



'Engage seniors in activities that promote health'

Active ageing improves quality of life, reduces healthcare costs, and supports long-term wellbeing, says expert.

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No plans for new taxes

Government focus is on increasing compliance and improving existing tax system as well as implementing tax measures announced in Budget 2025: Finance Ministry

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Serious health risks lurk in floodwater

Apart from pushing wildlife such as snakes and centipedes into human habitats, it is often contaminated with harmful pathogens from sewage leaks: Specialist

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Parents in flood-prone areas must ensure their children stay away from floodwater, which is often heavily contaminated with bacteria and viruses, making contact potentially harmful. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Risks of oversharing

The more you communicate about yourself online, the more information you are giving to viewers, including individuals with malicious intent who may misuse this data for criminal purposes: CCID chief

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Islamic preachers must be proficient in English: PM

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for improved English proficiency among Islamic preachers to enable them to debate better with thinkers in Europe and abroad.

He said a good command of the language would enable Islamic teachings to be presented more systematically so that they could be understood in depth.

"In Europe (for example) a strong grasp of the English language (is required) to debate

with them (thinkers)," he said when speaking at the *Ilmu Madani* event on Wednesday.

Also present were Cambridge Muslim College founder and Board of Trustees chair Syeikh Dr Abdal Hakim Murad and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar.

Anwar hailed the strength and wisdom of Syeikh Abdal Hakim, who used intellectual language to debate and captivate the interest of people in Europe regarding Islam.

"Your strength is your ability to articulate brilliantly in English."

Anwar said Syeikh Abdal Hakim is a prominent public intellectual renowned for addressing challenges in the contemporary Islamic world, Bernama reported.

"He can engage with Islamic tradition and Western philosophy and culture."

He urged university students and youths to read books or scriptures together with lecturers so that the analysis could be understood clearly.

DPM pledges to achieve more success

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, on the two-year anniversary of his appointment as deputy prime minister and rural and regional development minister, has pledged to continue serving with full commitment and dedication to achieve greater success that the country can be proud of.

In a post on his Facebook page, he said throughout the first two years in office various challenges were faced but many successes were also achieved.

He said among these achievements was the introduction of a single channel for applications to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) courses, and the increase in the employability rate of TVET graduates to 94.5%.

He added that the *halal* industry's contribution to the GDP has reached 7.9%, with *halal* product exports amounting to RM53.72 billion while Risdia Holdings Group recorded a financial performance of RM37 million, with a projected performance of RM70 million by the end of this month.

"All efforts toward these achievements were implemented with one main goal, which is to make Malaysia a developed, respected and prosperous country," – Bernama

No plans to introduce new taxes in near future: Ministry

➤ 'Present focus on increasing compliance, improving existing tax system, implementing tax measures already announced in Budget 2025'

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has no intention of introducing any new tax in the near future, said the Finance Ministry.

It said the present focus is on increasing compliance and improving the existing tax system as well as implementing tax measures that have already been announced in Budget 2025.

"The government will consider first the revenue requirement, current economic situation, the national tax system's overall structure, limits and challenges, possible room for improvement, and most importantly, the impact on and preparedness of the people," it said in a written reply on the Dewan Negara website.

The ministry was replying to a question from Senator Datuk Seri S. Vell Paari who wanted to know whether the government has plans to introduce any new tax in the near term and, if so, what measures would be taken to ensure it would not burden the people amid the rising cost of living.

The ministry said among the taxes to be implemented are the global minimum tax,

effective Jan 1, 2025, on multinational companies with a global annual revenue of at least 750 euros and the 2% tax on dividend income starting from the year of assessment 2025.

Also to be implemented are e-invoicing in stages which started on Aug 1, 2024, for taxpayers with more than RM100 million turnover as well as the self-assessment stamp duty system in phases based on type of instruments or agreements.

In addition, there will be a review of the sales tax and broadening of the service tax's scope from May 1, 2025, and a review of the excise duty on sugary drinks from Jan 1.

The ministry said the government would ensure the tax measures announced are progressive and easily administered, do not have a negative impact on the cost of living or economic growth, and can generate a sustainable revenue for the government.

The ministry also said the government is conducting a detailed study on the best implementation mechanism for foreign workers' contribution to the Employees

Provident Fund.

It said engagement sessions with various stakeholders are being carried out to ensure that policies made are holistic.

"This initiative aims to improve fairness in the labour market by ensuring that social protection for all workers is in line with international standards under the provisions of Article 68, Convention 102 of the International Labour Organisation, which is the equal right of social protection to non-citizens.

"This step is also seen to increase the competitiveness of local businesses at the global level through encouraging the transition of businesses towards automation while also reducing dependence on foreign labour," it said in a written reply on the Dewan Negara website to Senator Datuk Koh Nai Kwong's question on mandatory EPF contributions for foreign workers, which would burden MSMEs.

The ministry said the move is also in line with the EPF's efforts to ensure that all workers in Malaysia, regardless of nationality, have retirement savings to deal with the risk of insufficient retirement savings in old age as well as access to social protection, Bernama reported.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had said during the presentation of Budget 2025 that the government planned to obligate all foreign workers to contribute to the EPF and that the proposal would be implemented in phases.

M'sia-S'pore Leaders' Retreat postponed

SINGAPORE: The 11th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat, scheduled for Dec 8 to 9 in Malaysia, has been postponed after Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday.

"I was supposed to go to Kuala Lumpur for our annual Leaders' Retreat, but had to postpone it due to my Covid infection. We are in the midst of finding new dates. I look forward to meeting again soon!" he said in a social media post on Wednesday, Bernama reported.

Wong thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail for sending him a "Get Well Soon" package to wish him a speedy recovery.

Earlier, Anwar, while presenting the second reading of the Supply Bill 2025 in the Dewan Negara, said the signing of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone agreement, originally scheduled for Dec 9, has been postponed to January due to Wong's Covid-19 diagnosis.



RESOLUTE ... Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Dr Johari Abdul ordering Pandang MP (PN) Datuk Awang Hashim to get out of the lower house after suspending him for 10 days from yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

Expanded scope of SST to be known early next year

KUALA LUMPUR: The list of services subject to the expanded scope of the Sales and Service Tax (SST) will be announced in early 2025, said Deputy Finance Minister Lim Hui Ying.

She said the list would depend on engagement sessions with stakeholders being conducted by the Finance Ministry.

The government also does not intend to re-implement the Goods and Services Tax (GST), said Lim when winding up the debate on the Measures for the Collection, Administration and Enforcement of Tax Bill 2024 in the Dewan Rakyat on Wednesday.

She said the new SST to be implemented from May 1 would be easier to understand by businesses and the public as it has been in force for over 40 years.

She added that it could still be improved compared with reintroducing the GST, which requires a longer preparation

period on the part of the government and industry.

"The government will continue to ensure that improvements to the existing tax system do not impact the vulnerable groups – in terms of reducing regressive effects and controlling inflation – before assessing the need to introduce new taxes such as GST."

Earlier, the Dewan Rakyat passed the Measures for the Collection, Administration and Enforcement of Tax Bill 2024 with a majority of votes in agreement after the third reading tabled by Lim.

The Bill aims to implement amendments to improve the administration of direct and indirect taxes, especially in terms of tax collection, administration and enforcement processes.

The Labuan Business Activity Tax (Amendment) (No 2) Bill 2024 was also passed. – Bernama

Users urged to be wary of oversharing online

➤ Experts warn against digital overexposure amid rising cybersecurity and psychological risks

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: Commercial Crime Investigation Department director Datuk Seri Ramli Mohamed Yusof has warned against oversharing personal details online, especially on social media, as doing so can have serious consequences.

He said while he is aware that data has become one of the most valuable assets in today's ICT-driven era, the ease with which personal information is "blindly shared" poses significant security threats.

"The more you share your data with the public through social media, the more information you are giving to viewers, including individuals with malicious intent who may misuse this data for criminal purposes," he said.

Ramli said a major risk in sharing too much information is the fact that AI programmes can now mimic voices, accents and intonations.

The technology can even be used to translate different languages, amplifying the potential for misuse.

Ramli added that the stakes are higher where child pornography can now be "deepfakes" and sharing pictures of children on social media significantly increases the risk of such content being misused and falling into the wrong hands,

including predators on the dark web.

He said such data can be used for blackmail or other criminal purposes, and urged the public to be mindful of their online conduct.

"Avoid sharing pictures of your minor children in their bathing suits at a swimming pool as they could end up on paedophile sites, and always be aware of who your social media viewers are," he said.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) centre for psychological and counselling services senior psychology officer and director Dr Zulfikar Ahmad said oversharing on social media can have adverse consequences despite its positive elements, such as fostering friendships, sharing experiences and advocating for causes.

"Sharing on social media should be balanced with maintaining offline privacy. This is where the importance of educating users about digital boundaries and the long-term impact of their online presence comes in.

"We seem to be looking for social media validation in terms of likes and comments from our followers. These provide a sense of support, even if temporary, and help users connect to others."

However, he said sharing emotions online, although therapeutic for some, can leave individuals vulnerable to cyberbullying, scams or negative comments.

Zulfikar said the public should be more aware of the long-term implications of sharing personal information online, such as privacy risks and reputational damage.

He also emphasised that what a person posts in cyberspace will remain there indefinitely, so they should always think before posting.

UTM psychology professor Dr Siti Aisyah Panatik said several psychological factors drive individuals to overshare on social media, such as the need for peer validation, emotional catharsis, fear of missing out and even social media addiction.

"Oversharing often stems from a need for validation, where the dopamine released by likes, comments and shares reinforces this behaviour, creating a cycle of dependency," she said.

She added that feelings of loneliness and isolation can aggravate the compulsion to share personal details as individuals seek connections in a digital space.

Siti Aisyah also warned that the superficial support received online may not address underlying emotional issues.

"While online interaction may provide temporary comfort, it often lacks the depth needed to truly support an individual's mental well-being," she said.

She noted that parents and educators play a pivotal role in instilling digital boundaries to address oversharing among younger users.

"For instance, setting screen time limits, fostering open conversations about online behaviour, and teaching critical thinking about social media content is crucial."



PHOTO WORTHY ...
Visitors taking pictures of the Christmas decorations at Mid Valley Megamall in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.
— ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

RM392b required to implement flood mitigation projects

KUALA LUMPUR: The government would require an estimated RM392 billion to implement 365 flood mitigation plan (FMP) projects in flood-prone areas across the country from 2023 to 2100, according to Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

Fadillah, who is also Energy Transition and Water Transformation Minister, said the figure was identified by the ministry through research by the Department of Irrigation and Drainage (DID) on major river basins as part of a non-structural approach aimed at providing comprehensive flood planning and solutions.

"If we were to have that amount, there would be a year of no allocation for all ministries to resolve this issue.

