, but have fallen short of the 30% target."

For Malaysia, Mohammad Faiz said a critical gap is the lack of empirical evidence connecting

gender diversity to corporate performance at the local level.

"We need hard evidence for greater buy-in, and we hope academia will look at this as a research topic.

"To address the gap in our evidence base, the SC is working with the 30% Club Malaysia and academic partners will conduct a comprehensive, data-driven study.

"We want to gather data evidence to show that the participation of women in the corporate world matters – not just in financial matters, but also their impact on other areas like corporate strategy, risk management and ESG," he said, adding that the SC remains fully committed to promoting diversity through partnerships and collaborations.



(From left) Mohamad Norza, PT Citaglobal Internasional Capital president commissioner Aimi Aizal Nasharuddin, Sukadiono and Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Timur secretary Prof. Dr Biyanto.

Citaglobal eyes telecom, solar projects in East Java

KUALA LUMPUR: Citaglobal Bhd's Indonesian subsidiary, PT Citaglobal Internasional Capital, has signed a heads of agreement with Pimpinan Wilayah Muhammadiyah Jawa Timur to explore the deployment of telecommunications and renewable energy infrastructure across Muhammadiyah's network of hospitals, schools and universities in East Java.

The agreement outlines an initial target to pilot the deployment of approximately 250 telecommunication towers and 5 MW of solar energy capacity at selected hospitals, schools, and universities.

These pilot initiatives will enhance digital connectivity and clean energy access across PWM Jawa Timur's institutional ecosystem and serve as a foundation for broader long-term collaboration.

Both parties aim to complete the relevant feasibility studies and begin pilot implementation within six months from the date of signing, subject to the outcomes of technical and commercial assessments.

Citaglobal executive chairman and president Tan Sri Dr Mohamad Norza Zakaria said Indonesia is a key growth market in the region,

and Citaglobal plays a long-term role in its infrastructure transformation.

He said East Java, with a population of over 44 million, provides a strong institutional platform and a meaningful entry point into the broader Indonesian market.

"Through this partnership, we are introducing infrastructure solutions that combine telecommunications, renewable energy and facilities management in ways that are socially rooted and technically sound.

"PWM Jawa Timur's legacy of service aligns closely with our values. This pilot project reflects commercial potential and a shared vision to uplift communities and build lasting impact together," he said.

This partnership marks Citaglobal's first formal infrastructure initiative in East Java and reflects its commitment to expanding its presence in Indonesia through high-impact, values-aligned collaborations.

PWM Jawa Timur chairman Dr Sukadiono said the company chose to work with Citaglobal because of its track record in delivering infrastructure that reflects professionalism and purpose.

"This collaboration is grounded in shared values. It is not just about bringing technology into our institutions, but about enhancing the way we serve communities through education and healthcare.

"We believe this partnership will strengthen Muhammadiyah's role in supporting the people of East Java in ways relevant to the needs of today and tomorrow," he said.

PWM Jawa Timur currently manages over 3,000 institutions across the province.

This includes more than 1,000 schools, almost 100 healthcare facilities, 16 higher education institutions and over 2,600 religious and social service facilities.

The scale and diversity of this network provide a strong platform for integrated infrastructure deployment that directly benefits underserved communities.

The agreement is valid for one year and may be extended by mutual consent.

PT Citaglobal Internasional and PWM Jawa Timur will continue working closely to shape an implementation model that is locally responsive, financially sound and aligned with long-term development goals.

Public Bank sees minimal credit exposure to US tariff risks

KUALA LUMPUR: Public Bank Bhd sees minimal credit exposure to potential United States tariff risks, estimating that less than 3% of its total loans may be affected with asset quality expected to remain stable.

Managing director and chief executive officer Tan Sri Tay Ah Lek said the bank acknowledged shareholders' concerns over the ongoing uncertainty surrounding US trade policies and their implications on Malaysia's economy and the bank.

"As for Public Bank, our credit exposure to borrowers who may be directly impacted is not significant.

"It is estimated that less than 3% of total loans may be affected.

"Hence, asset quality is expected to remain stable," he said yesterday during a question-and-answer session at the bank's 59th annual general meeting.

Tay noted that the banking sector is unlikely to face direct fallout from potential US tariffs, but may be affected indirectly if broader economic conditions deteriorate as a result of trade tensions.

He added that the tariff hikes are currently on hold, offering temporary relief.

"We are confident that we will continue to sail through the current uncertainty from a position of strength.

"As for our regional operations, the respective governments are currently negotiating and exploring strategies to mitigate the potential adverse impact," he said.

While the final outcome remains uncertain, Tay said Public Bank has already taken precautionary measures to ensure greater prudence in its lending activities.

In another development, Tay said Public Bank is targeting a higher dividend payout of 60% of the group's net profit for the financial year 2025 (FY2025), depending on the financial performance, capital conservation and also subject to regulatory approval.

In FY2024, the bank paid total dividends of RM4.08 billion, representing 57% of its net profit, or 21 sen per share. – Bernama

NTT plans to take NTT Data private for ¥2.37 trillion

TOKYO: Japanese telecoms firm Nippon Telegraph and Telephone announced plans yesterday to take its subsidiary NTT Data private by purchasing the shares it does not already own for ¥2.37 trillion (RM70.2 billion).

NTT said in a statement it would launch a tender offer for NTT Data at ¥4,000 per share, representing a 34% premium from Wednesday's closing price.

NTT Data's shares were untraded yesterday due to a glut of buy orders, ending at the daily-limit high of ¥3,492, following a *Nikkei* newspaper report about the plan.

NTT currently owns 57.7% of NTT Data, an information technology services provider.

NTT, a former state monopoly still part government-owned, took mobile carrier NTT Docomo private in a ¥4 trillion deal in 2020.

The telecoms company has partnered Toyota Motor to develop a mobility platform and is also developing next-generation light-based communications technology.

NTT is also a major operator of data centres.

Management buyouts and corporate acquisitions have surged in Japan in recent years.

With the NTT deal, a transaction would conclude a prominent parent-child listing – a structure that remains common in Japan. – Reuters

DBS Q1 profit beats expectations

► Singapore lender cautious about 2025 but remains positive on India

SINGAPORE: Singapore lender DBS Group flagged risk from heightened uncertainty and softer non-interest income growth for 2025 after posting yesterday a 2% drop in first-quarter net profit that beat expectations.

Tan Su Shan, who took over as CEO in March, said in a press conference the market now expects three US Fed rate cuts in the second half of this year versus the two forecast earlier.

The Fed rates are a key determinant of interest rates charged by Singapore banks, and thus a profit driver for the lenders.

"Recent escalations in trade tensions have heightened macroeconomic risks and market volatility," Tan said earlier in a statement.

DBS, Southeast Asia's biggest bank, broadly maintained its 2025 guidance, but Tan

projected commercial book non-interest income growth to be in the mid-to-high single digits, versus high-single digits expected in February.

She said DBS is still looking at a loan growth of 5% to 6% this year, subject to conditions in the second half, but added that funding would be deployed into non-loan assets if loan demand weakened.

Shares of DBS climbed 1% in afternoon trade, outperforming the benchmark index's 0.3% drop.

Jefferies, in a research note to clients, said the profit beat "underlines the underlying strength of DBS's franchise" and maintained its preference for DBS among Singaporean banks.

Tan said DBS remained positive on India, one of its core markets, despite geopolitical tensions.

"The India structural growth story remains intact," she said.

"Our numbers suggest that the trend is good, because you do have a rising middle class, you have a very digitally engaged population."

DBS's results followed that of smaller peer

United Overseas Bank, which on Wednesday posted a stable yet weaker-than-expected first-quarter net profit and paused giving 2025 guidance due to uncertainties triggered by US tariffs.

Major global lenders such as HSBC and Standard Chartered have also highlighted the threat to economic growth due to the impact of US President Donald Trump's tariffs.

DBS said its January-March net profit declined to \$2.9 billion (RM9.6 billion) from \$2.95 billion a year earlier, due to higher tax expenses from the implementation of the 15% global minimum tax. It was the first on-year drop since the first quarter of 2022.

But the result beat the average estimate of \$2.82 billion from two analysts, according to LSEG data.

Profit before tax hit a record \$3.44 billion in the first quarter, slightly higher than a year ago, as total income grew 6% to a new high of \$5.91 billion, according to the bank's financial statement.

DBS said it took a general allowance of \$205 million as a prudent measure to strengthen reserves to \$4.16 billion in light of recent developments that have added to macroeconomic and geopolitical uncertainty.

It announced an ordinary dividend of 60 Singapore cents per share and a capital return dividend of 15 cents for the first quarter.

DBS's first-quarter return on equity was 17.3%, down from 19.4% a year ago.

Net interest margin, a key gauge of profitability, dropped to 2.12% in the first quarter from 2.14% in the same period a year earlier. – Reuters

EU accelerating free trade talks with Asia

SINGAPORE: The European Union is accelerating free trade talks with Asia following hefty tariffs by US President Donald Trump, the bloc's trade chief said on Wednesday.

Trump has slapped a series of higher tariffs on Europe since March and in his biggest move, he imposed a 20% tariff on a majority of EU goods last month – before announcing a 90-day pause that is due to expire in July.

Negotiations with Washington are a priority but such talks will not come "at any cost", EU trade commissioner Maros Sefcovic told reporters in Singapore.

"I would like to underscore that in today's geopolitical context, we are making sure that the

EU is not putting all its eggs in one basket," he said.

"Bilaterally, we are accelerating the negotiations with Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia."

All four countries are key members of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, a region of more than 650 million people.

"And we are also stepping up engagement with India. We just had another round of negotiations just last week," said Sefcovic.

He was speaking in Singapore after signing a digital trade agreement between the EU and the city-state on Wednesday.

"Our goal here is also very clear – to keep signing agreements and remain a reliable, trusted and predictable partner in a rapidly shifting global landscape."

The commissioner said the EU is also looking at "potential enhanced cooperation" with members of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

The EU has a surplus of €154 billion (RM749 billion) against the United States in goods trade, but is in deficit for €104 billion in services, Sefcovic said, citing data from the European Statistics Office.

This leaves the EU with a surplus of €50 billion, which can be rebalanced by buying more

liquefied natural gas, soya beans and high-end computer chips from the United States, Sefcovic said.

Trump has said the deficit is several hundred billion dollars a year.

There is currently a "baseline" levy of 10% on goods from the 27-country EU and other nations around the world.

Negotiators are now seeking to avoid a full trade war if the higher tariffs come into force in July.

The EU will also be looking for signs of "de-escalation" when US and Chinese officials meet in Switzerland for tariff talks this weekend, the commissioner said. – AFP

Toyota cites tariffs as it forecasts 35% drop in 2025-26 net profit

TOKYO: Japanese auto giant Toyota yesterday forecast a 35% year-on-year drop in net profit for 2025-26, citing Donald Trump's vehicle tariffs among other factors.

Carmakers have been among the hardest-hit by the US president's multi-pronged assault on free trade.

On top of a 25% tariff already placed on finished imported cars, the Trump administration on Saturday imposed a similar duty on auto parts including engines and transmissions.

For the current financial year that began in April, Toyota now forecasts net profit of ¥3.1 trillion (RM92 billion).

"The estimated impact of US tariffs in April and May 2025 have been tentatively factored in," the top-selling automaker said in a statement.

The firm logged net profit of nearly ¥4.8 trillion in the 12 months to March, down 3.6% year-on-year but beating its forecast issued in February.

As of this month, it estimated the tariffs would impact 2025-2026 operating profit to the tune of ¥180 billion.

Toyota's "influence and position" mean its profit forecasts are being closely watched in Japan, said Bloomberg Intelligence auto analyst Tatsuo Yoshida.

"My feeling is that Toyota will somehow find a way to calculate the impact of tariffs and have it reflected on its forecast," he told AFP ahead of the earnings report.

"The whole country including suppliers would be left at a loss if Toyota doesn't issue some kind of benchmark," – AFP



Toyota Motor president and CEO Koji Sato speaking during a press briefing on the company's financial results in Tokyo yesterday. – AFP



US Fed pauses cuts again and flags inflation, unemployment risks

WASHINGTON: The US Federal Reserve on Wednesday announced another pause in rate cuts and warned of higher risks to its inflation and unemployment goals in a likely reference to President Donald Trump's tariff rollout.

Policymakers voted unanimously to hold the US central bank's key lending rate at between 4.25% and 4.50%, the Fed said in a statement.

Speaking to reporters in Washington after the decision was published, Fed chairman Jerome Powell said there was "a great deal of uncertainty about, for example, where tariff policies are going to settle out".

The bank has a dual mandate to act independently to tackle inflation and unemployment, primarily by hiking, holding, or easing its benchmark lending rate.

Many analysts have warned that the Trump administration's actions will likely push up inflation and unemployment, while slowing growth – at least in the short run.

The Fed said that "swings in net exports" did not appear to have affected the solid economic activity – a nod to the pre-tariff surge in imports in the first quarter ahead of the introduction of Trump's "liberation day" tariffs.

The US president introduced steep levies last month on China, and lower "baseline" levies of 10% on goods from most other countries, sparking weeks of turbulence in the financial markets.

The White House also slapped higher tariffs on dozens of other trading partners, and then abruptly paused them until July to give the



Powell departing after speaking at a news conference following a Federal Open Market Committee meeting at the William McChesney Martin Jr Federal Reserve Board Building. – AFP/PIIC

United States time to renegotiate existing trade arrangements.

Data published in recent weeks point to an economic contraction in the first quarter of the year, while the unemployment rate has hovered close to historic lows, and the inflation rate has trended towards the Fed's long-term target of two percent.

Powell also faced questions on the recent public criticism leveled at him and the Fed by

senior government officials – including the president, who has called for him to cut rates to boost economic growth.

An upbeat Powell said the criticism from Trump "doesn't affect doing our job at all".

"We are always going to consider only the economic data, the outlook, the balance of risks, and that's it."

Following the April tariff rollout, many analysts pared back or delayed their

expectation of rate cuts for this year, predicting that tariffs will push up prices and slow growth – at least in the short run.

"It seems highly unlikely that the Fed will receive a clear enough signal to act by the June meeting, since the 90-day pause on 'reciprocal' tariffs lasts through July 8," economists at UniCredit wrote in a recent note to clients, adding they did not expect a rate cut before September. – AFP

Trump to rescind and replace AI chip export curbs

➤ Biden-era rule divided world into three tiers, with most countries subject to caps

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's administration plans to rescind and modify a Joe Biden-era rule that curbed the export of sophisticated artificial intelligence chips, a spokesman for the Department of Commerce said on Wednesday.