"But the reality is that the government's

financial capacity is limited, which is why we are implementing FMP projects based on the priorities of the states and areas identified in the studies," he said during the minister's question time at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Fadillah was responding to a question from V. Ganabatrau (PH-Klang), who asked whether the government was satisfied with the development of flood mitigation infrastructure and related investments over the years, and what measures were being taken to improve the country's preparedness and response efficiency for flood disasters.

Fadillah said the government was satisfied with the projects completed so far, citing the SMART Tunnel project in Kuala Lumpur, which was completed in 2007 at a total cost of

RM1.97 billion.

He noted that over its 17 years of operation the tunnel had been activated more than 600 times to divert floodwaters, significantly reducing the risk of flooding in the city.

A 2012 study by the DID revealed that the diversion system had prevented damages amounting to over RM4.3 billion, he added.

"The department has also updated and identified 4,619 flood hotspots across the country and initial actions have been taken to carry out mitigation works such as drainage system maintenance, repairs and retrofitting.

"It also ensures that the early warning system, involving 534 flood warning sirens along major rivers, is functioning properly," he said. — Bernama

Senator proposes localised wages

KUALA LUMPUR: A member of the Senate has proposed that the government implement a minimum wage based on locality rather than the blanket approach applied nationwide, as announced during the tabling of Budget 2025 on Oct 18.

Senator Datuk Seri Dr Zurainah Musa used Indonesia as an example, where minimum wages have been successfully set according to locality.

"Try implementing a minimum wage by district and state, as each locality has different living costs. We need to align this, as a minimum wage of RM1,700 in Kuala Lumpur may be insufficient, but it could be enough in rural areas.

"I urge the government to consider this, just as we account for living costs and family expenses when targeting subsidies. Why can't we do the same to determine minimum wages?" she said during the debate on the Supply Bill 2025 in the Dewan Negara on Wednesday.

Similarly, Senator Datuk A. Kesavadas suggested that Malaysia adopt an approach similar to that used in New Jersey in the US, where the minimum wage rate has been gradually increased every year since 2011.

"Malaysia could consider starting by raising the minimum wage to RM1,600 next year and then increasing it by 6.6% annually for the next five years.

"By 2026, it will rise to RM1,696, followed by RM1,797 in 2027, RM1,904 in 2028, and eventually RM2,018 in the fifth year. This approach will be more manageable for employers," he said, explaining that the proposed 6.6% annual increase was based on double the current inflation rate.

Kesavadas also suggested that the government grant exemptions to micro businesses with an annual income below RM500,000. — Bernama

History being reviewed for 2027 curriculum

KUALA LUMPUR: The Education Ministry (MOE) is in the process of developing the 2027 school curriculum for Year 1 and Form 1 students, which includes a review of the History subject.

Deputy Minister Wong Kah Woh said the review process involves a detailed examination of the current curriculum and discussions with various stakeholders, including educators, researchers, and the general public.

"Any new findings or facts to be included in the History syllabus will be reviewed and endorsed by the MOE History Curriculum and Textbook Reference Panel, comprising public university lecturers with proven expertise and credibility, appointed after undergoing stringent security screening.

"Outstanding teachers and authoritative agencies, including state secretariats, state archives, state museums, teacher training institutes (IPGs), and credible local non-governmental organisations involved in history, culture, and social studies, are also participating in drafting and reviewing the curriculum," he said during the question-and-answer session in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday. — Bernama

RON97, RON95, diesel prices unchanged

KUALA LUMPUR: The retail prices for RON97 and RON95 petrol will remain unchanged at RM3.19 and RM2.05 per litre, respectively, from Dec 5 to 11.

The Finance Ministry, in a statement, said the retail price of diesel in Peninsula Malaysia will also remain at RM2.95 per litre, while in Sabah, Sarawak, and Labuan, the price will remain at RM2.15 per litre during the same period.

It said the prices were fixed based on the weekly retail prices of petroleum products, using the Automatic Pricing Mechanism formula.

"The government will continue to monitor global crude oil price trends and take appropriate measures to ensure the continued welfare and well-being of the people," it added. — Bernama



Floodwater carries serious health risks, says specialist

► 'Contact may cause exposure to harmful pathogens from sewage leaks or dangerous wildlife'

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: Floodwater might look harmless but it carries serious health risks beyond drowning and physical injuries, warned Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia public health medicine specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh.

She was commenting on recent statements from health officials on a rise in infectious diseases.

On Dec 3, Kelantan Health Department director Datuk Dr Zaini Hussin reported 4,894 cases of infectious diseases at temporary relief centres across the state.

He said respiratory infections were the most common at 2,923 cases, followed by 1,367 cases of skin infections.

Other cases included 116

instances of gastroenteritis, 99 of conjunctivitis and 376 of viral fever.

In Terengganu, state Health Department director Datuk Dr Kasemani Embong reported on Dec 5 that 1,245 cases of infectious diseases were detected in several temporary relief centres across the state since flooding began at the end of November.

She said respiratory infections also topped the list in Terengganu at 969 cases, followed by skin infections at 166.

Other cases included 63 instances of fever and 47 individuals with stomach and intestinal inflammation.

Sharifah Ezat said with such cases on the rise, the public must exercise caution, especially when dealing with floodwater.

"Floodwater is not just dirty water as it often becomes contaminated when sewage leaks, which introduces harmful pathogens such as salmonella, *vibrio cholerae*, *shigella*, and hepatitis A.

"Floodwater could also push wildlife such as snakes and centipedes into human habitats, creating a danger for those wading through floodwater."

She said stagnant water left behind by floods serves as a breeding ground for mosquitoes,

increasing the risk of dengue, while accumulated rubbish attracts rats, which could lead to leptospirosis outbreaks.

She also urged parents to be more aware, especially as videos have been circulating online showing children playing in floodwater.

"Parents in flood-prone areas must remain vigilant, ensuring their children stay away from floodwater and educating them about the dangers. While many may be unaware of the risks, those in the know must take responsibility and educate others."

Prince Court Medical Centre consultant dermatologist and internal medicine specialist Dr Rani Manohari Kuppusamy said the damp conditions caused by floods could worsen skin health.

"These waters are often heavily contaminated with bacteria and viruses, making contact potentially harmful. The damp conditions from floods damage the skin's natural barrier, allowing bacteria and fungi to thrive.

"Exposure to floodwater could lead to immediate skin issues, such as rashes and skin softening. Prolonged contact increases the risk of chronic problems, such as fungal infections and eczema flare-ups."

Central Dermatology Specialist

Clinic consultant dermatologist Dr Teeba Raja said individuals with pre-existing skin conditions need to be more cautious as they are more vulnerable to complications than others.

She said those with existing skin conditions or weakened immune systems face a higher risk as damaged skin provides a pathway for contaminants to cause secondary infections.

"Immediate care after contact with floodwater is crucial to minimise risks. Thoroughly wash your skin with soap and clean water but avoid scrubbing open wounds.

"Use antiseptic for small cuts or scrapes, and ensure the skin is completely dry before applying moisturiser to restore and protect it."

She advised those affected to seek medical attention if they notice redness, swelling, pain, or signs of infection, such as pus, warmth, fever or spreading wounds.

She also said in the aftermath of flooding, taking care of one's health, skin and belongings is a priority.

"Wash contaminated clothing thoroughly before reusing it and disinfect furniture to prevent germ spread. Even after floodwater recedes, bacteria may remain, so practise good hand hygiene and stay hydrated."

Suggestions outlined to boost hybrid cattle industry

KUALA LUMPUR: The parliamentary special select committee on domestic trade, entrepreneurship, cost of living and agriculture has outlined seven key recommendations aimed at boosting the development of Malaysia's hybrid cattle industry, which holds significant potential.

Committee chairman Cha Kee Chin highlighted the need for a major shift in approach by the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry and the Veterinary Services Department to ensure that the industry receives adequate government attention and is not treated as a part-time initiative.

He emphasised that cooperation from other agencies is essential to avoid overburdening the ministry.

"If we place this responsibility solely on the ministry or its agencies, it will not be sufficient.

"For instance, the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority and the Federal Land Development Authority manage large oil palm plantations, and experts have suggested that these areas are well suited for cattle farming."

He shared these insights during a briefing, titled "Potential of the Hybrid Cattle Industry in Malaysia", at Dewan Rakyat here on Wednesday.

The Rasah MP said the committee recommended that government-linked companies provide capital injections to small-scale hybrid cattle breeders to help them scale up their operations.

Cha proposed forming a coalition of cooperatives that would unite private breeders, enabling a comprehensive and coordinated effort to develop the industry.

"The ministry and department must ensure the availability of necessary technical expertise, including the deployment of experienced artificial insemination technicians across the country."

He emphasised the need for strict enforcement to curb cattle smuggling at the borders as it undermines local efforts and negatively impacts the interests of domestic breeders.

He called on state governments to cooperate, noting that land falls under their jurisdiction, and urged them to support the nationwide growth of the industry.

"I hope that the ministry would take this proposal seriously so that this industry could contribute to the nation's prosperity." – Bernama



HIGH TIDE WOES ...

Branches, twigs and garbage strewn along the sand, washed up by waves during the northeast monsoon season at the Batu Buruk Beach in Terengganu yesterday.

– BERNAMAPIC

RM50m allocated to help villagers pay electricity bills

KOTA KINABALU: The Sabah government has set aside RM50 million to assist villagers who struggle to pay their electricity bill.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor said the allocation would be distributed next year as a government initiative.

"The initiative is taken to lighten the burden of eligible villagers," he said when officiating at the Sabah Education Assistance Presentation Ceremony at Menara Kinabalu here on Wednesday.

He said starting next year, the state government would give RM300 aid to hardcore poor families in Sabah for a period of one year.

He also said the state government, through its departments and agencies, has taken the initiative of providing various educational assistance and contributions to students and graduates to ease the burden of parents.

Hajiji said the assistance includes the Sabah Foundation Scholarship and the Bursary and Study Loan

Programme, which has allocated RM57 million for 4,500 students next year.

The Sabah Government Scholarship, with an allocation of RM127 million, aims to sponsor 3,850 new students studying at local and overseas universities, and finance existing sponsored students next year.

"This amount has increased compared with the RM113 million allocated by the government this year."

He said new and existing education assistance amounting to RM79.5 million would be provided in a lump sum, including religious, language and literature assistance for next year.

At the ceremony, Hajiji presented the Sabah Government Scholarship to 100 students studying at Universiti Malaysia Sabah while 100 students received assistance from the Sabah Education Fund.

Also provided was the *Bantuan Ihsan Sekolah Sabah* for this year with

an allocation of RM10 million, involving all schools in Sabah, *Bantuan Ihsan Komputer* and *Bantuan Khias Program Pendidikan*.

He said the Sabah Islamic Religious Council, through *zakat* funds, has mobilised various education initiatives by allocating RM47.3 million for the education sector next year.

"As of November, there has been an increase of RM4.9 million from the previous year, with a total expenditure of RM37.4 million." – Bernama

Be involved in active ageing activities, seniors urged

► Holistic approach improves quality of life, reduces healthcare costs and supports long-term well-being, says expert

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: An expert in ageing has urged senior citizens to become more active to improve their physical and psychosocial well-being, rather than focusing on the absence of illness.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Centre for Healthy Ageing and Wellness lecturer Prof Dr Devinder Kaur Ajit Singh said 3.5 million Malaysians are aged over 60.

"Projections indicate that older adults will make up over 15% of our 34.1 million population by 2030. This means active ageing has become increasingly important in our society."

She defined active ageing as a holistic approach that focuses on optimising health, staying involved in meaningful activities and feeling secure as people age.

"It aims to help older adults stay healthy, engaged and secure, while recognising their ongoing contributions to society. By addressing their physical, social and economic needs, active ageing improves their quality of life, reduces healthcare costs and supports long-term well-being."

She said active ageing challenges stereotypes that view older adults as unproductive or unable to grow, highlighting their ability to learn, grow and maintain a healthy body and mind, and emphasising their unique skills and experiences.

University Malaya Medical Centre and Specialist Centre consultant geriatrician Prof Dr Shahrul Bahyah Kamaruzzaman said older Malaysians often face barriers such as limited access to affordable healthcare, social isolation and inadequate mobility-friendly infrastructure.

He said chronic health conditions such as diabetes and arthritis restrict physical activity and impact overall well-being, making maintaining an active and healthy lifestyle difficult as they hinder the potential of older adults to live fulfilling lives.

"Programmes such as *Pusat Aktiviiti Warga*



Devinder Kaur said starting an exercise routine later in life could lead to significant health benefits as "any physical activity is better than none". - MASRY CHE ANI/THESUN

Emas run by the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry offer essential support, including spaces for social interaction, health checkups and recreational activities.

"The centres help older adults stay connected, active and purposeful, combating social isolation while fostering a sense of community," said Shahrul Bahyah, who is also Malaysian Healthy Ageing Society (MHAS) president.

MHAS honorary secretary Dr Sangeeta Kaur said there needs to be more community-driven solutions that emphasise social participation and inclusion.

"Engaging older adults in activities that promote health and social interaction could significantly improve their quality of life."

She said to support active ageing, it is vital to encourage physical activity tailored to individual needs.

Shahrul Bahyah said MHAS is dedicated to promoting active ageing and improving the well-being of older adults in Malaysia.

It aims to expand its outreach to underserved communities, strengthen partnerships with government bodies and NGOs, and increase public awareness on the importance of healthy ageing, apart from collaborating with local and global partners to ensure its programmes reach those in need.

"The public can support MHAS by

participating in our programmes, volunteering and advocating age-inclusive policies. Through collective efforts, MHAS hopes to build stronger and more supportive communities."

Devinder Kaur recommended a balanced approach that includes cardiovascular exercises such as walking and swimming, aiming for at least 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.

"Strength training using resistance bands or bodyweight exercises helps maintain muscle and bone health while balance exercises such as *tai chi* and yoga reduce the risk of falls and improve coordination.

"Flexibility exercises such as stretching are important to prevent stiffness and injuries.

"Starting an exercise routine later in life could lead to significant health benefits. Any physical activity is better than none."

She said active ageing benefits individuals by improving physical and mental health, independence and quality of life.

"A more active older population contributes to reduced public healthcare costs, lower caregiver burdens and stronger social cohesion.

"By fostering positive attitudes and building supportive communities, we empower older adults to stay active, keep learning and continue to contribute meaningfully to society."

Pay RM750,000 to DAP trio, MP told

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang High Court ordered Kepala Batas MP Dr Siti Mastura Muhammad to pay RM750,000 in total to three DAP stalwarts – Tan Sri Lim Kit Siang, Lim Guan Eng and Teresa Kok – over her claims that they were related to Communist Party of Malaya leader Chin Peng.

The High Court Judge Quay Chew Soon ordered Siti Mastura to pay RM300,000, RM250,000 and RM200,000 respectively to Kit Siang, Guan Eng and Kok.

In delivering his decision, Quay said Siti Mastura acted with malice, while on the balance of probabilities, the Kepala Batas MP has not succeeded in proving her defence of justification, fair command, privilege and innocent dissemination.

"The defendant has made inflammatory remarks, linking the plaintiffs to a prohibited political party and one of its infamous leaders. She has made unsavoury insinuations about the plaintiff's connection with communism.

"By linking the plaintiffs to a communist leader, the insinuation is that they are affiliated with and support communism. In our country, that is considered taboo," the judge said in the online proceeding on Wednesday.

Quay said Siti Mastura had even used former Singapore prime minister Lee Kuan Yew's name to make her allegations seem more credible, but the claims were baseless.

The judge also imposed a 5% annual interest if Siti Mastura fails to pay the amount and also ordered her to pay costs of RM25,000 each to the trio. - Bernama

'No reports on MyKad data sold via dark web'

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have not received any reports regarding the allegation that MyKad data of Malaysian citizens is being sold via the dark web.

Bukit Aman Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) deputy director (Investigation) Datuk Rohaimi Md Isa said the investigation conducted by CCID Cyber and Multimedia Crime Investigation Division has so far not found any evidence regarding the allegation.

"CCID will continue to monitor to determine the validity of the information. Appropriate investigations will be carried out together with other relevant agencies if a police report regarding the issue is received," he said.

Earlier, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail stressed that a thorough inspection carried out by security agencies including the National Registration Department regarding the allegation found that it was completely untrue.

He also gave an assurance that the security of data, especially MyKad belonging to all Malaysians, is guaranteed and safe. - Bernama

Ex-Sabah water dept director told to enter defence in corruption case

KOTA KINABALU: The Sessions Court here ordered former Sabah Water Department director Ag Mohd Tahir Mohd Talib, 62, his wife Fauziah Ptiut, 59, and former deputy director Lim Lam Beng, 70, to enter their defence on 37 charges of money laundering after the prosecution successfully established a *prima facie* case against them.

Judge Abu Bakar Manat scheduled the defence proceedings for Feb 26 to Feb 28 and April 28 to April 30 next year.

Delivering his decision at the end of the prosecution's case on Wednesday, Abu Bakar said witness testimony revealed RM23.69 million in cash was found and confiscated from Ag Mohd Tahir's office at Wisma Majlis

Ugama Islam Sabah.

Additionally, RM8.56 million was discovered at the couple's home; RM9.19 million from a Mazda vehicle; and RM4.13 million from a Mercedes-Benz.

Foreign currencies such as US dollars, pound sterling, euros, UAE dirhams, Thai baht, Chinese yuan, Hong Kong dollars, Japanese yen, Vietnamese dong, South Korean won, Saudi riyals, Singapore dollars, and Indonesian rupiah were also confiscated.

Another RM4.15 million held in Ag Mohd Tahir's bank accounts was also seized.

"Throughout the trial, based on witness testimonies and the discovery of substantial cash sums at various

locations, the court is satisfied that the prosecution has proven that the first accused abused his position as the director of the Sabah Water Department.

"(Ag Mohd Tahir) was involved in illegal activities, specifically corruption through a centralised collection scheme, which operated from 2005 to 2016," the judge said.

He also said based on witness testimony, it is evident that the centralised collection scheme could not have been executed without Ag Mohd Tahir's knowledge, direction, approval, and involvement.

Abu Bakar also noted that during investigations and cross-examinations of prosecution witnesses, the accused failed to

explain the source of the confiscated cash.

"The same applies to the luxury cars and watches, all of which were in the possession of the first accused at the time of the raids," he said.

Abu Bakar said Fauziah had over RM2.22 million in her personal bank accounts and owned 921 pieces of jewellery and 93 luxury handbags.

"The total value of the charges against her (Fauziah) exceeds RM6 million. The second accused also failed to explain the source of these funds during the investigation."

The judge said based on the discoveries, witness testimonies, documents, and circumstantial evidence, the court is satisfied that the accused, through her husband,

Ag Mohd Tahir, was involved in possessing illegal proceeds.

He added that while Fauziah was not directly involved, her possession of proceeds from unlawful activities constitutes an offence under Section 4(1)(b) of the Anti-Money Laundering, Anti-Terrorism Financing and Proceeds of Unlawful Activities Act 2001 (Amla).

Ag Mohd Tahir faces one charge under Section 4(1)(a) of the Amla 2001 and 11 charges under Section 4(1)(b) of the same Act.

Ag Mohd Tahir and Fauziah are jointly charged with two offences under Section 4(1)(b) of the Amla, while Fauziah and Lim face 19 and four charges, respectively, under the same section and Act. - Bernama



FELINE ATTRACTION ... Cat lovers admiring one of the cats at the Oh My Pet! Expo at Mid Valley Exhibition Centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. – **ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN**

'Register 5 Perak products as intellectual property'

IPOH: The Intellectual Property Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) said at least five popular products in Perak have the potential to be registered as heritage intellectual property, protected under Geographical Indications (GI).

MyIPO chairman Dr Mohd Zuhair Mohd Zain said among the products are milk corn, Kuala Sepetang mangrove charcoal, Perak onions, Batu Kurau durian, Sungai Perak catfish and Teluk Intan giant river prawn.

"We are worried that if these products, which are synonymous with Perak, are not protected under GI, they will lose the rights to the names," he said.

If these products are registered under GI, they would become an attraction and would help increase the state government revenue, Mohd Zuhair said after officiating at the MyIPO satellite office at Menara Suruhanjaya Syarikat Malaysia on Wednesday.

Mohd Zuhair said the opening of the first MyIPO satellite office in Perak would make it easier for entrepreneurs, designers, innovators and professionals to protect their creations and product branding.

He said previously, intellectual property owners in Perak would go to the MyIPO branch office in Seberang Perai Tengah, Penang, which also caters for customers from Kedah and Perlis.

"The opening of this office will also continue to encourage more individuals and businesses to protect their innovations and work, thus contributing to the state's economic development."

He said MyIPO had received 53,456 intellectual property applications from January to October, compared with 50,570 applications during the same period last year.

Of the total, 34,479 applications were from foreigners, while 18,977 were from locals. – Bernama



Sabah needs 'tailored solutions' to fight poverty

KOTA KINABALU: According to the Economy Ministry, eight out of the 10 poorest districts in Malaysia are located in Sabah, with Tongod recording the highest rate of extreme poverty at 5.9%, followed by Beluran 5%, Pitas 4.8%, Kinabatangan 4.6%, Kota Marudu 4%, Tuaran 2.6%, Ranau 2.4%, and Lahad Datu 2.4%.