The regulation was aimed at further restricting AI chip and technology exports, dividing up the world to keep advanced computing power in the United States and among its allies while finding more ways to block China's access.

The Framework for Artificial Intelligence Diffusion was issued in January, a week before the end of the administration of former president Biden.

It capped a four-year effort by the Biden administration to hobble China's access to advanced chips that could enhance its military capabilities and to maintain

American leadership in artificial intelligence.

"The Biden AI rule is overly complex, overly bureaucratic, and would stymie American innovation," the Department of Commerce spokesman said.

"We will be replacing it with a much simpler rule that unleashes American innovation and ensures American AI dominance."

Last week, Reuters reported the Trump administration was working on changes to the rule that would limit global access to AI chips, including possibly doing away with its splitting the world into tiers that help determine how many advanced semiconductors a country can obtain.

According to the Department of Commerce spokesman, officials "didn't like the tiered system" and said the rule was "unenforceable".

The spokesman did not have a timetable for the new rule.

She said debate was still under way on the best course of action.

The Biden rule was set to take effect on May 15.

Shares of Nvidia, an AI chip designer whose sales could rise if the rule were changed to increase exports, ended 3% higher after the news came out on Wednesday, but then dipped 0.7% in after-hours trade.

The Biden rule divided the world into three tiers – 17 countries and Taiwan were in the first tier, which could receive unlimited chips.

Some 120 other countries were in the second tier, which was subject to caps on the number of chips the countries could receive.

In the third tier, countries of concern including China, Russia, Iran and North Korea were blocked from the chips.

But Trump administration officials are weighing discarding the tiered approach to access artificial intelligence chips and replacing it with a global licensing regime with government-to-government agreements, sources said last week. – Reuters

Emirates announces record US\$6.2 billion gross profit

DUBAI: Dubai's Emirates Group, which includes the Middle East's biggest airline, announced yesterday gross annual profit of US\$6.2 billion (RM26.5 billion), its third record in three years.

The 18% rise in profit, based on strong customer demand, slimmed to US\$5.6 billion after the UAE's recently introduced corporate tax, which was applied for a full financial year for the first time.

"The Emirates Group has raised the bar to set new records for profit, revenue and cash assets," chairman Sheikh Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum said in a statement.

Emirates airline, excluding the group's other businesses, posted a record US\$5.8 billion pre-tax profit, up 20% from the year before.

The group invested US\$3.8 billion in new aircraft, infrastructure and technology "to support its growth plans", the statement said.

Its workforce grew by 9% to an unprecedented 121,223 employees.

State-owned Emirates Group operates the world's largest long-haul carrier.

As of March, it had 314 aircraft pending delivery, including 61 A350s and 205 Boeing 777s, the statement said.

It said it was retrofitting 219 aircraft at a cost of US\$5 billion to make up for delayed Boeing orders. – AFP

Google share price plunges after Apple executive's court testimony

WASHINGTON: Shares in Google parent Alphabet plunged more than 8% on Wednesday after Apple executive Eddy Cue testified in federal court that Google's search traffic on Apple devices declined last month for the first time in over two decades.

Cue, Apple's senior vice-president of services, told the Washington antitrust trial that Google was losing ground to AI alternatives like ChatGPT and Perplexity.

His revelation that this decline "has never happened in 22 years" sent shockwaves through Wall Street, wiping more than US\$170 billion from Google's market capitalisation in a single trading session.

The testimony came during a pivotal trial where district judge Amit Mehta will determine remedies for Google's previously ruled illegal search monopoly.

The case, ongoing since 2020, has exposed Google's practice of paying Apple tens of billions of dollars annually to remain the default search engine on Safari browsers and Apple smartphones.

Investors were further unsettled when Cue suggested Apple might soon offer AI alternatives as default search options on its devices, heightening concerns that Google's advertising revenue could face serious threats from AI competitors.

With the trial set to conclude today, government lawyers are pushing the judge to order Google to divest its Chrome browser.

They argue that AI technologies will only strengthen Google's dominance by leveraging its vast data resources across products like Maps, YouTube and Chrome to stifle competition.

However, Cue's testimony bolstered Google's defence that AI is already disrupting its search dominance, with chatbots now posing legitimate threats to its business model. – AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: MAY 8

Bursa Trade Statistic

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

8 May 2025

Participation		Retail (16.89%)	Institution (42.13%)	Foreign (40.98%)
Net (in RM mil.)		Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)
-42.57		+86.00	-43.42	
Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	Bought (in RM mil.)
438.25	480.82	1188.72	1102.72	1092.66
				1136.09

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

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

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	11,491.80 -27.78
FBMKLCI	1,542.74 -7.16
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	507.49 -2.01
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	153.01 +0.72
CONSTRUCTION	277.88 -0.30
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,054.80 -133.70
ENERGY	686.44 +1.39
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	511.17 +2.70
HEALTH CARE	1,891.15 -25.05
TRANSPORTATION	986.87 +3.53
PROPERTY	1,008.48 +1.81
PLANTATION	7,201.03 -104.20
FBMSHA	11,433.30 -4.68
FBMACE	4,660.86 +9.25
TECHNOLOGY	49.83 +1.07
TURNOVER: 3.365 bil	
VALUE: RM2.719 bil	

Bursa loses early gains on profit-taking to end lower

BURSA Malaysia gave up early gains to close lower yesterday, as profit-taking emerged in selected financial services counters, amid cautious sentiment on the regional market, an analyst said.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI slipped 0.46%, or 7.16 points, to 1,542.74 from yesterday's close of 1,549.90.

Maybank and CIMB were the top two contributors to the benchmark index's decline, falling 12 sen to RM9.88 and 8 sen to RM6.87, respectively, with a combined negative contribution of 3.55 points.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said the local benchmark index was unable to extend the momentum from Wednesday's gains as sentiment turned cautious despite a broadly supportive global backdrop.

"As anticipated, the US Federal Reserve (Fed) maintained its policy rate at 4.25-4.5 per cent, while flagging heightened uncertainty and signalling two-sided risks.

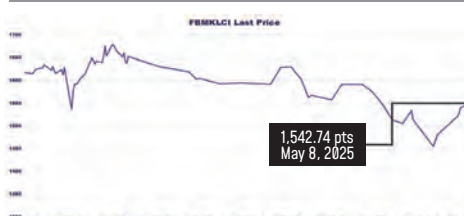
"In addition to the Fed's Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) decision, Bank Negara Malaysia's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting also concluded today with a decision to keep the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) unchanged," he told Bernama.

Among other heavyweights, Public Bank shed 2 sen to RM4.45, CelcomDigi declined 4 sen to RM3.87, Hong Leong Bank dipped 6 sen to RM19.94, while Tenaga Nasional gained 14 sen to RM14.30 and IHH Healthcare added 1 sen to RM7.01.

For active stocks, Natigate increased 9 sen to RMRM1.58, Tanco rose 1.5 sen to 91.5 sen, Veleso and MYEG earned half-a-sen each to 16 sen and 90 sen, respectively, while Fibromat slid 5.5 sen to 49.5 sen.

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWFI	0.150	-0.010	-6.25	2,007,377
HSI-CWEI	0.145	-	-	1,703,275
HSI-PWFR	0.150	-0.010	-6.25	1,628,855
HSI-CWEP	0.110	-	-	1,113,725
NATGATE	1.580	+0.090	+6.04	776,949
SAPNRG	0.045	-	-	773,032
YTLPOWER-C77	0.040	-	-	568,595
HSI-PWFM	0.085	-0.015	-15.00	567,043
HSI-CWGB	0.220	+0.040	+22.22	557,320
HSI-CWEY	0.255	+0.010	+4.08	407,562
TANCO	0.915	+0.015	+1.67	361,167
XIAOMI-C36	0.165	-	-	334,061
VELESTO	0.160	+0.005	+3.23	327,327
HSI-PWFI	0.240	+0.005	+2.13	320,996
MYEG	0.900	+0.005	+0.56	303,796
GAMUDA-C2R	0.065	-	-	295,731
FIBRO	0.495	-0.055	-10.00	294,519
YTL	2.110	+0.060	+2.93	291,658
PHARMA	0.300	+0.045	+17.65	260,554
SIMEPROP	1.430	-	-	258,974



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
DIN045801028	102.100	+0.900	4
PETDAG	19.820	+0.440	4,064
HEIM	27.400	+0.400	1,506
MPI	19.900	+0.340	1,322
KLCC	8.920	+0.170	2,302
SAB	3.220	+0.150	93
ALLIANZ	19.100	+0.140	683
PGF	1.900	+0.140	10
TENAGA	14.300	+0.140	199,234
MALPAC	0.880	+0.130	11
UWC	2.230	+0.130	26,241
VITROX	3.420	+0.120	31,961
SAM	3.660	+0.110	12,458
VSTECs	3.060	+0.110	3,762
DUFU	1.240	+0.100	129,185
FRONTN	3.790	+0.100	59,285
ALIBABA-C41	0.385	+0.090	4
INARI	1.980	+0.090	170,968
NATGATE	1.580	+0.090	776,949
AJI	14.380	+0.080	52

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
YTL-C1H	0.015	+200.00	881
NATGATE-CI	0.010	+100.00	7,431
SAPNRG-WA	0.010	+100.00	14,307
TENAGA-C2S	0.020	+100.00	47,108
ZENTECH	0.010	+100.00	173
MAXIS-C52	0.125	+66.67	140
VITROX-C8	0.025	+66.67	4,260
NATGATE-CK	0.040	+60.00	35,733
DRBHCOMC3K	0.015	+50.00	22,192
HANDAL-WB	0.015	+50.00	122
MALAKOFC55	0.015	+50.00	7,020
MALAKOFC59	0.015	+50.00	35,400
MTRONIC	0.015	+50.00	704
NATGATE-CG	0.015	+50.00	9,800
SIMEPROP-C39	0.015	+50.00	2,000
TENAGA-C2Q	0.015	+50.00	900
YTL-CIF	0.030	+50.00	247,780
DRBHCOMC3L	0.095	+46.15	41,913
YTL-C10	0.215	+43.33	11,920
YTL-C1C	0.090	+38.46	193

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	41,113.97	284.97	0.7
S&P 500 [US]	5,631.28	24.37	0.43
NASDAQ [US]	17,738.16	48.5	0.27
NYSE [US]	19,262.38	80.22	0.42
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,287.04	56.85	1.09
FTSE 100 [UK]	8,575.80	16.47	0.19
DAX [GER]	23,354.79	238.83	1.03
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	36,928.63	148.97	0.41
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	2,698.72	2.56	0.09
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	22,775.92	84.04	0.37
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,852.90	21.27	0.56
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	190.65	0.03	0.02
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	3,352.00	9.33	0.28
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,579.48	5.68	0.22
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	80,561.06	-185.72	-0.23
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,191.65	13.33	0.16
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,421.69	21.86	0.26
FBM KLCI	1,542.74	-7.16	-0.46
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	3,841.86	-23.51	-0.61
WTI [US\$/BBL]	58.65	0.58	1
BRENT [US\$/BBL]	61.67	0.55	0.9
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	3,346.40	-45.5	-1.34
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	32.53	-0.26	-0.8
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	978.02	-0.93	-0.09
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	456.8	-9.15	-1.96
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,419.50	-118.5	-1.24
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	448.75	-0.5	-0.11
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	537.25	3	0.56
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	47.94	0.61	1.29
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	9,198.00	0	0
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	170.8	0.2	0.12

As at 5:30pm, May 8

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [RM]	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	86.520	-0.920	1,094
DLADY	28.500	-0.400	35
AYER	8.000	-0.380	62
KLK	19.660	-0.260	4,603
PPB	12.000	-0.260	5,373
RVIEW	2.760	-0.240	2
F&N	27.100	-0.200	1,504
UTDPLT	22.740	-0.160	6,983
KPJ-C22	0.165	-0.145	100
EUROSP	2.300	-0.140	202
HSTECH-H21	0.630	-0.135	18,500
HARTA	2.070	-0.130	91,530
IOICORP	3.580	-0.130	14,946
UNISEM-C42	0.025	-0.125	25
HLIND	13.700	-0.120	772
MAYBANK	9.880	-0.120	120,188
HSI-PWFS	0.340	-0.115	200
TENCENT-HIF	0.120	-0.115	1,050
BAIDU-C4	0.115	-0.110	260
MBMR	5.590	-0.110	1,566

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING [RM]	+/- [%]	VOLUME ('00)
UNISEM-C42	0.025	-83.33	25
AEON-C36	0.020	-60.00	10
HSI-PWFI	0.035	-56.25	285
CYPARK-CJ	0.070	-53.33	2,466
EDGENTA-CS	0.075	-50.00	55
MFLOUR-CJ	0.005	-50.00	25
SUPERMX-C4Q	0.005	-50.00	7,600
YINSON-WA	0.005	-50.00	13,128
TENCENT-HIF	0.120	-48.94	1,050
BAIDU-C4	0.115	-48.89	260
KPJ-C22	0.165	-46.77	100
TMK-CB	0.085	-43.33	14,700
INARI-C30	0.090	-40.00	12,760
G3	0.010	-33.33	6,500
HARTA-C2N	0.010	-33.33	5,266
HSI-PWD2	0.010	-33.33	24,415
HSI-PWFI	0.010	-33.33	750
SALCON-WB	0.010	-33.33	54,729
SG	0.010	-33.33	5,610
SMTRACK	0.010	-33.33	10,001

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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AmMetLife pays out claims totalling over RM72m in 2024

KUALA LUMPUR: AmMetLife Insurance Bhd has announced claims payout of approximately RM72.6 million for its individual policies from January to December 2024, underscoring the company's mission of being a trusted partner in protection and financial security.

The claims payout comprises RM35.9 million in death claims, RM30.9 million in medical claims, RM2.9 million in critical illness benefits and RM2.5 million for total and permanent disability (TPD) claims.

AmMetLife CEO Rangam Bir said these claims statistics demonstrate the company's steadfast commitment to its policyholders.

"It also highlights the value of insurance protection in helping our customers navigate life's uncertainties.

"As a life insurer, the inherent nature of our business is to be a force for good in the world. By pooling risk and investing premiums prudently, we are always there for our policyholders in their time of need," said Rangam.