All eight districts are located in the rural and interior regions of Sabah, far from Kota Kinabalu, the primary economic growth hub of the Land Below the Wind.

Based on the 2022 Household Income Survey, the national extreme poverty rate in urban areas is 0.1%, whereas rural areas see a significantly higher rate of 0.7%.

Sabah records the highest extreme poverty rate in the country at 1.2%, compared with Kelantan at 0.8%, which has only one interior district, Lojing, followed by Pusa in Sarawak at 0.4%.

Institute for Development Studies Sabah CEO Datuk Dr Ramzah Dambul said the poverty and extreme poverty data in Sabah "speaks volumes" about the rural and interior poverty situation in the state, which is markedly different from that of Peninsular Malaysia.

This, he emphasised, necessitates a distinct approach to addressing the challenges to ensure that initiatives can effectively transform the harsh realities faced by the affected communities.

"The 1.2% extreme poverty rate (in Sabah) is significantly high compared with the national average of 0.2%. Hence, Sabah requires its own solutions, not a 'copy-and-paste' approach from Peninsular Malaysia.

"There is no one-size-fits-all solution for this issue. We often overlook this fact and apply blanket measures to resolve it, but there is a significant difference between Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah. Therefore, we need tailored solutions

➤ Using one-size-fits-all approach does not resolve issue due to significant difference between Peninsular Malaysia and state, says institute CEO

specifically for Sabah," he told Bernama in a recent interview.

The Sabah Budget 2025, unveiled by State Finance Minister Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun during the Sabah State Assembly session last month, highlighted the state government's steadfast commitment to tackling poverty.

To provide "fish" for those in need, for the first time, a monthly aid of RM300 for a year will be allocated to the poor and hardcore poor in the state through this budget, involving an allocation of RM358.5 million.

As part of its "teaching to fish" approach, the Sabah government has allocated RM488.5 million to implement various poverty eradication programmes, ensuring no groups are left behind in terms of development, living standards, and economic opportunities.

Among these initiatives, according to Masidi, is a one-time RM5,000 grant designed to help street vendors with valid business licences enhance their businesses – a first-of-its-kind programme in the state.

The Sabah government has also allocated RM2.6 billion to enhance infrastructure and utilities, focusing on resolving long-standing challenges related to road networks, water and electricity supply, and other public facilities.

These efforts aim to improve access for Sabah residents to economic "pools" in Kota Kinabalu, while accelerating the development of additional economic hubs, particularly in Tawau and Sandakan.

Meanwhile, Kuamut state assemblyman Datuk Masiung Banah, commenting on the poverty in Tongod – a constituency under his administration – said he has long raised the issue in state assembly sessions and other platforms, albeit with limited impact.

However, Tongod began to gain national attention after being named the poorest district in Malaysia.

"As a representative of the people, I have fought for the development of Tongod for a long time. When it was declared the poorest district, I took it positively as it drew national attention to our struggle. This recognition ensures that more initiatives will be implemented for us. What matters most is that the people of Tongod receive the support they need," he said.

Tongod, located 255km southeast of Kota Kinabalu, is accessible via hilly roads and some severely damaged routes, crossing varying elevations around Mount Kinabalu and the Ranau district.

Covering an area of 10,052sq km, Tongod is larger than several states in Peninsular Malaysia, including Kedah, which spans 9,447sq km.

"The town of Tongod is also undergoing development, including plans for a RM7 million commercial centre with shop lots along with other major development projects in the area.

"With initiatives ranging from commercial development to large factories and rice cultivation, Tongod is now on a path of transformation."

EDUCATION

FOCUS 2025

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South Korean president clings to power

➤ Ruling party to fight impeachment

SEOUL: South Korean opposition lawmakers said yesterday they would vote this weekend to impeach President Yoon Suk Yeol over a botched attempt to impose martial law, while the defence minister blamed for advising the move resigned.

Yoon's declaration of martial law late on Tuesday attempted to ban political activity and censor the media in Asia's fourth-largest economy and a key US ally. It sparked outrage in the streets and concern among its international allies.

Lawmakers from the opposition Democratic Party planned to put up a vote in parliament to impeach Yoon on Saturday, a party spokesperson told reporters.

"The Yoon Suk Yeol regime's declaration of emergency martial law caused great confusion and fear among our people," Democratic Party lawmaker Kim Seung-won told the National Assembly in an early morning session.

Yoon's ruling People Power Party is divided over the crisis but said it would oppose impeachment with two years left in Yoon's five-year term.

The Democratic Party needs at least eight of the 108 ruling-party lawmakers to back the Bill for it to pass with a two-thirds majority of the 300-seat parliament.

Fighting for his political future, Yoon accepted the resignation of Defence Minister Kim Yong-hyun yesterday and nominated his ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Choi Byung-hyuk, as a replacement, Yoon's office said.

Kim had recommended Yoon declare martial law on Tuesday, according to the interior minister, a senior military official and the filing to impeach Yoon by opposition members.

Kim also ordered the deployment of troops to the parliament, Vice-Defence Minister Kim Seon-ho said, adding he was unaware of the martial law order until Yoon declared it.

"I have fundamentally opposed the mobilisation of military forces under martial law and have expressed negative opinions about it," he told a parliament hearing yesterday, apologising and taking responsibility for failing to prevent it.

Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba said Japan's "security situation may be fundamentally changed" in light of the instability in Seoul and North Korea's rising military assertiveness.

"What will happen to South Korea? There appears to be a great deal of domestic criticism and opposition," he told parliament yesterday, adding that Yoon's efforts to improve relations with Tokyo "must never be undermined".

There has been no reaction yet from North



A South Korean marine veteran (right) and his wife get their heads shaved during a protest calling for the president's resignation near his office in Seoul yesterday. – AFPIC

Korea to the drama in the South.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Wednesday the United States had not been made aware in advance of Yoon's declaration, while his deputy, Kurt Campbell, said Yoon had badly misjudged it.

The US has 28,500 troops stationed in South Korea as a legacy of the 1950-1953 Korean War.

The commander of US Forces-Korea, General Paul LaCamera, warned American troops to exercise vigilance, avoid areas with protests, and to communicate travel plans to their supervisors in case "something unexpected" occurs.

Yoon had been embraced by leaders in the West as a partner in the US-led effort to unify democracies against growing authoritarianism in China, Russia and elsewhere.

But he caused unease among South Koreans by branding his critics as "communist totalitarian and anti-state forces". In November, he denied wrongdoing in response to influence-peddling allegations against him and his wife and he has taken a hard line against labour unions.

The impeachment follows a night of chaos after Yoon declared martial law and armed troops attempted to force their way into the National Assembly building in Seoul, only to stand back when parliamentary aides sprayed them with fire extinguishers.

The commander of the martial law troops said he had no intention of wielding firearms against the public, and Kim, the vice-defence minister, said no live ammunition had been provided to those troops.

"The people and the aides who protected parliament protected us with their bodies. The people won, and it's now time for us to protect the people," the Democratic Party's Kim said.

"We need to immediately suspend the authority of President Yoon. He has committed an indelible, historic crime against the people, whose anxiety needs to be soothed so that they can return to their daily lives."

The martial law crisis rattled global financial markets and South Korea's benchmark KOSPI index. Currency dealers reported suspected state intervention on Wednesday to keep the won stable.

Finance Minister Choi Sang-mok sent an emergency note to global financial chiefs and credit rating agencies late on Wednesday to say the ministry was working to alleviate any adverse impact from political turmoil.

If the impeachment bill passes, South Korea's Constitutional Court will then decide whether to uphold the motion – a process that could take up to 180 days.

If Yoon were to be suspended from exercising power, Prime Minister Han Duck-soo would fill in as leader.

If the embattled president resigned or was removed from office, a new election would be held within 60 days.

Yoon squeezed out a victory in the tightest presidential election in South Korean history in 2022, riding a wave of discontent.

But his support ratings have been at around 20% for months and the opposition captured nearly two-thirds of seats in parliament in an April election. – Reuters

Japan grant to boost Philippines naval capabilities

MANILA: Japan yesterday granted the Philippines ¥1.6 billion (RM47 million) to improve its naval capabilities.

The funds, part of a Japanese regional security assistance programme, will provide more rigid-hulled inflatable boats, coastal radar systems and automatic identification systems to the Philippine Navy, the two sides said.

The package will "contribute to maintaining and strengthening regional security" and "enhance the security of vital sea lanes", Japan's ambassador said after a meeting between Ambassador Kazuya Endo and Philippine Foreign Minister Enrique Manalo.

The amount more than doubled the ¥600 million Manila received when the Official Security Assistance (OSA) programme was launched in 2023.

The Philippines has been upgrading its maritime security assets and boosting ties with allies to counteract Beijing's aggressive assertion of its claims in the South China Sea.

The Foreign Ministry said the OSA deal would improve Manila's ability "to deter threats to peace, stability and security".

China claims almost the entire South China Sea, brushing off rival claims from other countries and an international ruling that its assertion has no legal basis.

On Wednesday, Manila said the China Coast Guard fired water cannon and "sideswiped" a government vessel near a disputed shoal.

On the same day, another Chinese vessel "intentionally rammed" a fisheries department vessel near Sabina Shoal in the Spratly Islands.

Manalo said the Philippines would be submitting a diplomatic protest.

"We were within our legal rights," Manalo told reporters after the signing of the security aid agreement with Japan.

"We don't understand why China again is repeating these actions which are clearly illegal."

On Wednesday, Japan expressed serious concern over the recent sea confrontations between the Philippines and China. – AFP

BRIEFS

FIRST AUSTRALIAN DAIRY COWS ARRIVE IN INDONESIA

JAKARTA: About 50 Australian dairy cows have arrived in Indonesia as the first cattle imports under a plan to boost milk production needed for President Prabowo Subianto's flagship feed-meals programme. Indonesia plans to import one million dairy cows from next year to support the scheme, which will launch early next year and aims to offer free meals to more than 80 million schoolchildren. The heifers, which are between three and seven months pregnant, were flown from Australia and arrived in Jakarta on Tuesday, and will be moved to Lampung province in southern Sumatra. "Hopefully these dairy cows would start producing milk for local needs by mid next year," said Agung Suganda, director-general of Livestock and Animal Health at the Agriculture Ministry. – Reuters

ASEAN MINISTERS TO DISCUSS MYANMAR CRISIS

JAKARTA: Asean is planning to hold a ministerial meeting in Thailand later this month to discuss the crisis in Myanmar, Indonesia Foreign Ministry spokesperson Roy Soemirat said yesterday. The meeting will work out ways to approach the crisis which has gripped Myanmar since a 2021 coup, including on the implementation of Asean's five-point plan, he said. The plan has made scant progress since its unveiling in April 2021, just months after Myanmar's military unseated the elected government. The military government has been battling a rebellion since then and has largely ignored calls by its neighbours to cease hostilities and enter into dialogue with its opponents. – Reuters

Southeast Asia celebrates *kebaya*'s Unesco recognition

SINGAPORE: The successful inscription of the *kebaya* onto the Unesco Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity – a joint nomination by five Southeast Asian nations – is a milestone to be celebrated, said Singapore Culture, Community and Youth Minister Edwin Tong.

Tong, who also serves as chairman of the Singapore National Commission for Unesco, said *kebaya*'s inscription highlights its cultural significance and promotes cross-cultural unity in Singapore and the region.

"It marks Singapore's first multinational nomination and is the largest for Southeast

Asia, in terms of the number of nominating countries, involving a collaborative effort between Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

"For the first time, these five nations have joined forces to recognise the *kebaya* as a symbol of our shared history and cultural identity," he said.

In a Facebook post, Tong noted that the *kebaya* represents Southeast Asia's multiculturalism and regional connections.

"The *kebaya* is more than clothing; it is a living tradition reflecting history, identity, and artistry. Each *kebaya*-wearing community's

unique sewing and embroidery styles highlight their cultural elements and shared heritage," he said.

Kebaya: Knowledge, Skills, Traditions and Practices was inscribed onto the list at the 19th session of the Intergovernmental Committee held in Asuncion, Paraguay, on Wednesday.

Thai Culture Minister Sudawan Wangsuphakijkosol welcomed *kebaya*'s inscription and noted that Malaysia initiated the nomination in early 2022, coordinating with Brunei, Indonesia, Singapore, and Thailand to prepare the necessary documents with input from their communities. – Bernama

We won't bow to totalitarianism, says Lai

➤ China slaps sanctions on 13 US military firms

TAIPEI: Taiwan will not bow down to totalitarianism, President Lai Ching-te said yesterday in the US territory of Guam, calling Taiwan and the United States "brothers".

Lai arrived in Guam, a major US military base, late on Wednesday on what is officially only a one-night stopover as part of a tour of three Pacific island countries which maintain formal diplomatic ties with Chinese-claimed Taiwan.

China has decided to impose sanctions on 13 US military firms from yesterday, in response to the sale of US arms to Taiwan, the Foreign Ministry said after the United States arranged for Taiwan's president to transit through its territory.

Lai addressed members of the overseas Taiwan community as well as Guam Governor Lou Leon Guerrero and Northern Mariana Islands Governor Arnold Palacios at a lunch.

He said Taiwan's path from the "darkness of dictatorship" to democracy was hard fought.

"I hope that all of our compatriots, no matter where you are, will make a joint

commitment to continue to deepen our democracy and protect it, and that we will never bow down to totalitarianism," Lai said.

Mentioning the victory of Taiwan's baseball team at an international championship in Japan last month, Lai said he wanted to be "humble" and say that Taiwan beat the US team on its way to the finals.

"Although we are brothers, when it comes to baseball you have to rely on strength."

Lai also thanked the United States for arranging his transits through both Guam and Hawaii.

Earlier in the day Lai had a breakfast meeting at the Guam governor's residence.

"In the face of authoritarian expansionism all like-minded countries and regions must unite and collaborate to safeguard democracy, peace and prosperity in the Indo Pacific region," Lai told reporters at the residence, with a Taiwan flag behind him.

"Taiwan and Guam are both situated in the First Island Chain. Moving forward we must work closer together and stand side by side to safeguard peace and stability in the Indo Pacific region."

The First Island Chain is a collection of archipelagos running roughly from Indonesia in an arc northeast to Japan, encompassing the South China Sea and East China Sea.

Guerrero thanked Taiwan for the

resumption of direct flights from Taipei to Guam and other areas of cooperation.

China's sanctions move follows its strong objection to the United States authorising a potential US\$385 million (RM1.7 billion) sale of spare parts and support for F-16 jets and radars to Taiwan, which Beijing says undermines its sovereignty.

China, which considers Taiwan its own territory and Lai a dangerous separatist, opposes any foreign interactions or visits by the island's leaders.

Companies targeted by the sanctions include Teledyne Brown Engineering Inc, BRINC Drones Inc and Shield AI Inc, the Foreign Ministry said in yesterday's statement.

Other companies facing sanctions are Rapid Flight LLC, Red Six Solutions, SYNEXXUS Inc, Firestorm Labs Inc, Kratos Unmanned Aerial Systems Inc, HavocAI, Neros Technologies, Cyberluc Corporation, Domo Tactical Communications and Group W.

In addition, Beijing will freeze the assets of six executives from five companies including Raytheon, BAE Systems and United Technologies, in China, and bar their entry to the country.

Chinese organisations and individuals are also prohibited from dealing with them. - Reuters

French PM meets president to resign

PARIS: French Prime Minister Michel Barnier yesterday was meeting Emmanuel Macron to submit his resignation after losing a vote of no confidence in parliament, with the president urgently seeking ways to halt growing political and financial chaos.

Poised to be contemporary France's shortest-serving premier, Barnier arrived at the Elysee Palace just after 0900 GMT (5pm in Malaysia) for the resignation formality, with the outgoing premier and government constitutionally obliged to step down after the defeat in parliament.

A majority of lawmakers on Wednesday supported the no-confidence vote proposed by the hard left and backed by the far right headed by Marine Le Pen.

Barnier's record-quick ejection comes after snap parliamentary elections this summer, which resulted in a hung parliament with no political force able to form an overall majority and the far right holding the key to the government's survival.

The trigger for Barnier's ouster was his Budget for next year including austerity measures that were unacceptable to a majority in parliament, but that he argued were necessary to stabilise France's finances.

On Monday he had forced through a Social Security Financing Bill without a vote.

The successful no-confidence motion cancelled the government's entire financing plan, leading to an automatic renewal of the current budget into next year, unless any new government can somehow rush through approval of a new budget by Christmas - an unlikely scenario.

"France probably won't have a 2025 budget," said ING Economics in a note, predicting that the country "is entering a new era of political instability".

National Assembly Speaker Yael Braun-Pivet urged Macron to waste no time in choosing a new premier. - AFP

Cathay removes video with Tiananmen joke

HONG KONG: Cathay Pacific said on Wednesday that it removed an inflight entertainment programme following a complaint about an episode from American TV show *Family Guy* that mentioned China's Tiananmen Square crackdown.

A Cathay passenger lodged a complaint after viewing a scene from the animated sitcom that included a joke about Tiananmen.

The airline said in a statement that it was aware of the incident and apologised to affected customers.

"We emphasise that the content of the programme does not represent Cathay Pacific's standpoint, and have immediately arranged to have the programme removed as soon as possible," Cathay said.

Cathay said its inflight entertainment content was managed by a third-party provider, without naming the company.

"We have promptly informed the service provider of the seriousness of the incident, and have instructed them to thoroughly investigate the cause and strengthen oversight to ensure that similar incidents do not occur in the future."

Family Guy's pilot episode, aired in 1999, featured a throwaway gag where main character Peter Griffin said he had lied about "(standing) up to that tank in Tiananmen Square".

Hong Kong's candlelight vigil to mark the Tiananmen anniversary on June 4 has been halted since 2020, and its organisers are facing charges of subversion under a security law.

In 2021, Hong Kong passed censorship laws forbidding broadcasts that are contrary to the interests of national security though the rules do not explicitly cover content shown on flights. - AFP



Lai receiving a gift during a farewell ceremony before departing Tuvalu. - CNA/AFP

Yunus urges unity to counter 'Indian aggression'

DHAKA: Bangladesh's interim leader Muhammad Yunus has urged the country's politicians to keep differences at bay and put up a united front to counter "Indian aggression".

A student-led uprising in August toppled elected Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and ended her 15-year rule.

India - the destination of Hasina's exile - has accused Yunus' administration of failing to protect minority Hindus, straining ties between the neighbours.

"They are undermining our efforts to build

a new Bangladesh and are spreading fictitious stories," Yunus told a gathering of political parties.

"They have spread these rumours in particular countries and among influential players."

Yunus urged the politicians to unite against what he characterised as a disinformation campaign, describing the matter as "a question of our existence".

A caretaker administration headed by Yunus has been tasked with enacting democratic reforms ahead of fresh elections.

The chaotic aftermath of Hasina's ouster saw reprisal attacks against Hindus and other minorities, based in part on their perceived support for her government.

Yunus' administration has acknowledged and condemned attacks on Hindus but said in many cases they were motivated by politics rather than religion.

It has accused India of exaggerating the scale of the violence and running a "propaganda campaign".

Yunus' media team said the meeting was part of an initiative to promote unity. - AFP

Amnesty accuses Israel of genocide

► Group calls for ICC investigation

THE HAGUE: Amnesty International accused Israel of committing genocide against Palestinians in the Gaza war in a report published yesterday.

The London-based human rights group said it reached the conclusion after months of analysing incidents and statements of Israeli officials.

Amnesty said the legal threshold for the crime had been met, in its first such determination during an active armed conflict.

The 1948 Genocide Convention, enacted in the wake of the mass murder by Germany, defines genocide as "acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a

national, ethnical, racial or religious group". Israel has consistently rejected any accusation of genocide, saying it has respected international law and has a right to defend itself after the attack on Oct 7, 2023.

Israeli officials could not immediately be reached for comment on the report.

Israel launched its air and ground war in Gaza after gunmen attacked Israeli communities across the border 14 months ago, killing 1,200 people and taking over 250 hostages.

Israel's military offensive since then has killed more than 44,400 Palestinians and injured many others.

Palestinian and UN officials say there are no safe areas left in Gaza, a tiny, densely populated and heavily built-up coastal territory. Most of Gaza's 2.3 million people have been internally displaced, some as many as 10 times.

At hearings earlier this year before the UN's

International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, where Israel faces accusations of genocide brought by South Africa, lawyers for the country denied the charge.

They argued that there was no genocidal intent and no genocide in Israel's conduct of the war, whose stated objective is the eradication of Hamas.

Presenting the report to journalists in The Hague, Amnesty International Secretary-General Agnes Callamard said the conclusion had not been taken "lightly, politically, or preferentially".

She told journalists after the presentation: "There is a genocide being committed. There is no doubt, not one doubt in our mind after six months of in-depth, focused research."

Amnesty said it concluded that Israel and the Israeli military committed at least three of the five acts banned by the 1948 Genocide Convention, namely killings, causing serious bodily or mental harm, and deliberately

inflicting conditions of life calculated to bring about a protected group's physical destruction.

Callamard said Amnesty had not set out to prove genocide but after reviewing the evidence and statements collectively, she said the only conclusion was that "Israel is intending and has intended to commit genocide".