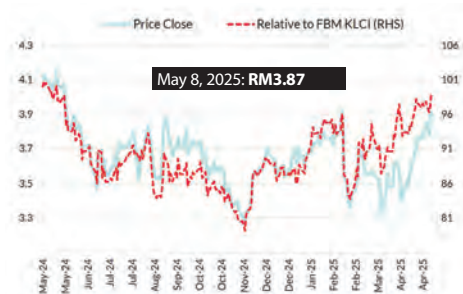
AmMetLife continues to enhance its claims experience with streamlined digital processes.

The company's proactive approach includes implementing digital claims submission, online claims status check, and simplified claims processing and tracking to reduce processing time.

In February this year, AMMB Holdings Bhd terminated its plans to sell all its interest in AmMetLife Insurance and AmMetLife Takaful Bhd to Great Eastern Life Assurance (Malaysia) Bhd and Great Eastern Takaful Bhd.

AMMB in a Bursa Malaysia filing, said the implementation agreement dated Oct 2, 2023 was terminated, and it was a mutual decision made with AmMetLife and Great Eastern Holdings Ltd.

CelcomDigi Bhd Buy. Target price: RM4.40



Source: Bloomberg

MANAGEMENT sees some slippage in the network integration timeline (from mid-2025 to 2H'25) due to changes in Digital Nasional Bhd's (DNB) operating model which would impact the remaining 25% of sites (4,000) to be integrated. CDB believes the MNOs/shareholders to "come to a landing" soon with DNB that would result in a revised wholesale framework. This is as 5G traffic would be shared with U Mobile as the second 5G infrastructure provider. While no discussion has taken place with the latter, CDB acknowledged that a fresh wholesale agreement inked going forward would be commercially-driven. We understand the existing wholesale structure allows MNOs to terminate their respective agreements within 30 days of an alternative 5G network becoming available or before Jan 2028 with prior notice given.

IT system upgrades will see incrementally higher opex in 2025. Management highlighted the bulk of FY25 capex of RM1.8-2 billion (FY24: RM2.4 billion) will be for IT system upgrades which would translate to higher opex in the short-to-medium term (largely from new software licenses). The higher opex and accelerated depreciation charges for network assets (expected to taper off in FY25-26) are baked into CDB's FY25 EBIT guidance of a low-to-mid-single digit growth which also factors in higher 5G wholesale charges.

CDB believes current mobile plans and pricing don't reflect its leading position in mobile revenue and market share. It aims to address this over the medium term through a modernised network, integrated IT, and strong distribution.

BUY with RM4.40 TP. - **RHB Research, May 8**

Ringgit down slightly on signs confidence in US dollar is back

THE ringgit closed lower against the US dollar yesterday as confidence in the greenback is deemed to have returned, said an economist.

Meanwhile, Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) has maintained the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 3% yesterday.

At 6pm, the local note inched lower to 4.2780/2830 versus the greenback compared to Wednesday's close of 4.2360/2435.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) has decided to keep the OPR unchanged, citing that the global economy continues to grow along with domestic demand although the downside risk to growth has escalated.

"On that note, BNM has announced a 100 basis points cut in the Statutory Reserve Requirement (SRR). Such a move will add RM19 billion worth of liquidity into the system that will translate into more lending and financing activities among banks.

"It appears that if there would be more trade deals with the US, it would lift the value of the US dollar as confidence in the greenback may have returned," he told Bernama.

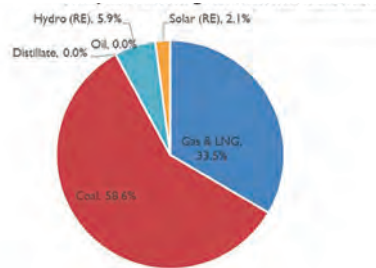
At the close, the ringgit traded mostly lower against a basket of major currencies.

It gained versus the Japanese yen to 2.9534/9571 from 2.9556/9613 at Wednesday's close, but eased vis-a-vis the euro to 4.8264/8321 from 4.8104/8189 on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the ringgit was lower against its Asean peers.

It fell versus the Singapore dollar to 3.2984/3025 from 3.2802/2862 on Wednesday close, depreciated against against the Thai baht to 13.0189/0404 from 12.9383/9691 on Wednesday, edged lower vis-a-vis the Indonesian rupiah to 259.2/259.6 from 256.1/256.7 previously.

Power & Utilities Overweight



Source: TNB, TA Research

THE Economy Minister indicated late last year the inclusion of nuclear energy as part of the national energy mix, with potential incorporation as an official energy source in the 13th Malaysia Plan. This follows a decision by the National Energy Council to consider nuclear power as an energy option. Malaysia is not alone, as numerous Asean member states are also exploring nuclear energy, each at different stages of development. Broadly, we believe nuclear power is a potential alternative to Malaysia's expiring coal power plants, given its reliability and low GHG emissions, which addresses the sustainability and supply security dimensions of the energy trilemma.

Given its ability to provide stable but clean baseload power, we believe nuclear energy provides a good alternative to coal, which currently accounts for 59% of Malaysia's generation mix. There is a sense of urgency, we reckon, as more than half of the country's coal capacity is scheduled to expire within the next 8 years.

While still early days, we note that TENAGA has in the past engaged in preliminary works on nuclear development, and as the national utility, we would not rule out its involvement should the country decide to go down the nuclear energy path.

Large reactors make for a suitable low carbon baseload alternative for the country's power system given its ability to operate at high capacity factor of 60%-80%, as per data from the World Nuclear Association, while data from the US Energy Information Administration suggests capacity factor of >90%. This is an especially pertinent factor considering Malaysia's heavy reliance on coal power generation for baseload power currently, which accounts for up to 58% of generation mix (in Peninsular Malaysia). - **TA Research, May 8**

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.3190	4.1780	4.1680
1 Australian Dollar	2.7930	2.6760	2.6600
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3350	3.2310	3.2230
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1170	3.0280	3.0160
1 Euro	4.8910	4.7240	4.7040
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5750	2.4770	2.4610
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3350	3.2310	3.2230
1 Sterling Pound	5.7460	5.5560	5.5360
1 Swiss Franc	5.2760	5.0450	5.0300
100 UAE Dirham	118.8900	112.5300	112.3300
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.6260	3.3710	3.1710
100 Chinese Renminbi	60.1400	57.5100	N/A
100 Danish Krone	67.1900	61.7200	61.5200
100 Hongkong Dollar	56.2200	53.3300	53.1300
100 Indian Rupee	5.1800	4.8500	4.6500
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0270	0.0244	0.0194
100 Japanese Yen	3.0060	2.9050	2.8950
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	42.8400	39.3400	39.1400
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5600	1.4600	1.2600
100 Philippine Peso	7.9000	7.4300	7.2300
100 Qatar Riyal	119.6300	113.5600	113.3600
100 Saudi Riyal	116.2500	110.3600	110.1600
100 South African Rand	24.5100	22.1100	21.9100
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4800	1.3600	1.1600
100 Swedish Krona	46.1500	41.9500	41.7500
100 Thai Baht	13.7300	12.1500	11.7500

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

SD Guthrie Bhd Neutral. Target price: RM4.89



Source: PublicInvest Research

Q1'25 revenue grew 11% to RM4.8 billion. The group's sales improved from RM4.3 billion to RM4.8 billion, as stronger sales in upstream Malaysia (+15% YoY), upstream Indonesia (+62.6% YoY) and downstream segments (+8.7% YoY) were partially offset by weaker sales from upstream PNG (-3.3% YoY). Q1'25 average CPO price advanced from RM3,880/mt to RM4,576/mt (Malaysia: RM4,693/mt, Indonesia: RM4,062/mt and PNG: RM4,938/mt) while Q1'25 FFB production climbed 1% YoY to 2m mt, mainly led by stronger production from Indonesia (+11% YoY) and PNG (+10% YoY), partially offset by a decline in Malaysian production (-7% YoY) due to persistent rainfall in Johor and Sabah, which affected 4,700ha planted area. OER was marginally lower at 21.17% (Malaysia: 20.32%, Indonesia: 20.99% and PNG: 22.84%). Meanwhile, downstream sales rose from RM3.8 billion to RM4.2 billion, led by improved capacity utilisation from 47% to 50%.

Excluding non-core items, the group's core profit jumped from RM211 million to RM567 million, boosted by stronger earnings from all the upstream plantation units, bolstered by stronger selling prices and lower production costs due to higher output. Upstream Malaysia pre-tax earnings doubled to RM285 million. Upstream Indonesia earnings also doubled to RM209 million and upstream PNG earnings jumped 4-fold to RM259 million. Q1'25 CPO production cost averaged at RM2,591/mt (Malaysia: RM3,700/mt, Indonesia: RM2,900/mt and PNG: RM2,170/mt).

On the other hand, downstream earnings tumbled 40% YoY to RM81 million, dampened by weaker earnings contributions from the European refineries and the Asia Pacific bulk operations due to weak demand and margin compression.

Neutral with RM4.89 TP. - **PublicInvest Research, May 8**

Domestic tourism boom

» Enfiniti Group founder Tiara Jacqueline explains surge in local travel

AS the founder of Enfiniti Group, Tiara Jacqueline is well placed to gauge the state of local tourism.

Enfiniti Escapes, which is part of the group, provides tourists avenues to escape from the hustle and bustle, as they soothe their weary senses by immersing in resorts situated in nature, which include the award-winning resort at Janda Baik, Pahang and the seaside retreat in Langkawi.

Speaking to *theSun*, Tiara shared insights on navigating the tourism boom.

What are the main factors driving the current boom in domestic tourism?

There is a beautiful confluence of factors fuelling Malaysia's domestic tourism boom. Yes, government incentives, improved infrastructure, and a stronger ringgit have certainly helped. But, the deeper shift is emotional.

Post-pandemic, Malaysians are rediscovering the magic in our own backyard. With international travel still pricey and unpredictable, travellers are choosing experiences that are meaningful,

Tiara believes a holistic approach is required to sustain domestic tourism.



restorative, and close to home. Social media has amplified this, especially among younger generations seeking authenticity.

People are no longer just looking for hotels. They want unique accommodations, one-of-a-kind experiences, and stories to tell.

At Tiarasa Escapes and Dream Forest Langkawi, we have seen this trend firsthand. People are yearning for the nature-infused luxury, immersive storytelling and soul-nourishing experiences. Whether it is glamping under the stars or journeying through myths and legends on a nighttime forest walk in Langkawi.

What are the key challenges facing the industry in sustaining this domestic tourism momentum?

The biggest challenge is scaling without losing soul. Manpower shortages are real, especially in rural destinations where local talent often migrates to cities.

At Tiarasa Escapes, we made a conscious decision to hire and upskill local youth from Janda Baik and Langkawi, turning them into hosts and guardians of our rainforest sanctuaries.

Through Enfiniti Academy, we developed a unique drama-based frontliner training programme that builds confidence, nurtures personality and empowers these young people to shine in customer-facing roles. We also train them in English proficiency, guest service skills and immersive storytelling techniques to ensure every visitor interaction is warm, sincere and memorable.

It is no surprise that our reviews almost always

mention the hospitality and helpfulness of our team – something we are deeply proud of.

For us, it is not just about delivering great service. It is about making sure every guest leaves with an unforgettable experience, crafted from the heart.

Rising operational costs, particularly for eco-conscious businesses, also add pressure. But, these costs are long-term investments. The real risk lies in mass tourism models that harm ecosystems and communities.

This is why we design with intention – our forest trails, luxury tents, treehouses and guest experiences are curated to protect nature while enchanting our guests. It is not about scale. It is about significance.

How are players in the tourism sector adapting their marketing strategies to cater to local travellers?

There is a clear pivot towards storytelling and emotional connection.

Malaysians want to support local, holiday local – they are looking to reconnect with nature. I believe they call this “healing” now. More than ever, travellers are seeking unique experiences that create unforgettable memories, strengthen bonds – and give them those Instagram-worthy moments to treasure and share.

At Enfiniti, our tourism ventures are naturally built around emotional resonance, whether it is the heritage woven into Dream Forest's tales or the nostalgia of slow mornings at Tiarasa.

We have embraced platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, yes – but not just for flashy content. Our messaging is rooted in values – sustainability, family, healing and rediscovery.

We also work closely with local creatives, influencers and tourism collaborators to amplify our reach



Tiara says Malaysians want to support local tourism and they are looking to reconnect with nature. – ENFINITIGROUPPIC

and stay deeply connected to Malaysian travellers.

Looking ahead, do you expect this domestic tourism boom to continue, and what measures are needed to sustain growth in the long term?

Absolutely. This is not just a trend – it is a mindset shift. Malaysians are falling in love with Malaysia all over again. To sustain this, we need a holistic approach.

Invest in sustainable tourism infrastructure, especially in second-tier and nature-rich destinations.

Protect and promote our

heritage – cultural, natural and culinary.

Build tourism as a force for community upliftment, not just profit.

Great tourism does not just attract visitors. It nurtures identity, community and pride in what is truly ours.

As we gear up for Visit Malaysia 2026, the goal is to be more than just hosts – we want to be custodians of wonder.

Through Tiarasa Escapes, Dream Forest Langkawi and the many stories yet to be told, we hope to inspire Malaysians to see their homeland through new eyes.

Experience *The Last of Us* in Petaling Street



The mural provides visitors with an Instagram-worthy backdrop.

KWAI CHAI Hong, a historic alley in Kuala Lumpur's Chinatown (Petaling Street), has transformed into a post-apocalyptic world inspired by the critically-acclaimed HBO Original series *The Last of Us* season two.

Designed to captivate fans and curious visitors alike, Max, the streaming service from Warner Bros Discovery, and Astro collaborated with Malaysian artist Akid One to create a mural of *The Last of Us* at Kwai Chai Hong, which will also feature a bespoke mural by Daphy with the aim to capture themes that define the show and are complemented by atmospheric sound effects and cinematic lighting, inviting the public to step into a world inspired by the series.

Whether you are a loyal fan of the Emmy-winning drama series or looking for the next Instagram-worthy spot, this one-of-a-kind showcase is the place to be this May. Open all day, the installations are free for visitors to explore until this Sunday. In addition, Astro customers



A captivating experience in the heart of the city.

will have a chance to redeem exclusive swag from the show through the My Astro app and Astro, until May 11, at Kwai Chai Hong, while stocks last.