She said: "The assertion that Israel's war in Gaza aims solely to dismantle Hamas and not to physically destroy Palestinians as a national and ethnic group, that assertion simply does not stand up to scrutiny."

Amnesty urged the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate alleged genocide.

The office of the prosecutor said in a statement that it is continuing investigations into alleged crimes committed in the Palestinian territories and is unable to provide further comment. - Reuters

Children's agency sets US\$9.9b fund goal

NEW YORK: The UN children's agency on Wednesday launched a US\$9.9 billion (RM44 billion) fundraising appeal to provide aid next year for millions of young people impacted by wars and other crises.

"The scale of children's humanitarian needs is at a historically high level, with more children impacted every day," said Unicef executive director Catherine Russell.

The money will target 109 million children and will support access to primary healthcare facilities, mental health services, drinking water and education, malnutrition screening and gender-based violence mitigation.

"Looking ahead to next year, we estimate that 213 million children in 146 countries and territories will need humanitarian assistance over the course of the year - a staggeringly high number," Russell said.

Unicef's appeal comes at a time when humanitarian operations face a chronic funding crisis.

Last year, the agency appealed for US\$9.3 billion in its fundraising call.

The largest appeal for funds - at over US\$1 billion - is for Afghanistan, followed by Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Palestinian territories and Lebanon. - AFP

BRIEFS BODY OF HOSTAGE RECOVERED

TEL AVIV: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that the body of a hostage had been recovered from the Gaza Strip. "In a special operation, the body of hostage Itay Svirsky, who was kidnapped on Oct 7 (2023) from *kibbutz* Beerli and murdered in captivity in January 2024, was brought back," Netanyahu said in a statement. The body of Svirsky, who was 38 when he was kidnapped during the attack, was recovered in an operation by the Shin Bet internal security agency, aided by the military. The Hostages and Missing Families Forum welcomed the return of Svirsky's body while demanding the release of the remaining hostages. - AFP

SYRIAN REBELS PUSH INTO HAMA

AMMAN: Syrian rebels said they had started pushing into Hama, a major city where pro-government forces backed by intense Russian airstrikes are trying to stave off a new rebel victory and halt the insurgents' lightning advance. Rebel commander Hassan Abdul Ghany said they had begun to penetrate Hama. State media had earlier reported that pro-government forces had repelled an attack. Insurgents have been battling to try to enter Hama since Tuesday and there was heavy fighting with the Syrian army and allied groups supported by a Russian bombardment. - Reuters



Palestinians, displaced from Beit Lahia, arrive in Jabalia in the northern Gaza Strip on Wednesday. - AFP/IC

Tanks roll into Khan Younis, 47 killed across Gaza

CAIRO: Israeli tanks pushed into northern parts of the Khan Younis area in the south of the Gaza Strip on Wednesday and Palestinian medics said further Israeli airstrikes had killed at least 47 people across the enclave.

Residents said tanks advanced one day after the Israeli military issued new evacuation orders, saying there had been rocket launches by Palestinian gunmen from the area.

With shells crashing near residential areas, families left their homes and headed westward toward the nearby humanitarian-designated area of Al-Mawasi.

Palestinian and UN officials said there were no safe areas left in Gaza and most of its 2.3 million people have been displaced multiple times.

An Israeli airstrike at a tent encampment in Al-Mawasi killed at least 17 people and wounded several, medics said. The Civil Emergency Service said the attack sparked

fires in tents housing displaced families.

The Israeli military said the strike targeted gunmen operating from the humanitarian zone in Khan Younis.

"Following the strike, secondary explosions were identified, suggesting the presence of weaponry in the area," it said in a statement.

Another Israeli airstrike hit three houses in Gaza City, killing at least 10 people and wounding many others, the territory's emergency service said.

Many victims remained trapped under the rubble with rescue operations underway. There was no immediate army comment on this incident.

Medics said 11 people were killed in three airstrikes on areas in central Gaza, including six children and a medic. Five of the dead had been queuing outside a bakery, they said.

A further nine Palestinians were killed by

tank fire in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, medics said.

Israeli forces also fired on Kamal Adwan Hospital in Beit Lahia in north Gaza for the fifth straight day, hospital director Hussam Abu Safiya said. Three of his medical staff had been wounded, one critically, on Tuesday night, he said.

"Drones are dropping bombs filled with shrapnel that injure anyone that dares to move," said Abu Safiya. "This situation is extremely urgent."

Residents in three towns - Jabalia, Beit Lahia and Beit Hanoun - said Israeli forces had blown up dozens of houses.

Palestinians say Israel's army is trying to drive people out of the northern edge of Gaza with forced evacuations and bombardments to create a buffer zone. The Israeli army denies this and says it has returned to prevent Hamas fighters from regrouping. - Reuters



UNDER ONE ROOF

Q: I have been out of university for four years, and I see many of my peers getting everything they want – good jobs, nice homes, world travel, etc. Yet, they still seem unhappy, at least from my perspective. Am I weird for wanting to take things slower?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: We live in a world that is moving too fast, with constant reminders of it all around us. From microwaves and fast food to computers and mobile phones. We have grown accustomed to easy and immediate results.

The demand to produce more in less time is increasing, and the essential elements for living a well-rounded life are being stripped away. This leads to real problems.

The first problem is an attitude of impatience and entitlement. Our society demands instant gratification, forgetting that true success cannot be rushed. It often requires hard work over time.

When people lose sight of this, they take shortcuts to achieve maximum results with minimal effort.

Take, for example, athletes caught in doping scandals or individuals seeking to lose weight without proper diet or exercise. The list of such shortcuts goes on.

A second problem with instant gratification is that it weakens our character. Achieving success gradually allows us to develop as individuals. As our character strengthens, so

Building character trumps instant gratification

does our ability to handle success.

Many people have raced to the top, only to lose it all because they lacked the character needed to handle the responsibility that success demands. The faster our world moves, the more diligent we must be in not only pursuing success but in character as well. As one writer put it: "We all want to be, but few of us are willing to become."

So, are you "weird"? No – we think you are wise.

Q: What is your opinion on paying school-aged children for doing household tasks? As a child, I always received an allowance for doing my chores. However, my husband believes children should work without being paid, saying it is simply part of being a family.

Focus on the Family Malaysia: There is no right or wrong answer here. Some parents

choose to give an allowance while others pay their children for specific chores. Still, others do not pay anything at all but give their children money for purchases based on their overall attitude and helpfulness.

Whatever approach you choose, it is important to remember that one of your major goals is to prepare your children to live in the "real world" – the world of work, taxes, giving and investments. In that world, no one is going to pay them for making their beds or taking out the trash.

However, they will be paid for tasks like managing a group of employees, making a delivery on time or successfully selling a pair of shoes to a demanding customer.

With that in mind, here is our suggestion. Children should do certain tasks around the house simply because they are part of the family. This can include responsibilities, such as taking care of their rooms, picking up their toys, helping to prepare meals, washing

their own clothes, and yes, even taking out the garbage.

On the other hand, it is fine to pay children for chores that demand more time and energy – household tasks that "go beyond the call of duty". This may include activities like mowing the lawn, washing the car, or, in the case of a responsible teenager, babysitting a younger brother or sister for an entire Saturday afternoon.

One final note: helping children learn how to give, save and spend their money is just as important as teaching them how to earn it.

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

Upholding human rights key to better public health

COMMENT by Prof Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman

AS a trained HIV physician, it has been inspiring to witness the steady development of effective treatments for HIV.

The continual expansion of proven HIV-prevention tools has resulted in life-saving benefits for so many people.

However, it has also been heartbreaking to witness the obstruction of scientifically proven methods from reaching their full potential.

When I started my service in Malaysia in 1997, my HIV practice was overwhelmed with individuals who had contracted the virus through injecting drugs. This starkly contrasted with my experience in Australia, where I received my medical education and training. While I saw many patients living with HIV, nearly none had acquired the virus through drug injection.

The reason quickly became clear. Australia treated drug use as a public health issue, offering harm reduction services that allowed people who used drugs to protect themselves from HIV.

In contrast, Malaysia adopted a punitive and highly stigmatising approach to drug use, preventing people who used drugs from accessing harm reduction services or protecting themselves from HIV.

Drug use is prevalent in Australia and Malaysia, but the contrasting human rights environments led to vastly different public health consequences. This experience had a profound impact on my professional career and my personal perspective.

The Hippocratic Oath taken by all physicians mandates that we focus on helping people who are sick, and that we do no harm by our actions or inactions.

I realised that improving health outcomes for my clients required more than just a biomedical approach; I also

had to become a strong advocate for their human rights.

Providing HIV prevention and treatment services to individuals who inject drugs, including those in prisons and other closed settings, led me to become deeply involved in drug policy reform. It became clear that aligning drug policy with human rights principles is essential for advancing public health.

Some critics argued that implementing harm reduction services in our country would be impossible. However, after years of overcoming resistance, we successfully introduced the programme – and it worked.

Since its implementation, needle-sharing has ceased to be the primary mode of HIV transmission in Malaysia, preventing thousands of new infections.

Some critics claimed harm reduction would be too expensive, yet it ended up saving the country significant amounts of money. The global HIV response has shown that, as health workers, we cannot leave the responsibility of advocating for human rights to others.

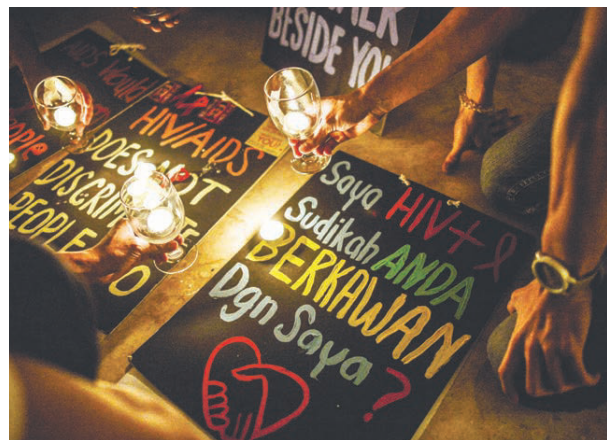
Human rights violations are keeping our scientifically proven tools from being effective. Too many people are still being denied life-saving care simply because they belong to communities whose rights are being violated.

Many individuals who seek treatment for HIV at a late stage report that they delayed care out of fear of being ostracised, losing their jobs or facing mistreatment.

When we fail to address discrimination, HIV wins and humanity loses. The evidence is clear: without protecting everyone's human rights, we will not be able to end AIDS as a public health threat.

In recognition of this, the International AIDS Society-Lancet Commission on Health and Human

"Human rights violations are keeping our scientifically proven tools from being effective. Too many people are still being denied life-saving care simply because they belong to communities whose rights are being violated."



Many individuals who seek treatment for HIV at a late stage report that they delayed care out of fear of being ostracised, losing their jobs or facing mistreatment. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Rights, which I co-chaired, issued a recommendation urging that "practitioners and stakeholders across the health field ensure that all aspects of their work reflect and promote a commitment to human rights".

To protect public health by safeguarding human rights, the commission further recommended that those working in the health field collaborate with other sectors and communities, including human rights organisations, scientists and advocates focused on issues like climate justice, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and racial and migrant justice.

We are at a critical juncture where human rights are under attack worldwide. Those attempting to strip away human rights often claim to be defending religious values but these claims are false.

I believe that protecting everyone's health by safeguarding their human rights honours Islamic teachings, fulfils its commitment to compassion and

prioritises the preservation of life.

Upholding human rights means recognising the inherent value of every individual's life and understanding that our societies are stronger when everyone is treated with respect, dignity and inclusion.

Similarly, protecting public health requires ensuring that no one is left behind, recognising that none of us is truly safe until all of us are.

It is not for us to judge others but to take care of each other. Human rights belong to everyone, and upholding them is essential for allowing us all to be healthy and to thrive.

Prof Datuk Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman is chairman of the Malaysian AIDS Foundation, professor of Medicine and Infectious Diseases and pro vice chancellor and president of Monash University, Malaysia, and former president of the International AIDS Society. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com



the Sun **LYFE**

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Food galore

Restaurants to tantalise taste buds - P12

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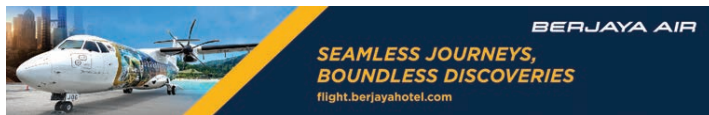
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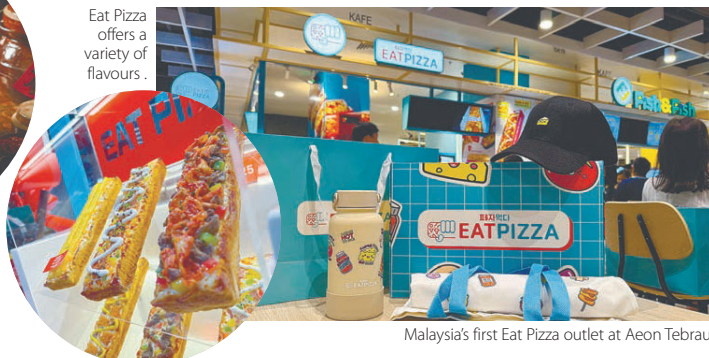
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Customers are offered private dining rooms at Nong Geng Ji's Pavilion Kuala Lumpur outlet.

Steamed carp fish head with chopped chilli is an exclusive menu item at Nong Geng Ji's Pavilion Kuala Lumpur outlet.

Eat Pizza offers a variety of flavours.



Malaysia's first Eat Pizza outlet at Aeon Tebrau.

Exploring flavours

BY JOHN TAN

➤ Expand your culinary horizons at these five new restaurants

FOR many, it is common to stick to a familiar dining experience. We often find ourselves indulging in the same culinary delicacies, dining at the same restaurants out of convenience and financial prudence. There is also the added assurance of knowing what to expect.

However, why not step outside of your comfort zone and try out these five new restaurants.

Nong Geng Ji's Pavilion outlets

Nong Geng Ji's new outlets at Pavilion Bukit Jalil and Pavilion Kuala Lumpur reflect the Hunan cultural essence with every dining experience, offering open and cosy dining concepts.

Customers can look to savour the signature menu in an open and comfortable set up at the Pavilion Bukit Jalil outlet. But for private family celebrations and group gatherings, customers can head over to the Pavilion Kuala Lumpur outlet.

The Pavilion Kuala Lumpur outlet features three private dining rooms, two 10-seater rooms and one 12-seater lounge dining room, ensuring a comfortable and intimate environment for cosy celebrations with family and friends.

Aside from privacy, the rooms come with an exclusive menu curated just for the outlet, guaranteeing a tailored and authentic Hunan dining experience for customers.

Its offerings include Nong Geng Ji's signature roasted chicken, braised kampung chicken with golden abalones, steamed carp fish head with chopped chilli, mustard shrimps and braised duck in tea oil.

For those who prefer milder flavours, non-spicy selections are available to suit more sensitive palates. The options include beancurd skin with egg, steamed pork ribs with taro as well as sweet and sour chicken with pineapple.

Eat Pizza @ Aeon Tebrau

Known for its 25cm rectangular pizzas, Eat Pizza has made its footing in Malaysia, picking Johor as its first Malaysian outlet. Located at Aeon Tebrau in Johor Bahru, Eat Pizza is offering customers a range of over eight pizza flavours.

Customers can pick between the Sweet Bulgogi Pizza, Korean Edition Hawaiian Pizza and the Kimchi Bulgogi Pizza. Local customers are in luck as the Kimchi Bulgogi Pizza is a



Nikkei Lounge at Mesa on 51.

Tapas are served at Mesa on 51.



Milk & Barley's first Malaysian outlet.

Customers can pour their own milk at Milk & Barley outlet.

unique offering catered to the local palettes. Additionally, the menu features other items such as the hot spicy chicken, popcorn chicken and mac & cheese gochujang.

Seeing how well-received the outlet has been, Eat Pizza is looking forward to expanding to Kuala Lumpur. Customers in the Klang Valley may soon have the opportunity to try out this pizza parlour.

Mesa on 51 @ Permata Sapura Tower

If you are looking for something fancy, Mesa on 51 is your go-to! Mesa on 51 is an entertainment and dining destination at the Permata Sapura Tower, neighbouring the Petronas Twin Towers and KLCC Park.

The venue serves Spanish cuisine and has private dining rooms. The

elegant Nikkei Lounge is equipped with state-of-the-art audio-visual light technology and boosted by the Void sound system while the Terrace Bar offers covered and *al fresco* seating and panoramic views.

Upon arriving, customers will get to indulge in a selection of Spanish *tapas*, *paellas* and *picana* steaks in the main or private dining rooms.

For an elegant view and entertaining time, they can head to the Nikkei Lounge which provides an unobstructed view of KLCC Park and the Petronas Twin Towers,



Season Bakery merges timeless heritage with modern styles.



Local pastry flavours are available for purchase at Season Bakery's outlet.

accompanied by performances from local and international DJs.

Meanwhile, the Terrace Bar allows customers to relax with their alcoholic drinks in the outdoor section or settle in comfortably in the covered area.

Milk & Barley @ Berjaya Times Square

Milk & Barley has cemented its presence in Malaysia, opening its first restaurant in Malaysia at Berjaya Times Square. The restaurant sets itself apart by combining freshness, customer interaction and community engagement.

Customers do not need to worry about the freshness as the pastries are made daily. None of them are carried over to the next day.

As for the interaction aspect, the restaurant features Malaysia's first self-serve milk station. Customers can pour fresh milk for themselves to complement their pastries, creating a fun and memorable experience for children and adults.

Another element that differentiates the restaurant is its in-store countdown discount

screens. Through the screens, customers are made aware of the discounts on selected items as closing time approaches.

Similarly to Eat Pizza, customers can look forward to more restaurants as Milk & Barley plans to open 10 more restaurants nationwide.

Season Bakery @ Mount Austin

Committed to celebrating the "Taste of Malaysia", the bakery promotes local pastries such as pandan gula melaka swiss roll, original lapis, sambal ikan bilis bun and Season's pandan chiffon cake.

New additions exclusive to Mount Austin, such as the original chocolate chip bites, mini Milo swiss roll and soya are available for purchase too.

Its dedication to local flavours is also reflected in the bakery's interior. In line with its five decades of history, the bakery showcases a concept that merges timeless heritage with modern styles.

The interior design incorporates vibrant elements inspired by local culture, creating a space where tradition meets contemporary aesthetics.



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Malaysian corporate capex up 15% this year

➤ Increase reflects heightened confidence among foreign and local investors in country's policies, initiatives, says MARC Ratings CEO

BY AIMIE SHAZRIE
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Corporate capital expenditure (capex) in Malaysia is experiencing 15.3% growth in 2024, signalling increased confidence among domestic and international investors, said MARC Ratings Bhd CEO Rajan Paramesran (*pic*).

He said the rise highlights the nation's robust economic policies and ongoing initiatives to attract high-value investments across diverse sectors.

"Malaysia remains committed to fostering a conducive environment for business growth. This increase reflects investor trust in our long-term economic potential," Rajan said at the MARC360 Overview webinar yesterday.

That aligns with Malaysia's broader strategy to strengthen its standing as a key investment



destination in the region, it added.

Rajan said growth in investments is underpinned by strategic collaborations between the public and private sectors.

"These partnerships are driving significant advancements in areas such as green technology, manufacturing and digital transformation. We are seeing an increasing trend of investments focused on sustainability and innovation, which aligns with our vision for Malaysia's economic future."

and innovation, which aligns with our vision for Malaysia's economic future."

Rajan remarked that the government is prioritising support for small and medium enterprises, a critical pillar of the Malaysian economy. "SMEs are integral to our growth story, and ensuring their success remains a top priority. This growth in capital expenditure also reflects efforts to provide them with enhanced opportunities."

He said foreign direct investment, too, is playing a pivotal role in this surge, with Malaysia's ability to attract large multinational corporations bolstering its position in the global market. "We are focused on maintaining strong ties with international investors and ensuring Malaysia remains a competitive and attractive destination."

Rajan said that in tandem with investment growth, the government has reaffirmed its commitment to improving infrastructure and streamlining regulatory processes. "By reducing bureaucratic barriers and investing in infrastructure, we aim to create an ecosystem where businesses can thrive."

Despite global uncertainties, Rajan said, Malaysia's strategic approach to economic management appears to be yielding results. "The resilience of our economy is a testament to the policies and reforms we have implemented over the years," he remarked.

The 15.3% surge in corporate capex underscores the nation's economic resilience and its readiness to embrace new opportunities, Rajan said.

"With investments set to shape the future of Malaysia's economy, stakeholders will be optimistic about continued growth in the coming years," he added.

Balancing subsidy rationalisation and market stability

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia is embarking on a pivotal journey towards economic resilience as the government reduces subsidies to alleviate fiscal pressure while ensuring market stability.

MARC Ratings Bhd chief economist Dr Ray Choy (*pic*) said the move has been the focus of policy discussions, reflecting the need for a balanced approach.

"Subsidy rationalisation is not just about reducing the fiscal burden but also about ensuring long-term economic sustainability," he said at the MARC360 Overview webinar yesterday.