The Last of Us season two takes place five years after the events of the first season. Joel and Ellie are drawn into conflict with each other and a world even more dangerous and unpredictable than the one they left

behind. Season two returning cast include Pedro Pascal as Joel, Bella Ramsey as Ellie and Rutina Wesley as Maria. New cast includes Kaitlyn Dever as Abby, Isabela Merced as Dina, Young Mazino as Jesse, Tati Gabrielle as Nora, Danny Ramirez as Manny, and Jeffrey Wright as Isaac. Catherine O'Hara also guest stars.

The series is available on Max and or streamed via On-Demand.

Spain enjoying tourism boom

SPAIN welcomed a record 17 million foreign tourists in the first three months of 2025 as the buoyant sector drives an economy outshining European peers, official data showed on Monday.

The 17.1 million foreign tourists arriving in the country from January to March was a 5.7% increase on the same period in 2024, Spain's National Statistics Institute said.

Britain, France and Germany supplied the most holidaymakers to the world's second most-visited country, which last year hosted a record 94 million foreign tourists seeking its sun, beaches and culture.

Spending by foreign tourists also climbed 7.2% to €23.5 billion (RM113.2 billion), the tourism ministry said in a statement, a welcome development for the government which wants visitors to splash more cash during their stay.

The tourist sector was one of the drivers of Spain's standout growth of 3.2% in 2024, well above the EU figure of 1%.

But the bonanza has sparked a growing backlash among locals who complain that an unsustainable influx of foreign visitors is driving up rents, saturating infrastructure and changing the fabric of neighbourhoods.

Spain aims to "diversify" destinations, make the sector less dependent on key seasons and "share out the benefits" across the country, Tourism Minister Jordi Hereu said in a statement. — AFP



Spain aims to 'diversify' tourist destinations and make the sector less dependent on key seasons. — PEXELSPIC

France honours first Concorde jet as monument

THE first Concorde supersonic passenger aircraft has been named as a historical monument, France's culture minister said Monday.

Concorde 001, which was the first of the 20 aircraft built and the first to take to the skies in a test flight in 1969, is now housed in the Aeroscopia museum outside of the southern French city of Toulouse.

"This plane embodies France's innovation and industrial strength in the aviation sector," Culture Minister Rachida Dati said in a statement on X announcing

the designation.

The Concorde entered into commercial service in 1976 and to date is the world's only supersonic passenger plane, travelling faster than sound at speeds that whisked an elite class of travellers between London or Paris and the US east coast in just over three hours.

The service was definitively retired in October 2003, three years after a devastating crash outside Paris that killed 113 people.

"This plane, a pioneer in

supersonic flight, remains in our memories," said Dati.

The plane, which was developed by French and British firms that became part of Airbus and BAE Systems, was operated by Air France and British Airways.

"Its preservation will provide future generations an example of our aeronautical expertise and futuristic vision."

The French culture ministry said 18 of the 20 Concorde have been preserved, including six located in France. — AFP



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Hong Kong's raucous Bun Festival

» Tourists flock to blend of Cantonese traditions, modern culture

KIDS dressed as real and fantasy heroes, drummers pounding a beat and sweet treats offered to powerful gods — thousands of visitors poured onto a small island in Hong Kong for its annual Bun Festival on Monday.

Held on the Chinese city's outlying Cheung Chau, the raucous five-day festival transforms the usually quiet fishing community into an explosion of colour and noise that blends Cantonese traditions with modern culture and draws locals and tourists alike.

Monday's three-hour parade — known as "Piu Sik", meaning floating colours — traditionally saw locals march through town with statues of local gods.

These days, local children dress up as both real and imaginary figures, including Olympic fencing champion Cheung Ka Long, Ne Zha from a recent Chinese

blockbuster animation, and the legendary Monkey King, Sun Wukong.

The five-day Bun Festival is said to date back to the 1800s, when fisherfolk drove away pirates and the plague by parading a statue of Taoist sea deity Pak Tai.

"It is my first time to visit the island and this showed me a new Hong Kong, completely different from downtown," said Cedric Linet, a 49-year-old French banker.

The buns represent good fortune, holding sweet bean paste in a crumbly pastry marked with Chinese characters for "peace" and "safety".

Crowds queued all day to get hold of the buns, used to make offerings to traditional deities and sacrifices to the souls of the dead.

The climax of the festival comes at midnight, when contestants climb a 14m-high tower covered in buns — hoping to be crowned "King of Kings" or "Queen of Queens".

Among those gathered were tourists



from mainland China, keen to get a glimpse of traditional Chinese culture.

Chinese students studying in Hong Kong, Gao Yidan and Cheng Qi, said they learnt about the festival on Xiaohongshu, an app similar to Instagram.

"The atmosphere of traditional culture is very strong here," said Gao.

Another visitor from China's southwestern Sichuan province said she appreciated Hong Kong's celebrations of Buddha's birthday, which fell on Monday.

"We love the crowded atmosphere here, even though today is very hot," said Huang Dan, a 42-year-old housewife. — AFP

The Piu Sik parade attracts huge crowds. — AFPIC

People take part in a bun scrambling competition during the Bun Festival at Cheung Chau Island in Hong Kong. — REUTERSPIC



To date, the Concorde remains the world's only supersonic passenger plane. — AFPIC

MOVIE REVIEW

BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ

It is rare for sequels to outshine their originals, but *The Accountant 2* pulls it off with precision. Directed by Gavin O'Connor, this action thriller sees the return of Ben Affleck's brilliant yet emotionally complex Christian, proving that sometimes, a second chapter can be more thrilling, more emotionally engaging and far more satisfying than the first.

While many sequels fall into the trap of "bigger but emptier," this film sidesteps that entirely. Instead, it offers a tightly woven plot, rich character arcs and an impressive balance of tension and humour. Audiences looking for just another action flick may be surprised to discover how deeply character-driven this story is and how much it rewards viewers who pay attention.

Consistency worth praising

Affleck's portrayal of Christian is quite frankly one of the most consistent and layered performances seen in an action franchise. Where many action leads are written to be superhuman or invincible, Christian is fascinating because he is both exceptional and deeply human. His autism is portrayed not as a gimmick or a limitation, but as an integral part of who he is, influencing his meticulousness, his focus and his moral compass.

What makes this portrayal even more striking is how the filmmakers have stuck to their vision. Over two films, Christian's personality, habits and quirks remain intact, allowing audiences to watch a character evolve without ever betraying the foundation set in the first instalment. It is this consistency that gives *The Accountant 2* its emotional weight. Rather than relying on cheap plot twists or flashy set pieces, the film draws strength from its protagonist's inner world, something that elevates it far above the typical action sequel.

Supporting cast brings heat

Of course, Affleck does not carry this film alone. Jon Bernthal returns as Brax, Christian's estranged brother, bringing his signature blend of gruff charm and emotional rawness.

The dynamic between the two brothers is one of the film's brightest highlights, offering humour, tension and moments of surprising tenderness. Cynthia Addai-Robinson's Marybeth Medina, now a high-ranking Treasury official, adds sharp intelligence and moral



Christian (Affleck, right) and Brax (Bernthal) team up once again, bringing brotherly tension and firepower to the mission.

DIRECTOR:

Gavin O'Connor

CAST:

Ben Affleck, Jon Bernthal, Cynthia Addai-Robinson, J.K. Simmons, Yael Ocasio

E-VALUE

8

ACTING

8

PLOT

9

Sharper, smarter, better

► The Accountant 2 surpasses original

grounding to the mix.

Newcomer Daniella Pineda makes a strong impression, holding her own amid a sea of veteran actors. Meanwhile, J.K. Simmons once again proves why he is one of Hollywood's most reliable scene-stealers. Every supporting character feels thoughtfully written and meaningfully placed – no one is wasted and every interaction adds something to the overall story.

More than just action

Yes, there is action and it is incredibly well-staged but what sets *The Accountant 2* apart is how it integrates action with character. Every gunfight, every chase, every tense confrontation stems directly from character decisions, not random spectacle.

The pacing is sharp, keeping the audience on the edge of their seat without ever feeling bloated or rushed.

The script does not drown in unnecessary subplots or side quests, everything circles back to Christian's journey and the relationships he builds and rebuilds along the way.

Visual, musical upgrade

Behind the camera, director O'Connor teams up with cinematographer Seamus McGarvey, whose work brings a sleek, polished look to the film. The action sequences are clear and crisp, avoiding the shaky-cam pitfalls that plague so many modern thrillers. The production design by Jade Healy adds atmospheric texture, while Bryce Dessner's score underscores the tension without overpowering the emotional beats.

These elements combine to create a film that feels polished but not sterile, stylish but not overproduced. There is a maturity to the filmmaking here, a confidence that allows the characters and story to shine without distraction.

Gripping standalone experience

At the heart of *The Accountant 2* is a

simple but powerful truth: this is a sequel made with care. It is better than the first film because it respects its characters, trusts its audience and does not try to reinvent the wheel just for the sake of novelty.

For fans of the original, this film is a satisfying continuation, not just more of the same, but a meaningful next chapter. For newcomers, it is a gripping standalone experience that delivers thrills, humour and genuine heart.

Something is refreshing about a film that knows what it wants to be and delivers on that promise without pretension. *The Accountant 2* does not need to shout or shock to hold attention, it simply focuses on great characters, a smart plot and consistent, thoughtful execution.

Consistency is key

The Accountant 2 is proof that action films can be smart, emotionally resonant and consistent across sequels. With Affleck delivering one of his most memorable performances, a stellar supporting cast and a director



The Accountant 2 promises a sharp, high-stakes thriller packed with action and heart.

who knows exactly what he is doing, this film deserves to be watched with the mindset that it is a standout.

Whether viewers come for the sharp action, rich character work or joy of seeing a well-crafted continuation, they will leave impressed. This is not just another entry in the action-thriller genre, it is a carefully constructed, confidently delivered story that knows how to raise the bar.

For anyone debating whether to watch, one thing is clear: *The Accountant 2* is not only better than the first, it is one of the strongest sequels in recent memory.



Anais (Pineda, left) emerges as a mysterious figure with deadly skills and a haunting past.



Brothers Christian (left) and Brax navigate trust, rivalry and survival as they face off against relentless enemies.

Reel brilliance

► Movies currently taking over Malaysian screens

BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ

FROM record-breaking dramas and animated classics to martial arts showdowns and chilling horrors, this year's May to August is packed with cinematic gems. Here is a curated look at the most anticipated releases and why they are lighting up the big screen:



Sophie and Howl soar through a breathtaking world of magic, love and self-discovery in Studio Ghibli's beloved classic *Howl's Moving Castle*.

Howl's Moving Castle (Re-release)

Creator: Hayao Miyazaki
Cast: Chieko Baisho, Takuya Kimura, Tatsuya Gashuin

Studio Ghibli's *Howl's Moving Castle* flies back to Malaysian cinemas by popular demand. After the successful rerun of *Spirited Away* in 2024, fans voted this 2004 Oscar-nominated fantasy as the "Most Wanted Ghibli Film to Return". Beloved for its breathtaking animation and moving storyline, the film follows Sophie, a young

woman cursed into an old body, who finds herself on a magical adventure with the enigmatic wizard Howl. Voice actor Kimura's alluring performance has long cemented Howl as one of anime's most iconic leading men. Beyond the film, fans can look forward to exclusive cinema merchandise such as collectable towels, stickers and commemorative cards. This revival not only celebrates Ghibli magic but taps into the wave of nostalgia sweeping cinema screens worldwide.

Bring Her Back is a new twisted possession horror from the *Talk to Me* directors.



Bring Her Back

Creators: Michael Philippou, Danny Philippou, Bill Hinzman
Cast: Billy Barratt, Sora Wong, Jonah Wren Phillips, Sally-Anne Upton, Stephen Phillips, Mischa Heywood, Sally Hawkins

Following the critical success of *Talk to Me*, the Philippou brothers return with *Bring Her Back*, a possession horror film promising to haunt audiences long after the credits roll. Centring on a brother and

sister who uncover a sinister ritual at their new foster mother's remote home, the film blends creeping dread with shocking twists. Starring Hawkins in a chilling role, the movie builds on the director's reputation for fusing emotional depth with skin-crawling horror. With a July 31 release date, *Bring Her Back* taps into the appetite for elevated horror and joins the ranks of must-see genre offerings this year.

Why this lineup matters

This wave of releases shows Malaysia's cinematic landscape thriving with diversity. On one end, local and regional hits such as *The Last Dance* capture cross-border emotional resonance, while global giants such as Studio

Ghibli continue tapping fan nostalgia. Hollywood's enduring franchises (*Karate Kid*) evolve with fresh faces and stories, while horror (*Bring Her Back*) and indie dramas (*Materialists*) push genre boundaries and emotional depth.

The Last Dance (Extended Version)

Creator: Anselm Chan Mou Yin
Cast: Dayo Wong, Michael Hui, Michelle Wai, Tommy Chu, Catherine Chau, Elaine Jin, Paul Chun, Vincent Kok, Kaki Sham

Already a sensation across Hong Kong and Malaysia, *The Last Dance* has become a cultural juggernaut, grossing over RM18.8 million locally and earning its place among Malaysia's Top 10 highest-grossing Chinese films. The heartwarming funeral-themed drama returns with an Extended Version, adding 13 minutes of never-before-seen footage. This cut deepens the emotional arcs, particularly the backstory of Dominic (Wong) and introduces new characters played by Kok and Sham. Fans are drawn by the powerful performances, especially Wai and Hui, who swept major awards and the promise of a richer, more emotionally complete experience. The Extended Version serves as a tribute to the universal themes of regret, love and redemption.



Wong (left) and Chu deliver award-winning performances in this heartwarming, record-breaking Hong Kong drama *The Last Dance*.

Karate Kid: Legends

Creators: Jonathan Entwistle, Rob Lieber
Cast: Jackie Chan, Ralph Macchio, Ben Wang, Joshua Jackson, Sadie Stanley, Ming-Na Wen

Karate Kid: Legends marks the long-awaited fusion of *kung fu* and *karate* as Chan's Mr. Han joins Macchio's Daniel LaRusso for an all-new story. The film introduces Li Fong (Wang), a *kung fu* prodigy who relocates to New York City

and after clashing with a local *karate* champion, prepares for an ultimate martial arts competition. Guided by the combined wisdom of his two legendary mentors, Li learns to blend their styles in an emotional and action-packed journey. For fans, this is a generational crossover moment, merging East and West, old-school discipline and modern challenges, delivering fresh energy to a beloved franchise.



Wang plays a *kung fu* prodigy in *Karate Kid: Legends*.

Materialists

Creator: Celine Song
Cast: Dakota Johnson, Chris Evans, Pedro Pascal

From *Past Lives* director Celine Song comes *Materialists*, a sophisticated romantic drama set in New York City's high-end matchmaking world. The film follows an ambitious matchmaker (Johnson) torn between a seemingly perfect new match

(Evans) and her imperfect ex (Pascal). With Song's signature blend of raw emotion and sharp social observation, *Materialists* explores themes of love, ambition and the messy intersections between them. As Song's follow-up to her Oscar-nominated debut, this film is positioned as an awards-season contender, promising biting dialogue and layered performances when it arrives in cinemas on Aug 28.

Johnson plays an ambitious matchmaker in Song's stylish romantic drama *Materialists*.



For Malaysian moviegoers, it is a rare moment when the screens are filled not just with noise, but with heart, craft and stories that remind audiences why they fell in love with cinema in the first place. Whether it is cheering for an underdog, being swept into animated

magic, trembling through a horror spiral or reflecting on love's contradictions, this season's lineup offers something unforgettable for everyone.

Which of these cinematic experiences will you step into?

KRU takes trip back to 90s

► Brothers reunite on stage after hiatus

FANS of iconic pop group KRU were elated as the trio of brothers reunited on stage for the first GenKRU concert, making a much-awaited comeback after a seven-year hiatus from the entertainment scene.

Held over nearly three hours at Axiata Arena, Bukit Jalil last Saturday, the concert drew more than 10,000 fans across generations who relived the golden era of KRU's music from the 1990s through over 30 hit songs performed by Datuk Norman Abdul Halim, Datuk Yusry Abdul Halim and Edry Abdul Halim.

Organised by Icon Entertainment, the event was also attended by Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil and his wife, Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Adam Adli, and local celebrities including Sherry Al Hadad and Aedy Ashraf.

At exactly 9pm, the stage came alive with a medley of high-energy hits such as *Fanatik*, *Malam Kita* and *Ooh La La* firing up a crowd that had packed the arena since the afternoon and who responded with cheers and nostalgic sing-alongs.

"Who among the audience is cheering for Team Norman, Yusry and Edry? But most special of all, who's Team GenKRU tonight?" the band asked. They were greeted with thunderous applause that echoed throughout the hall.

"We never imagined after 33 years in the industry, KRU could still pull off a concert of this scale. Thank you so much for your unwavering support. The number 33 is quite significant for us - 33 years of KRU, three members and we are holding this concert for

three nights at Axiata Arena. Alhamdulillah," they said.

Powerful emotions

The next segment showcased a line-up of ballads such as *2, Babe*, *Untukmu* (originally by Feminin), *Janji Kita*, *Di dalam Dilema* and *Bidadari*, further emphasising the sentimental side of KRU through the emotional depth of their performance narrative.

One of the most touching moments was when KRU performed *Perpisahan Terasing* as a virtual duet with the late Datuk Sudirman Arshad, accompanied by visuals on a giant screen - a special tribute to the legendary Malaysian artiste.

As they descended from the stage to interact with fans while performing *Dekat Padamu*, KRU created unforgettable memories for those lucky enough to be up close. This was followed by renditions of *Wanita* and *Apa Saja*, paying tribute to the band's female fans and the couples in attendance.

KRU invited longtime loyal fans and early signees under their label - Adam AF2 and girl group Elite - to join them in singing *Terhangat di Pasaran* and *Di Pintu Syurga*, respectively.

The band also performed a medley of songs they composed but were originally sung by other artistes, such as *Sedetik Lebih* (Anuar Zain), *Separuh Masa* (The Lima), *Romancinta* (Mojo) and *Hi Hi Bye Bye* (Ezlynn), each given a fresh twist.

The colourful night continued with a return to their hip-hop and rap roots through tracks such as *Hanya Kau*, *That's The Way We Jam* and *Inikah Ertinya Cinta*, reviving KRU's experimental identity that once pioneered urban and electronic music in Malaysia.

New album

KRU also premiered two new singles



The band and assorted guests entertain the crowd at Axiata Arena.

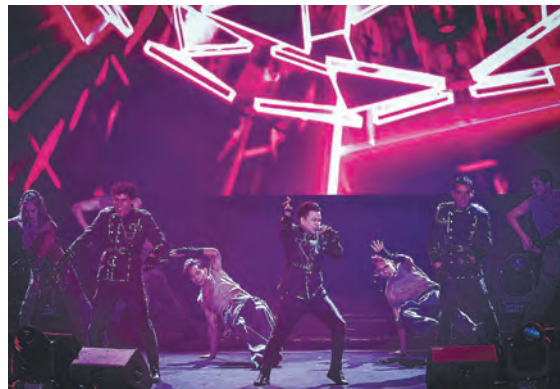
Voodoo and *One More Time* from their latest album *Kaset*, which was released that night.

"We have been planning this for some time. Coincidentally, all three of us were available and that is when the idea of a reunion took shape. After seven years, we missed the playful banter - but we could not just hold a concert without leaving behind a legacy. That is how this album came to life," said Edry, drawing laughter from the other band members.

The concert closed with three of their most iconic and anticipated hits *Mengerti*, *Jangan Lafazkan*, and *Awas* firing up the crowd who stood up, danced and sang along in a climactic, high-energy finale.

"Thank you all for being here tonight. Until we meet again. Take care and see you soon," they said before wrapping up the show.

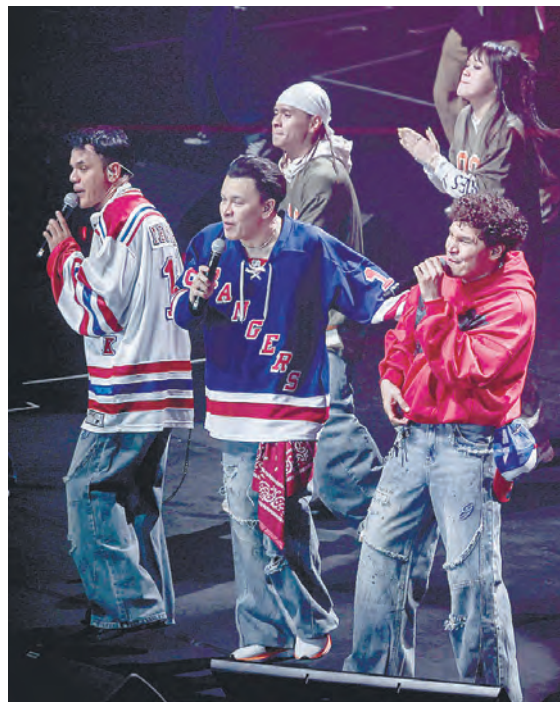
Following last weekend's performances, there will be further GenKRU concerts tomorrow and Sunday. The band will head to Singapore on June 28. - Bernama



The concert is KRU's biggest stage production to date.



The sold out crowd sings along to the band's most memorable hits. - ALL PICS FROM BERNAMA



The brothers still display great stage presence despite their seven-year hiatus from the entertainment scene.

Aina The End drops new single

JAPANESE singer-songwriter Aina The End has released her new single *Aria*. This powerful new track also marks her latest contribution to the world of drama, serving as the theme song for the newly launched drama *The Reluctant Preacher*.

Aina The End, known for her emotive vocals and lyrical depth, penned the words herself after deeply engaging with the drama's script.

Longtime collaborator Shin Sakiura, a trusted musical partner for over a decade, joined her in composing the track.

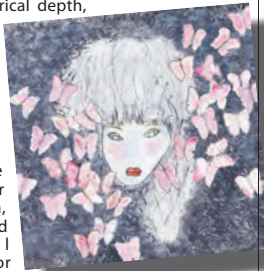
Aria, written specifically for the drama, is a tender mid-tempo anthem that captures the emotional transformation of its protagonist.

As the character gradually opens up to the warmth of others, she begins to face her past and her students with renewed strength and compassion.

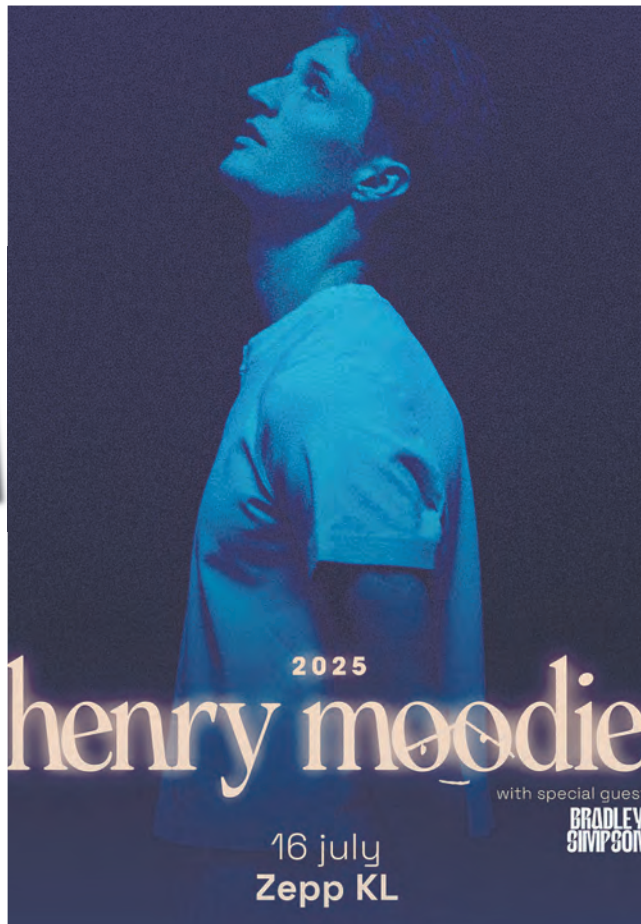
The song beautifully mirrors this personal journey, or opening of the heart, and extends its message to viewers and listeners alike.

Aina The End revealed during her live performance: "Even if you cannot speak perfectly that does not mean you are empty. You have lived through things, that is enough. So, it is okay to just be yourself."

With its radiant melody and comforting tone, *Aria* stands out as an uplifting and emotional highlight in her discography.



Aria is a tender mid-tempo anthem.



Moodie will play Zepp KL on July 16.

Henry Moodie to play in KL

English singer brings his tour to Malaysia

Rising star Henry Moodie, who rose to popularity with his hit single *Drunk Text* and other viral tunes such as *You Were There For Me* and *Beat Up Car*, is set to perform in Kuala Lumpur on July 16 at Zepp Kuala Lumpur – followed by Bangkok, Seoul, Taipei, Hong Kong and Tokyo.

Moodie will be joined by special guest Bradley Simpson of British pop-band The Vamps for his tour here in Kuala Lumpur.

At just 21 years old, he has already amassed over 600 million streams worldwide, secured a spot in the Top 10 most viewed UK artists on TikTok in 2022 and 2024, joining the ranks of Central Cee, Charli XCX and Coldplay.

His work is defined by emotional vulnerability and sweeping, timeless lyrics that set him apart in today's pop landscape. Moodie released his debut single *You Were There For Me* in the summer of 2022.

Mastercard cardholders have special access to presale tickets in Malaysia. Mastercard presale starts next Tuesday and ends next Wednesday.

Live Nation Malaysia members can secure tickets during the Live Nation presale on Wednesday. Tickets to the general public will go on sale next Thursday.

Celebrating iconic jazz family

THE legacy of Malaysia's jazz family The Solianos was celebrated during the Jazz & Blues Tribute Series at Hard Rock Hotel Desaru Coast in conjunction with International Jazz Day recently, highlighting Malaysia's rich contribution to the global jazz scene.

The Solianos, recognised for their multi-generational influence in the local music scene, performed a special live showcase alongside the hotel's in-house band Ground Breaker. Guests were treated to an evening of timeless jazz and blues, showcasing the family's enduring musical excellence.

The Solianos donated a rare handwritten musical score by the late Alfonso Soliano to the hotel, a composition titled *Blues in Bangkok* penned on original Orkes Radio Malaysia paper. Complementing this, a commemorative poster of Alfonso was also donated by the Merican family in celebration of the 100th birth anniversary of Tan Sri Ahmad Merican.

The memorabilia pieces were handed over during a Coffee Talk session where members of the family shared personal insights into their family's history and Alfonso's contributions to jazz.

"Their contribution reflects not only a deep personal legacy but also Malaysia's broader musical heritage," said the hotel's general manager and area vice president of hotel operations (Asia) Murray Aitken.



The Solianos.



Poster of late Alfonso.

"We are proud to have this historic piece join our collection and to continue celebrating the impact of music legends, internationally and locally."

The tribute series was attended by hotel guests and members of the media, who gathered to experience the live performances and witness the handover of the memorabilia the following day. The donated handwritten musical score and poster will be permanently displayed at the hotel.



Ticket prices for the shows start from RM98.

– PIC FROM FACEBOOK @AWIEALPAMOLO

Two icons to reignite rock spirit

TWO Malaysian rock legends, Datuk Awie and Search's KidDin, are set to electrify the local music scene with the Rockology Tour Concert 2025. Set to rock two major venues – Midtown Perda, Penang on June 21 and EduCity Sports Complex, Iskandar Puteri, Johor on July 5 – the concerts aims to reignite the rock spirit in Malaysia.

Awie said he accepted the invitation to participate in the concert because of the mission and spirit carried by the tour.

"Part of the funds or profits generated from this concert will go towards our corporate social responsibility programme, namely 'Wings in Prison Concert', a special project to reach out to communities that need attention and rehabilitation support.

"This is our way of giving back to society, especially to those who have been isolated from the outside world," he said.

Tickets prices start from RM98. – Bernama

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(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perolehan akan dilelong semula pada 21-05-2025)

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG DALAM KESAMPAHAN NO. PA-28NC-599-09/2024

Per: Ang Chee Hwa (No. K/P: 780321-07-5621) Penghujung Penghakiman

Ex parte: Hong Leong Bank Berhad (No. Syarikat: 193401000023 (97141-X)) Pemilut Penghakiman

NOTIS

Dalam perkara Petyen Pemilut yang bertarikh pada 26-02-2025

Kepada: Ang Chee Hwa No. 39, Lebuhan Nakoda Taman Telok Air Tawar 13050 Butterworth, Pulau Pinang Dan/atau

d/ang Huat Pallet Wood Sdn. Bhd., PMS 907, Mukim 12 Ladang Juru, Simpang Ampat 14100 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu Petyen Pemilut telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh Hong Leong Bank Berhad yang berlatarbelak di Tingkat 30, Menara Hong Leong, No. 6, Jalan Damansara, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan supaya Petyen Pemilut tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menggunakan salinan-salinannya berserta satu salinan temerlekat Perintah Untuk Penyampaian Ganti pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Pulau Pinang dan di tempat kediaman premis terakhir Penghujung Penghakiman di No. 39, Lebuhan Nakoda, Taman Telok Air Tawar, 13050 Butterworth, Pulau Pinang dan di d/ang Huat Pallet Wood Sdn. Bhd., PMS 907, Mukim 12, Ladang Juru, Simpang Ampat, 14100 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang dan juga dengan menyerahkan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhir hari tarikh tersebut berhubung tempoh penghapusan yang berkuatkuasa "The Sun" dan bahawa penyampaian dan penyerahan sedemikian difikatkan penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup akan Petyen Pemilut tersebut kepada kamu (7) hari selepas hari terakhir penghapusan atau penyerahan sedemikian Notis ini mengikut masa yang berkenaan.

DAN SELANJUTNYA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa Petyen Pemilut tersebut akan difikatkan di Mahkamah ini pada 04 Jun, 2025 pada pukul 9.00 pagi pada hari yang mana kamu dikehendaki hadir dan jika kamu tidak hadir Mahkamah boleh membuat Perintah Kehakiman terhadap kamu dalam ketidakhadiran kamu.

Petyen Pemilut tersebut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini. Berakhir pada 24 April 2025.

AINA NABILA BINTI MUHAMMAD AZHAR Penolong Kanan Pentadbir Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia Georgetown

Notis ini difailkan oleh Teuan Kei Ooi & Lee Hong, Peguacara bagi Pemilut Penghakiman yang dinamakan di atas dan alamat untuk penyampaian kepadanya ialah di 53, Tingkat 1, Lebuhan Pinang, 10300 Pulau Pinang.

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Sharma announces retirement

India captain to step out of Test cricket in June

INDIA captain Rohit Sharma (pic) yesterday announced his retirement from Test cricket ahead of the team's tour of England starting next month, but will continue to play the shorter 50-over format.

In 67 Tests, Rohit scored 4,301 runs including 12 centuries with a best of 212 against South Africa in 2019 and an average of over 40. He captained India in 24 Tests with 12 wins, nine defeats and three draws.

"Hello everyone I would just like to share that I am retiring from Test cricket," the 38-year-old Rohit wrote on *Instagram*.

"It's been an absolute honour to represent my country in whites. Thank you for all the love and support over the years. I will continue to represent India in the ODI format."

Rohit, who quit T20 internationals alongside Virat Kohli after India's World Cup triumph in Barbados last year, recently led the team to an ODI Champions Trophy title in Dubai.

India will begin a five-Test series in England in June-July and the team now needs a new Test skipper.

India's cricket board said, "Rohit Sharma has informed us of his decision to retire from Test cricket. A legend of the red-ball game."

"We will soon announce a new Test captain - it's time for the next generation to rise."

Rohit began his Test career in 2013, but it was five years later that he came into his own in the five-day format as a swashbuckling opener and later took over as captain from Kohli. - AFP



DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISTER DI KUALA KUBU BHARU DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ENSAR, MALAYSIA GUAMAM CIVIL NO. BF-A72NCVC-32-01/2025

Antara MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) ...PLAINTIF Dan ...PLAINTIF

SHARUDIN BIN SHAMSUDIN (NO. K/P: 580802-08-6365) ...DEFENDAN

NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN SECARA PENGKALAN

Kepada, SHARUDIN BIN SHAMSUDIN (NO. K/P: 580802-08-6365) No. 23 Jalan Hang Lekit 4 Padang Golf 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu Selangor

PENTABER HARTIA PUSAKA BAGI AMMAT BIN ABAN (NO. K/P: 580802-08-6365) No. 23 Jalan Hang Lekit 4 Padang Golf 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu Selangor

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majlister Kuala Kubu Bharu dalam Guaman Sivil No. BF-A72NCVC-32-01/2025 oleh MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) yang berlatarbelak di Jalan Bukit Kerjagan, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah ini telah memberi perintah bahawa Writ Saman bertarikh 22.01.2025 hendaklah dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti kepada Defendan dengan menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada papan kenyataan di Mahkamah Majlister, Kuala Kubu Bharu, menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada alamat terakhir Defendan yang diketahui dan juga secara menyerahkan salinan Notis Periklanan untuk sekali sahaja di suratbhar tempatan dan bahawa penyampaian sedemikian hendaklah menjadi satu penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup dalam tempoh empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh akhir penyampaian dokumen tersebut dan pengiklanan notis tersebut mengikut yang mana lebih lewat.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah dalam masa empat belas (14) hari dari penyampaian dan penyerahan pengiklanan ini, memfailkan Memorandum Kehadiran. Kegagalan kamu untuk berbuat demikian boleh menyebabkan Penghakiman Ingkar boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 09 harianbul Mei 2025.

LL
Peguacara bagi pihak Plaintiff Law Practice of K.A. Ramu

Notis Penyampaian Secara Pengiklanan ini telah dikeluarkan oleh Law Practice of K.A. Ramu, Peguacara & Peguacara, bagi Plaintiff yang dinamakan diatas dan yang mempunyai alamat penyampaiannya di Unit G082, Ground Floor, Millenium Square, 98 Jalan 14/1, Section 14, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 017-7171474. Ruji/PAKAR/LITMDS (SS)17/2022 Email: jawpractico@karamu@gmail.com

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISTER DI KUALA KUBU BHARU DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ENSAR, MALAYSIA GUAMAM CIVIL NO. BF-A72NCVC-3-01/2025

Antara MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) ...PLAINTIF Dan ...PLAINTIF

MOHD HAMID BIN AMRI (NO. K/P: 610207-08-6023) ...DEFENDAN

NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN SECARA PENGKALAN

Kepada, MOHD HAMID BIN AMRI (NO. K/P: 610207-08-6023) SBE-3-03 Apt Sd Bakawali 2 Perumahan Jalan Comperanti 46300 Rawang, Selangor

PENTABER HARTIA PUSAKA BAGI AMMAT BIN ABAN (NO. K/P: 580802-08-6365) No. 23 Jalan Hang Lekit 4 Padang Golf 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu Selangor

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majlister Kuala Kubu Bharu dalam Guaman Sivil No. BF-A72NCVC-3-01/2025 oleh MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) yang berlatarbelak di Jalan Bukit Kerjagan, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah ini telah memberi perintah bahawa Writ Saman bertarikh 07.01.2025 hendaklah dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti kepada Defendan dengan menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada papan kenyataan di Mahkamah Majlister, Kuala Kubu Bharu, menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada alamat terakhir Defendan yang diketahui dan juga secara menyerahkan salinan Notis Periklanan untuk sekali sahaja di suratbhar tempatan dan bahawa penyampaian sedemikian hendaklah menjadi satu penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup dalam tempoh empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh akhir penyampaian dokumen tersebut dan pengiklanan notis tersebut mengikut yang mana lebih lewat.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah dalam masa empat belas (14) hari dari penyampaian dan penyerahan pengiklanan ini, memfailkan Memorandum Kehadiran. Kegagalan kamu untuk berbuat demikian boleh menyebabkan Penghakiman Ingkar boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 09 harianbul Mei 2025.

LL
Peguacara bagi pihak Plaintiff Law Practice of K.A. Ramu

Notis Penyampaian Secara Pengiklanan ini telah dikeluarkan oleh Law Practice of K.A. Ramu, Peguacara & Peguacara, bagi Plaintiff yang dinamakan diatas dan yang mempunyai alamat penyampaiannya di Unit G082, Ground Floor, Millenium Square, 98 Jalan 14/1, Section 14, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 017-7171474. Ruji/PAKAR/LITMDS (MMA)/105/2022 Email: jawpractico@karamu@gmail.com

Brevis blitz dims Kolkata's IPL playoff hopes

SOUTH AFRICA'S Dewald Brevis hit a 22-ball fifty as Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by two wickets on Wednesday, leaving the defending IPL champions in grave danger of missing the playoffs.

Chasing 180 for victory, Chennai slipped to 60-5 in the sixth over before Brevis hit 52 and impact substitute Shivam Dube made 45 to steer the team home with two balls to spare at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

Skipper MS Dhoni hit a six when Chennai needed eight off the last over and finished unbeaten on 177 with No. 10 Anshul Kamboj hitting the winning four off Andre Russell.

The result left Kolkata's chances of making the playoffs hanging by a thread as they need to win their remaining two matches and hope other results go their way.

"It was really tough," Kolkata skipper Ajinkya Rahane said of the defeat. "We were 10-15 short, 185-195 would have been an ideal total. The bowlers bowled really well but tough to be on the losing side."

On the way forward, Rahane said, "Pretty simple. Try to win two out of two, and then see what happens from there."

Dhoni, 43, still remained the biggest draw for the Kolkata crowd and the former India captain who played down talk of imminent retirement, saying he would entertain his fans as long as he can. - AFP

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISTER DI KUALA KUBU BHARU DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ENSAR, MALAYSIA GUAMAM CIVIL NO. BF-A72NCVC-36-30/2025

Antara MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) ...PLAINTIF Dan ...PLAINTIF

NOREHAN BINTALI (NO. K/P: 640630-10-7378) ...DEFENDAN

NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN SECARA PENGKALAN

Kepada, NOREHAN BINTALI (NO. K/P: 640630-10-7378) No. 25 Jalan 122/11, Medan Idaman OT Taman Setapak 51300 Kuala Lumpur Wilayah Persekutuan

MOHD OMAR BIN AHMAD MAZLAN (NO. K/P: 700926-10-5947) No. 3-15 Jalan Bangsaya 2 Apartment Roggerfa Fasa 1 Taman Bangsaya Selangor 48300 Rawang, Selangor

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majlister Kuala Kubu Bharu dalam Guaman Sivil No. BF-A72NCVC-36-30/2025 oleh MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) yang berlatarbelak di Jalan Bukit Kerjagan, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah ini telah memberi perintah bahawa Writ Saman bertarikh 17.01.2025 hendaklah dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti kepada Defendan dengan menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada papan kenyataan di Mahkamah Majlister, Kuala Kubu Bharu, menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada alamat terakhir Defendan yang diketahui dan juga secara menyerahkan salinan Notis Periklanan untuk sekali sahaja di suratbhar tempatan dan bahawa penyampaian sedemikian hendaklah menjadi satu penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup dalam tempoh empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh akhir penyampaian dokumen tersebut dan pengiklanan notis tersebut mengikut yang mana lebih lewat.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah dalam masa empat belas (14) hari dari penyampaian dan penyerahan pengiklanan ini, memfailkan Memorandum Kehadiran. Kegagalan kamu untuk berbuat demikian boleh menyebabkan Penghakiman Ingkar boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 09 harianbul Mei 2025.

LL
Peguacara bagi pihak Plaintiff Law Practice of K.A. Ramu

Notis Penyampaian Secara Pengiklanan ini telah dikeluarkan oleh Law Practice of K.A. Ramu, Peguacara & Peguacara, bagi Plaintiff yang dinamakan diatas dan yang mempunyai alamat penyampaiannya di Unit G082, Ground Floor, Millenium Square, 98 Jalan 14/1, Section 14, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 017-7171474. Ruji/PAKAR/LITMDS (NR)/125/2022 Email: jawpractico@karamu@gmail.com

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISTER DI KUALA KUBU BHARU DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ENSAR, MALAYSIA GUAMAM CIVIL NO. BF-A72NCVC-19-01/2025

Antara MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) ...PLAINTIF Dan ...PLAINTIF

1. NORLAJI BINI RIDZUAN (NO. K/P: 720105-14-5456) 2. RIDZUAN BIN MUSA (NO. 22 Kampung Chempedak 51300 Kuala Lumpur Wilayah Persekutuan

NOTIS PENYAMPAIAN SECARA PENGKALAN

Kepada, NORLAJI BINI RIDZUAN (NO. K/P: 720105-14-5456) RIDZUAN BIN MUSA No. 22 Kampung Chempedak 51300 Kuala Lumpur Wilayah Persekutuan

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majlister Kuala Kubu Bharu dalam Guaman Sivil No. BF-A72NCVC-19-01/2025 oleh MALIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (dahulu dikenal sebagai MALIS DAERAH HULU SELANGOR) yang berlatarbelak di Jalan Bukit Kerjagan, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah ini telah memberi perintah bahawa Writ Saman bertarikh 17.01.2025 hendaklah dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti kepada Defendan dengan menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada papan kenyataan di Mahkamah Majlister, Kuala Kubu Bharu, menyampaikan satu salinan perintah ini pada alamat terakhir Defendan yang diketahui dan juga secara menyerahkan salinan Notis Periklanan untuk sekali sahaja di suratbhar tempatan dan bahawa penyampaian sedemikian hendaklah menjadi satu penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup dalam tempoh empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh akhir penyampaian dokumen tersebut dan pengiklanan notis tersebut mengikut yang mana lebih lewat.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membatalkan tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah dalam masa empat belas (14) hari dari penyampaian dan penyerahan pengiklanan ini, memfailkan Memorandum Kehadiran. Kegagalan kamu untuk berbuat demikian boleh menyebabkan Penghakiman Ingkar boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 09 harianbul Mei 2025.

LL
Peguacara bagi pihak Plaintiff Law Practice of K.A. Ramu

Notis Penyampaian Secara Pengiklanan ini telah dikeluarkan oleh Law Practice of K.A. Ramu, Peguacara & Peguacara, bagi Plaintiff yang dinamakan diatas dan yang mempunyai alamat penyampaiannya di Unit G082, Ground Floor, Millenium Square, 98 Jalan 14/1, Section 14, 46100 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. Tel: 017-7171474. Ruji/PAKAR/LITMDS (NR)/125/2022 Email: jawpractico@karamu@gmail.com

McIlroy to defend Truist title

Northern Ireland golfer moves on after Masters win

HAVING won the Masters to complete a career Grand Slam and end a 10-year major win drought, Rory McIlroy is ready to move on starting at this week's PGA Truist Championship.

The 36-year-old from Northern Ireland has won the event four times at Quail Hollow, but this year the event has been moved to Philadelphia Cricket Club because next week's PGA Championship, the year's second major event, is being played there.

"It doesn't quite feel like a defense, but it's good to be here. It's always, at this stage of my career, cool to come to new venues, see new golf courses, and do new things," McIlroy said yesterday.

"First week, I guess, as an individual coming back and playing over the last few weeks. I'm excited to get back to being a golfer. It's nice to get back into the routine again and get back to what I know how to do."

McIlroy had put himself on the brink of the career Slam in 2014, when he won the Open and PGA championships, but he failed 10 times after that to win the Masters before finally claiming the green jacket with an

emotional playoff triumph last month over England's Justin Rose at Augusta National.

"I always had hope. It's not as if I wasn't going to show up at Augusta and feel like I couldn't win," McIlroy said.

"I always felt like I had the game.

And like I think, as everyone saw on that back nine on Sunday, it was about getting over -- I don't know what the right phrase is, but defeating my own mind was sort of the big thing for me and getting over that hurdle.

"I'm just glad that it's done. I don't want to ever have to go back to that Sunday afternoon again. I'm glad I finished the way I did and we can all move on with our lives."

McIlroy, who celebrated a birthday last Sunday, played alongside Ireland's Shane Lowry at a pairs event two weeks ago but this marks

his solo PGA return as well as his last tuneup for the PGA Championship.

After a week celebrating with family and friends in Europe, with McIlroy admitting that when he saw his mother "we were both a mess for a few minutes," he spent three days last week practicing and some time in New York.

"That period is sort of behind me, and I'm looking forward to the next few months," McIlroy said. — AFP



Raducanu marches on in Rome

EMMA RADUCANU was delighted with herself after getting through a difficult day to seal her first-ever win at the Italian Open. The world No. 49 was broken when serving for the match twice. She finally got the job done at the third time of asking, beating teenage qualifier Maya Joint 7-5, 6-7(1), 6-3.

But it was a tough build-up overall for Raducanu, who was given the last slot of the day on the new SuperTennis Arena in Rome and had her match further pushed back by rain delays. After a long wait, the Brit was proud of her ability to regroup after feeling like she had a "day off."

The British No. 2 had a lot of hurdles to overcome as she made her return to the Italian Open after a

three-year absence.

"Honestly, I think the level was really high today. I think Maya played so aggressive and anytime I dropped the ball a tiny bit short, she was just all over it," the 22-year-old told *Sky Sports*.

"I'm really proud of how I came through, but the level, it was really difficult to play and to close out the match was extremely hard!"

"But the crowd and the support was amazing given it's almost 11 o'clock at night and I really felt it and tried to shimmy along past the finish line."

Raducanu also had difficulty getting into a match mentality after spending some time in the city earlier in the day. "I found it so hard this morning, the wait and the rain and the delay," she explained.

"I mean I tried to come to site pretty late, I actually managed to go to the Trevi Fountain but I didn't make a wish though, the queue was too long and I didn't have a coin!"

"It was nice to kind of see the sights and then I had a nice lunch outside on a terrace somewhere on the street, it was pretty chill."

"The toughest part is trying to get psyched up for a match after you've basically had a day off until 6pm so that was hard in the warm-up but really proud of how I kind of came back in the match."

Raducanu now faces 21st seed Ekaterina Alexandrova, and it wouldn't be a surprise if she asked for a slightly earlier slot in the schedule. — Express Newspapers

Postecoglou hits back at Wenger

ANGE POSTECOGLOU has slammed Arsene Wenger's "crazy" claim that Tottenham shouldn't be allowed to qualify for the Champions League if they win the Europa League. Postecoglou's troubled side won the first leg 3-1 against Bodo/Glimt.

Despite languishing in 16th place in the Premier League, Europa League glory would earn them qualification for the Champions League due to a Uefa rule in place since the 2014/15 campaign.

United are one place above Tottenham in the English top-flight after an equally bad domestic campaign.

And former Arsenal boss Wenger, currently head of global football development at Fifa, this week told *beIN Sport* that Tottenham and United

should not be able to get into Europe's elite competition via the Europa League, urging Uefa to "review" their rule.

The under-fire Postecoglou responded to Wenger's controversial comments in acerbic fashion.

"Well, I mean that's a debate that's been raging for years, like at least the last eight days," Postecoglou told reporters yesterday.

"I've never heard that before. I've said it before, mate, Spurs does crazy things to people. It does, it does."

"You put that club into any sentence or any issue and invariably they all come out and try and diminish as much as they can."

The Australian cannot understand why Wenger raised the topic now, insisting the rules should be respected.

BRIEFS

Fognini's last hurrah

FORMER WORLD NO. 9 Fabio Fognini said this year's Italian Open in Rome will be his last appearance at the ATP Masters 1000 event. "I think it's a good time to say goodbye in this beautiful city, special city," Fognini, who first played at the Italian Open in 2006, told the *Tennis Channel* yesterday. "Since I was a kid I was coming here to say, 'Oh let's see, let's hope to play one day.' And now I'm in the opposite (end of my career). But I'm here with a smile on my face because I know that I had a really difficult time during my, I don't know, 20 years in Rome and I would like to enjoy the last lap." Fognini has won eight of his nine ATP singles titles on clay, including the 2019 Monte Carlo Masters. He said one of his fondest memories in Rome was beating then world No. 1 Andy Murray in straight sets in 2017.

Daly skipping PGA C'ship

JOHN DALY is skipping the PGA Championship at the Quail Hill Club in Charlotte, NC, instead choosing to play in the PGA Tour Champions' first major of the season. Daly, 59, holds a lifetime exemption to the PGA Championship after winning the tournament in 1991 at Crooked Stick Golf Club in Carmel, Ind. He also won the 1995 Open Championship. Daly entered the PGA Championship at Valhalla Golf Club in Louisville, Ky., last year. He withdrew due to a thumb injury before the second round after shooting an 11-over 82 in the opening round. He is scheduled to open play May 15 at the Regions Traditions at Greystone Golf and Country Club in Birmingham, Alabama, the first of five major championships on the Champions circuit, which is for players 50 and older. The second major, the Senior PGA Championship, is set to begin the following week on May 22.

Osaka inspired by Agassi

FOUR-TIME Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka said this year's claycourt swing feels different as she enters it with momentum and confidence following a run of victories.

Japan's Osaka beat Slovenian Kaja Juanovic 6-1, 7-5 last week in the final of the L'Open 35 de Saint-Malo, a WTA 125 tournament, to win her first claycourt title at any level. It was also her first WTA crown since becoming a mother in July 2023.

"I wanted to rack up experience on clay. I didn't really have too much of an ego playing that tournament," Osaka told reporters after defeating wildcard Sara Errani 6-2, 6-3 in the Italian Open first round on Wednesday.

"I'm okay playing on Court 16 if I have to anyway. The reason I came back wasn't to play on centre courts all the time, it's because I really enjoy the game."

Osaka said her decision to play in Saint-Malo was inspired by American great Andre Agassi, who rebuilt his career in the late 1990s by competing on the ATP Challenger Tour.

"I remember reading (Agassi's) book. There was a moment where ... he was saying he was flipping his own scoreboards. Someone came and yelled, 'Image is everything!' I would say that section of the book crossed my mind more," she said.

The former world No. 1 has often struggled on clay, having never gone past the third round of the French Open, in which she is set to feature in the main draw this month.

"I'm coming into it with a lot more wins. Obviously, I would say I'm a lot more comfortable on clay now ... I feel like clay is very strength-reliant," she said.

Osaka yesterday breezed past Swiss lucky loser Viktorija Golubic 6-2, 6-3 for her sixth straight win on clay. — Reuters

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Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH SESYEN DI KUALA LUMPUR
DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR
GUAMAN SIVIL
NO: WA-AS2NCC-1078-02/2025

ANTARA

LIM ENG THYE
(No. K/P: 600109-07-5735) ... PLAINTIFF

DAN

YAP RAYMOND
(No. K/P: 750929-14-5819) ... DEFENDAN

NOTIS IKLAN

Kepada:-

YAP RAYMOND
(No. K/P: 750929-14-5819)
No. 107-25-1 Bistari Condo,
Jalan 11640 Off Jalan Putra,
50350 Kuala Lumpur.

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tututan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Sesyen Kuala Lumpur oleh Lim Eng Thye dan Mahkamah telah memarahkan kamu dengan Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tututan diserahkan kepada kamu secara penyampaian ganti dengan menampalkan sesalitan Perintah Untuk Penyampaian Ganti dan Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tututan ini di Papan Notis Mahkamah Sesyen Kuala Lumpur dan dialamatkan kepada kamu yang diketahui oleh Plaintiff iaitu di No. 107-25-1, Bistari Condo, Jalan 11640 Off Jalan Putra, 50350 Kuala Lumpur dengan mengiklankan satu Notis sekali dalam akhbar tempatan berbahasa Inggeris, The Sun, dianggap penyampaian sempurna dan cukup ke atas kamu selepas empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh akhir penampalan atau pengiklankan terakhir.

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tututan tersebut akan didengar pada 26 Mei 2025 jam 9.00 pagi di Mahkamah Sesyen Sivil Kuala Lumpur melalui Pengurusan Kes secara eheview Mahkamah. Namun sekiranya kamu gagal mematuhi kehadiran secara persendirian atau melalui Peguam, Penghakiman akan dikeskakan sebagaimana yang diberikan adli dan sesuai manfaat oleh Mahkamah terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 23 April 2025

..L..
Tetuan Christopher Yeo & KP Chang
Pegacara bagi pihak Plaintiff

NOTIS IKLAN ini telah difailkan oleh **TETUAN CHRISTOPHER YEO & KP CHANG**, Pegacara bagi pihak Plaintiff yang berkhidmat penyampaian di Unit 9.08, Menara MBMR, No.1 Jalan Syed Putra, 50000 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan, Malaysia.
T: 03 2703 1605 F: 03 2703 1615
E-mail: general@ccclaw.com.my
Ruj: CC/CW/3073/2024/KP/TK

Spurs midfielder Maddison out for the season

BY WILL CASTLE

JAMES MADDISON will be out for the rest of Tottenham's season with a knee injury, Ange Postecoglou has confirmed.

Maddison was forced off in last week's 3-1 Europa League semifinal first-leg win against Bodo/Glimt, a result that put Spurs on the brink of a European final later this month.

However, should Postecoglou's side pass this week's test in the Arctic and book their place in Bilbao, Maddison will play no part in the final showcase after scans revealed he is facing an extended period on the sidelines.

"Madders from the first leg, so he's out," Postecoglou said. "He'll miss the rest of this season and it's disappointing for him."

"I'm disappointed for him because he's been a real catalyst for us. He'll miss out but that's been the story of our season."

Maddison, whose creativity from midfield will be sorely missed by Spurs in their push for silverware, is also a doubt for the start of pre-season.

It acts as the latest blow for the club, who will also be without Lucas Bergvall for the rest of the season due to an ankle injury.

Maddison wasn't the only key man to be forcibly withdrawn during Tottenham's first-leg win over Bodo/Glimt, with Dominic Solanke also coming off injured after netting his side's third of the game.

Solanke was absent from the squad that drew to West Ham on Sunday, but Postecoglou had more encouraging things to say about his recovery ahead of a potential trip to the Basque Country.

The Australian said at his post-match press conference on the weekend: "Dom's improving. We left him out today, but the medical team are pretty confident that he should be alright for Thursday." – The Independent

Kompany looking forward to good sleep

BAYERN MUNICH coach Vincent Kompany wants nothing more than a good night's sleep after his team won the Bundesliga title last week with two matches left to play.

The Belgian, in his first season at the club, said the constant preoccupation with the next match during the season did not really allow him to really enjoy the simple pleasures.

"Sleep, really sleep," Kompany said in a club interview when asked what he was most looking forward to after the title win.

"You constantly have the pressure of the next game. You achieve something but then you have to start building for the next achievement."

It was by no means an easy domestic season for Bayern and Kompany, with the club facing stiff competition from last year's champions Bayer Leverkusen, who also eliminated the Bavarians in the German Cup.

Bayern were also eliminated by Italy's Inter Milan in the Champions League quarterfinals.

"Sometimes you have these moments with the family during the year, but then your head is somewhere else," Kompany said.

"Now in the next few weeks I will leave some of that behind. But you can only do that after winning." – Reuters

Inter turns attention to fading Serie A title defence

INTER MILAN come back down to earth on Monday (12.01am Malaysian time) when they travel to Torino, hoping to relaunch their Serie A title defence, still buzzing from one of the greatest nights of European football in their history.

No-one was thinking about the three-point gap separating Inter from league leaders Napoli on Wednesday when Inter showed extraordinary guts and determination to get past Barcelona.

The reigning Italian champions have three matches to pull back Napoli before heading to Germany for their date with destiny, against Paris Saint-Germain, later this month.

"Inter have never chosen to prioritise one competition over another," said Inzaghi on yesterday.

"To sit down and say, 'I'll play for that competition and not that one' is nonsense. We've given our all in everything."

However, it looks like Napoli are

well on their way to a fourth *Scudetto* as Monday's (2.45am) match with Genoa is one of three fixtures against teams in the bottom half of the table.

Parma are six points clear of the drop zone with Cagliari a further point ahead in 14th, meaning both could have their top flight status secured by the time they face Napoli.

And Napoli's last four wins have all come without conceding a goal, giving the impression that the title is a good as wrapped up, especially as

Inter face Champions League chasers Lazio and red-hot Como after Torino.

Juve are at Lazio on Sunday (12.01am), while Roma on Tuesday take on Atalanta, who are five points ahead of Juve in third.

Bologna are a point behind Juve and the two Rome clubs in seventh and take on AC Milan at the San Siro tomorrow (2.45am), a few days before facing the seven-time European champions in the Italian Cup final. – AFP

PSG reach UCL final

Luis Enrique says team determined to beat Inter and lift trophy in Munich

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN coach Luis Enrique insisted his team deserved their place in the Champions League final and were determined to go on and lift the trophy after winning their last-four tie against Arsenal yesterday.

"Over the two legs we scored more goals than them and in football it's the most important thing, but Arsenal played a great game and we suffered a lot," the Spaniard said after PSG's 2-1 win in the second leg in Paris secured a 3-1 aggregate triumph.

Goals either side of halftime by Fabian Ruiz and Achraf Hakimi put the French champions out of sight in the tie before Bukayo Saka pulled one back for Arsenal,

while PSG's Vitinha had a penalty saved.

However, the hosts needed goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma to make several vital saves and Arsenal coach Mikel Arteta claimed his team had been better over the two legs.

"It is the match in which we suffered the most (in the Champions League) but we deserve to get to the final," added Luis Enrique.

PSG will now face Inter Milan in the final in Munich on May 31 after an extraordinary run in the competition which has also seen them knock out two other Premier League sides in Liverpool and Aston Villa.

"I think throughout the competition it is clear that the results are what counts, we

know that, but in the league phase there is no doubt we deserved nine points more," Luis Enrique claimed.

"The fact we had such a difficult set of fixtures in the league phase helped the team improve and grow."

"The statistics showed we were one of the best teams in Europe, and when we started to be more clinical, in a short competition, I think we have showed that we deserve to be in the final."

It will be PSG's second Champions League final, five years after they lost 1-0 to Bayern Munich in Lisbon.

Last year, in Luis Enrique's first season with the club, they were beaten in the semifinals by Borussia Dortmund. – AFP



Paris St Germain's Marquinhos (left) with teammates celebrate after the match. – REUTERS/PIIC

Amorim makes bold statement on Fernandes' future

BY RICHARD JOLLY

RUBEN AMORIM has vowed that Bruno Fernandes will not leave Manchester United by saying he is desperate to keep one of the best players in the world.

Al-Hilal are reportedly interested in the United captain and Amorim said he can understand why other clubs are casting admiring glances at the 30-year-old.

Fernandes has scored 19 goals and got 18 assists this season and is the joint top scorer in the

Europa League, prompting talk of a big-money move to the Saudi Pro League.

But Amorim is adamant his fellow Portuguese, who has two years left on his contract at Old Trafford, is crucial to United.

"I think it is easy to understand [his importance], not just because of the numbers but the way he plays, the importance that he has during his five years here," he said.

"He is a top player, we need top players. He is a leader, he's the captain, so he's really important. It's normal that a lot of clubs want a player like

Bruno, like [Alejandro] Garnacho, like others.

"But we want to keep the best players, and Bruno is clearly one of the top players in the world, so our idea didn't change. We want Bruno here."

Amorim had been adamant in March that he wanted to keep Fernandes when Real Madrid were reportedly interested in him while the United captain admitted that he had an offer to leave Old Trafford last summer, when he held talks with the club to learn about their plans for the future. – The Independent

Rafiq to make amends at KLIO25

Malaysian keglers aims to get his act right after last year's disappointment

NATIONAL BOWLING ace Muhammad Rafiq Ismail intends to make amends for last year's disappointment by winning this year's Kuala Lumpur International Open (KLIO) bowling championships, which will be held at the Sunway Mega Lanes, Sunway Pyramid here from May 25-June 1.

The 24-year-old, still buzzing from his runner-up finish in the PBA Scorpion Championship at the National Bowling Stadium in Reno, Nevada, the United States last month, admitted to performing below par in last year's edition.

"Last year, I performed quite badly in the KL Open when I could only finish in 24th position overall.

So, this time, I hope to raise my game as this will also be one of the tournaments where we will be assessed for selection to play in the

International Bowling Federation (IBF) World Championships (in Hong Kong in December) and the Thailand SEA Games (Dec 7-19)," he said.

Speaking at a media conference for the tournament at Sunway Mega Lanes yesterday, he also clarified that he performed poorly last year due to his delay in making the necessary "technical adjustments" at the tournament and not due to ill health.

As for Malaysia's challenge in this year's edition, which is expected to be more hotly contested with the presence of world-class bowlers, Rafiq expressed confidence in the ability of local keglers and does not view the foreign charge to be a big threat.

"It doesn't matter how many international bowlers are coming. Our players are also top-notch bowlers, including those not from the national team. For example, Musayyar Khalid won last year's edition and he wasn't from the national team either," said Rafiq.

Rafiq will certainly be hoping to be third-time lucky this year, having finished runner-up twice so far - in the IBF World Cup in Hong Kong in January and the PBA Scorpion Championship in Nevada - in his bid to remain as Asia's top-ranked bowler for the fifth year.

This year's KL International Open is set to be a thrilling affair with the participation of over 800 keglers from 12 countries, with the total prize

money on offer rising from RM250,000 last year to RM317,000 this year, thus making this one of Malaysia's most lucrative bowling tournaments.

In the Open Division, the winner will take home RM30,000, followed by RM15,000 (runner-up) and RM8,000 (third placing) while the purse for the Graded Division is RM20,000 (champion), RM10,000 (runner-up) and RM6,000 (third placing).

Some of the big names confirmed for the tournament are Sam Cooley (Australia), 2014 Incheon Asian Games gold medalist Yannaphon Larpapharat (Thailand), Kim Hyo-mi (South Korea) as well as Japan's Ryo Fukumitsu, Shion Izumune and Yamashita Tomokatsu. - Bernama

RESULTS

UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE (semifinal, 2nd leg): **Paris Saint-Germain 2** (Ruiz 27, Hakimi 72) **Arsenal 1** (Saka 76) - **PSG win 3-1 on aggregate.**

TOUCHLINES

ARSENAL have made an offer to the representatives of Ipswich's English striker Liam Delap, 22, as they seek to sign a supporting forward alongside a more experienced and proven option.

THE Gunners have also stepped up talks to extend the contract of France centre-back William Saliba, who has been linked with Real Madrid. The aim is to prevent the 24-year-old leaving for a cheaper price when he has one year left on his deal next summer, or on a free transfer when his contract ends in 2027.

THE future of Argentina keeper Emiliano Martinez, 32, at Aston Villa could be in doubt, with the Midlands club looking to sign a new stopper in the summer transfer window.

LIVERPOOL are ready to sell 28-year-old Greece leftback Kostas Tsimikas this summer.

ARSENAL, Manchester United and Chelsea all have an interest in Bayer Leverkusen's Czech Republic striker Patrik Schick, 29, this summer.

CHELSEA and Liverpool are leading the race to sign Bournemouth and Spain centreback Dean Huijsen, 20.

UNCERTAINTY around the final verdict of the 115 charges faced by Manchester City could extend into next season, but the club are still planning to spend big in the summer transfer window.

AL-HILAL are waiting for an answer from Inter Milan boss Simone Inzaghi about the Italian becoming their new manager and, if he turns them down, the Saudi Pro League club could make a move for Fulham's Marco Silva.

ENGLISH defender Lloyd Kelly, 26, has made the required number of appearances to turn his loan move from Newcastle United to Juventus into a permanent switch.

NAPOLI owner Aurelio de Laurentiis has intensified contact with former Juventus and AC Milan boss Massimiliano Allegri in case manager Antonio Conte leaves the club at the end of the season.

MANCHESTER UNITED are keeping tabs on 25-year-old Italy and Fiorentina forward Moise Kean.

Al-Ittihad complete comeback to beat Al-Nassr



Al Ittihad's Moussa Diaby (centre) in action with Al Nassr's Mohamed Simakan (right). - REUTERS/SPIC

HOUSSEM AOUAR scored a last-minute goal to help Al-Ittihad complete a comeback and secure a 3-2 win over Al-Nassr on Wednesday, taking them a step closer to clinching the Saudi Pro League title.

Sadio Mane opened the scoring for the home side after three minutes with a low shot.

The Senegal international then assisted Ayman Yahya to make it 2-0 for Al-Nassr in the 37th minute. The goal stood following a VAR review, even though the ball had touched Mane's hand in the build-up.

Al-Ittihad were the better side after the interval and Karim Benzema reduced the deficit with a header in the 49th minute.

Laurent Blanc's side equalised after a counterattack, finished off by N'Golo Kante who slotted the ball into Al-Nassr's net.

Algeria international Houssein Aouar, scored the winner in added time from close range following a cross by Moussa Diaby.

Al-Ittihad, who can clinch the domestic double after reaching the King Cup final, extended their lead to 71 points, six ahead of Al-Hilal, with four games remaining.

For Cristiano Ronaldo's Al-Nassr, now fourth with 60 points, the loss was a setback to their hopes of reaching the AFC Champions League elite next season, with only two teams qualifying from the league after Al-Ahli of Saudi won the continental title last Saturday. - Reuters

SHORTS

PFC players free to continue careers elsewhere

PERAK FC players can negotiate with other clubs to continue their football careers.

Perak FC chairman Datuk Seri Abdul Azim Mohd Zabidi said they don't want to give players false hope regarding the team's takeover process.

"Therefore, the players can freely negotiate with any team interested in acquiring their services," he told *Bernama*.

Abdul Azim revealed that three commercial entities are interested in taking over Perak FC.

This recent development brings renewed hope to supporters of The Bos Gaurus following the announcement that the club will withdraw from next season's Super League due to financial burdens totalling nearly RM40 million over the past three years.

Meanwhile, Abdul Azim said negotiations took place last week with a third party representing the interested commercial entities.

He said the primary focus of the discussions was to arrange a meeting with the owners of the entities to gather detailed information regarding the potential takeover bids.

"The discussion with the third party or agent went smoothly, and we hope the meeting with

the entity owners can be expedited.

"This is crucial to understand the terms they're proposing and how serious they are about taking over Perak FC," he said.

Kelantan committed to resolving delayed salaries

FOOTBALL club Kelantan Darul Naim (KDN) FC has stated its commitment to resolve the delayed salaries of its players, some of whom are owed up to four months, before the start of the new season.

Its president, Rozi Muhamad said that salaries were previously delayed up to seven months, but the management had settled at least three months' worth since early February.

"We are committed in this issue and have taken steps to resolve it, with four months left to be paid soon to ensure KDN can play in the next season of the Malaysia League," he told reporters after an appreciation dinner for club sponsors and strategic partners on Wednesday night, where corporate figure, Datuk Mohd Irfan Rizal Mohd Ali Napiah was appointed as the club's new chief executive officer.

Rozi also denied that the amount owed to players had reached eight months, pointing out the maximum was seven months and they were trying to settle what was owed.

On planning for the team, he said that the club would have about 70% new players and

management to mount a challenge in the next season.

... and need RM7m for new M-League season

THE Golden Deers need an allocation of between RM6 and RM7 million to prepare for the 2025/26 Malaysia League (M-League) season.

Its president Rozi Muhamad said the amount is based on the advice and guidelines set by the Malaysian Football League (MFL), following the financial management challenges faced by the team last season.

He added that a restructuring process has been carried out involving officials and players to strengthen the team while a new management team has been established, consisting of individuals based on their vast experience in various fields, to ensure the club is better prepared for the upcoming season.

Rozi also announced that the east coast club has forged strategic collaborations with several parties, including sponsors and the state government, to ensure the club remain competitive.

"The club is actively addressing the licensing requirements as stipulated by the MFL and the First Instance Body (FIB), with 90 per cent of the process now completed," he told reporters recently.



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Arsenal fall short again!

Defiant Arteta says Gunners were best team in Champions League despite painful exit

Paris Saint-Germain's Marquinhos (2nd left) and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia (right) jump for the ball against Arsenal's Jakub Kiwior (2nd right). - AFP/PICT



MIKEL ARTETA defiantly insisted Arsenal were the best team in the Champions League this season despite their semifinal exit against Paris Saint-Germain yesterday.

Arteta's side crashed to a 3-1 aggregate defeat after losing 2-1 in the second leg at the Parc des Princes.

It was a painful loss for the Gunners, who created numerous chances in the early stages, only to be denied by a series of superb saves from Gianluigi Donnarumma.

Goals from Fabian Ruiz and Achraf Hakimi put PSG in control and although Bukayo Saka reduced the deficit, it was too late to spark a sensational fightback.

PSG will meet Inter Milan in the final, while Arsenal face up to a trophy drought that has now extended to five years.

Arteta responded to the loss in combative fashion, claiming Arsenal were as good as PSG

and were unlucky not to have beaten the French champions.

"When you look at the two games their best player on the pitch has been the goalkeeper, he has been the difference for them in the tie," Arteta said.

"I'm very proud of the players. 100 per cent I don't think there's been a better team in the competition from what I have seen, but we are out. "We were very close, much closer than the result showed but unfortunately we are out.

"After 20 minutes it should have been 3-0. We were very close and for long periods of both games we were much better than them but we are not in the final and that has to hurt."

Not for the first time this season, Arsenal paid the price for a lack of cutting edge and untimely defensive mistakes.

And even Arteta had to concede the north Londoners were punished for their failings in both penalty areas.

"If we want to win this competition we have to realise that. There are certain things that are on us. You shouldn't just be understanding we are out. That is not the way I look at it," he said.

"This competition is about the boxes and in both boxes are the strikers and the goalkeepers and theirs was the best in both games."

Having failed in their bid to win the Champions League for the first time, the Gunners are still waiting for their first silverware since the 2020 FA Cup.

Injuries to key players played a major role in their failure to push Liverpool in the Premier League title race.

And Arteta insisted his wounded

side's gallant display against PSG - who had already knocked Liverpool and Aston Villa out of the Champions League this season - gave him hope for the future.

"The players deserve a lot of credit for what they are doing in the context of the situation and the amount of injuries, probably the worst state you could arrive here as a team," he said.

"You have to arrive in the competition at this stage with a full squad in the best condition, and we haven't got that.

"To come here with a different context and still do that, it gives me a lot of positives for the future but tonight I am very upset, so annoyed that we didn't manage to do it."

While Arteta saluted his players' efforts, he struck a more equivocal tone when asked if Arsenal have the quality to eventually succeed in their quest to land a major prize.

"It depends. This squad, two years ago, nobody believed that we could probably even qualify for the Champions League. Not even think that we could compete for the league," he said.

"Or have the amount of points that we had that in any other year you are a champion. Or have the run and the performances that we had in the Champions League. "But the reality at the end is you need something to lift that trophy and the disappointment is that it's not going to happen."

Now Arsenal have to find a way to recover from their heartache and Arteta said: "If you want to be competing and be very close to all the trophies, you better be able to deal with that." - AFP



Paris Saint-Germain's Joao Neves (left) and Football Adviser Luis Campos (centre) celebrate their victory at the end of the Champions League semifinal second leg against Arsenal. - AFP/PICT

Arsenal's Jurrien Timber (left) and manager Mikel Arteta look dejected after the match. - REUTERS/PIC