Choy said the sentiment underscores the delicate balance between fiscal responsibility and shielding lower-income groups from adverse impacts.

He added that the government's efforts have been complemented by Bank Negara Malaysia's decision to maintain the Overnight Policy Rate at 3%, a move designed to foster economic growth while keeping inflation in check. "The central bank's cautious stance is vital in preventing unnecessary shocks to the financial system."

In addition, the ringgit, which faced heightened volatility earlier this year, has seen signs of stabilisation amid these reforms, Choy said.

"Investor confidence is gradually returning as Malaysia positions itself as a stable economy in the region," Choy said, adding that the country's trade dynamics are supporting the positive outlook.

"Malaysia has benefitted from shifts in global supply chains, particularly in key sectors like palm oil and semiconductors. Trade continues to play a crucial role, but sustaining this momentum requires strategic long-term policies," he highlighted.

However, Choy said, despite the positive outlook, structural challenges persist.

"High household debt and uneven wage growth remain critical issues, with experts urging the government to prioritise workforce productivity and skills development. Productivity enhancement and workforce upskilling are essential if Malaysia is to meet its high-income nation targets."



Choy said the government's initiatives in Budget 2025, including investments in green energy, digital infrastructure and innovation, reflect a commitment to addressing these challenges. "These measures are aligned with global trends and the nation's aspiration to be a high-tech economy by 2030."

He noted that public sentiment towards subsidy rationalisation has been mixed, with calls for greater transparency and communication from policymakers. "People need to see how these reforms directly benefit them in the long term. Building trust is key to ensuring widespread support," he said.

Choy emphasised that maintaining equilibrium between short-term fiscal adjustments and long-term economic goals is essential as Malaysia navigates these transitions.

"Economic resilience is about careful planning and consistent execution. Malaysia's current trajectory is promising, but it requires continuous vigilance." - by AIMIE SHAZRIE

No official proposal from BRICS nations on dedollarisation: Tengku Zafrul

KUALA LUMPUR: There has been no official proposal agreed upon by BRICS member countries regarding dedollarisation in trade matters, said Investment, Trade, and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz.

He said Malaysia, as a partner country in BRICS, is aware of the current situation, particularly about the threat made by US President-elect Donald Trump, who has proposed imposing 100% tariff on BRICS countries if they pursued the use of a new currency.

"Although one of the topics that were discussed during BRICS meetings in the past was related to reducing dependence on traditional trade currencies such as the US dollar, there has been no official proposal agreed upon for dedollarisation as of now," Tengku Zafrul said during Minister's Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was responding to a question from Young Syefura Othman (PH-Bentong) about Malaysia's stance as a BRICS partner regarding the potential 100% tariff increase by Trump.

Tengku Zafrul said Malaysia views BRICS as an increasingly important platform for presenting views and positions on regional economic issues through dialogue, forums, or discussions that are non-binding.

At the same time, he acknowledged that there is a high level of interdependence in the trade and economic relations between Malaysia and the US, especially in the semiconductor supply chain, where US companies are key investors in Malaysia.

This complementary trade relationship can be seen in statistics, where in 2023, the US was Malaysia's third largest trading partner, while Malaysia was the 19th largest trading partner of the US.

"Therefore, any move to impose a 100% tariff would only harm both parties, who are mutually dependent on efforts to prevent disruptions in the global supply chain," said Tengku Zafrul.

He added that Malaysia, which is still not an official member of BRICS, would continue to closely monitor developments that could impact the country, considering that the US dollar still plays a significant role in the global financial system.

"The use of other currencies by Malaysia in trade and investment matters needs to be carefully examined by the government, and any decision on this matter should be based on the national interest and aligned with the country's current policies," he added. - Bernama

UOB: Asean-6 economic growth to hit 4.8% in 2025, outpace global average

KUALA LUMPUR: United Overseas Bank (UOB) forecasts that Asean-6 economic growth will reach 4.8% in 2025, surpassing the projected global average gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.2%.

UOB Asean economist Enrico Tanuwidjaja said Indonesia's GDP is expected to grow by 4.8%, Malaysia 5.3%, the Philippines 6.5%, Singapore 2.5%, Thailand 2.9% and Vietnam 6.8%.

"Countries with large customer bases are likely to cushion the impact

of global trade tensions," he said, adding that the trade and foreign direct investment outlook for these countries remains positive.

Tanuwidjaja was speaking at UOB Global Economics and Market Research's 2025 Macroeconomic Outlook Virtual Media Briefing yesterday.

He elaborated that the ongoing shift in the global supply chain towards Asean, driven by the China Plus One Strategy, could further accelerate Asean-6 economic growth as trade tensions between the United

States and China intensify.

Citing Donald Trump's first term as US President, Tanuwidjaja observed a trend of supply chain rerouting and rebalancing across Asean, with Singapore emerging as a key destination.

"Singapore is often the initial landing point for investors before they expand into the broader region. Subsequently, countries like Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand could be beneficiaries out of Singapore," he said.

Tanuwidjaja emphasised that Asean

will continue to attract quality investments, especially those related to the global diversification strategies in manufacturing and technology, as well as sectors targeting young and rising middle-income class markets with high consumption potential.

"To capitalise on these opportunities, Asean economies must prioritise steady structural transformation including human capital enhancement, creating investment-friendly regulations, and attracting investments in emerging sectors," he said.

Tanuwidjaja also highlighted Asean's untapped potential in consumption markets, as many of these areas are less affected by tariffs dominating high-value and tech sectors, global investments are expected to flow into the region.

On segmental beneficiaries, he said the finance and insurance sector received the highest share of investment, with over 40%, followed by manufacturing, professional and technical services, retail, transport and storage. - Bernama



Luno optimistic on M'sian market, plans new offerings

➤ Digital asset exchange set to introduce another product by early next year

BY JOHN GILBERT
sunbiz@thesunday.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Luno, Malaysia's leading digital asset exchange, is working with regulators to expand the range of digital currencies available on its platform and is poised to unveil a new digital product by early next year.

Country manager for Malaysia Scarlet Chai said Luno is optimistic about the Malaysian market, which has already achieved one million customers.

"We are very optimistic about the Malaysian market. We see Malaysia as a country that has the potential to grow digital assets," she told reporters in a media briefing yesterday.

Chai said Luno adheres to Securities Commission Malaysia guidelines and periodically meets with the regulator to discuss the exchange's products and services.

In addition to the one million customers milestone, Luno has recorded 32% growth in cumulative transaction volume from last year, bringing its platform's total cumulative transaction volume to over RM87 billion, another clear sign of confidence in the growing crypto market.

Further, Luno has processed more than 72 million transactions in total, encompassing the depositing and withdrawing of rringit and the sending and receiving of digital assets.

Luno's assets under custody for both digital and rringit have more than doubled to RM4.28 billion from last year.

The digital exchange's staking services experienced substantial take-up, with Ethereum dominating at 55% of staking assets under custody, followed by Solana at 25% and



Chai (left) and Tang at Luno's media briefing yesterday.

Cardano at 20%. Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ripple, Solana and Ethereum have emerged as the most traded and favoured cryptocurrencies among Luno users.

"Malaysians are increasingly viewing digital assets like cryptocurrencies as a means of diversifying their investment portfolio. This is across all age and income groups, with the average investor aged 34.8 and a median deposit of RM100.

"Our customers also came from diverse industries - manufacturing, construction, engineering and education sectors. In an encouraging development for gender parity in the industry, we also saw a 17% increase in female customers this year, compared with a 14% increase in male customers," Chai said.

Luno is the world's first regulated digital asset exchange to offer syariah-compliant Ethereum staking, highlighting its commitment to customer needs. Malaysia is the first country globally where this service is available, providing assurance to Muslim investors that their investments align with Islamic principles.

In addition, Luno has introduced Luno Institutional, a service designed for institutional investors, professional traders and fund managers. This offering includes advanced account setup for managing multiple entities and access to a dedicated account manager for tailored solutions.

Cryptocurrencies saw a surge in price following Donald Trump's impending return to the White House. The incoming US administration has been widely known to be pro-crypto and pro-business.

Luno's general manager for Asia-Pacific, Aaron Tang, said these macroeconomic factors have contributed to doubling Bitcoin's price since the start of 2024.

"On Jan 1, 2024, Bitcoin was at RM198,911. Shy of two weeks ago, Bitcoin set a new all-time high of RM438,466 on Luno.

"We are proud of our role in Malaysia and the region - our global exposure has allowed us to work alongside regulators like the Securities Commission and Bank Negara Malaysia in growing the local digital assets industry," Tang said.

MJets Air's contract with MASKargo extended for 12 months

PETALING JAYA: MJets Air Sdn Bhd, a commercial air cargo operator under MMAG Aviation Consortium Sdn Bhd (MAC), the aviation division of MMAG Holdings Bhd, has renewed its contract with MASKargo Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Malaysia Aviation Group Bhd.

The 12-month extension, formalised through a letter of award dated Nov 28, is a recognition of the achievements of their successful six month collaboration and underscores MASKargo's continued trust in MJets Air's capabilities.

Set to take effect on Jan 1, 2025, this extension of the contract marks a significant milestone for MJets Air, which expanded its presence in the airfreight market earlier this year through its groundbreaking partnership with MASKargo.

MJets Air was entrusted with a key role in MASKargo's logistics operations during its initial contract. Over the past six months, MJets Air has effectively served as MASKargo's narrow-body freighter operator, providing feeder services to support its wide-body network. The contract has developed into a long-term partnership focused on efficiency and mutual growth.

Since the initial MASKargo contract, MJets Air has expanded its interline partnerships with major carriers, including Teletport by AirAsia, China Southern Airlines, and All Nippon Airways.

These collaborations have bolstered MJets Air's ability to serve as a vital feeder operator, connecting diverse regional and global markets. The partnerships also enhance Kuala Lumpur International Airport's position as a leading transhipment hub, with MJets Air's state-of-the-art Xpress Cargo Terminal offering advanced automated cargo handling capabilities.

MJets Air's collaboration with industry leaders such as Menzies Aviation and Unilode Aviation Solutions enhances its operational efficiency and service quality.

MAC chairman Woo Kam Weng said: "We are incredibly honoured to continue our collaboration with MASKargo. This extension signifies the confidence and trust MASKargo has in our capabilities and affirms our commitment to delivering unparalleled service standards. Through this partnership and our growing network of interline collaborations, we aim to enhance regional connectivity and support MASKargo in establishing its global presence whilst achieving new heights of operational excellence."

Deleum sets sights on Southeast Asia expansion

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: Deleum Bhd is setting its sights on expansion in Southeast Asia after completing the acquisition of a 70% stake in PT OSA Industries Indonesia, group CEO Rao Abdullah said.

The US\$7 million (RM31 million) PT OSA Industries deal is expected to be completed in the first half of 2025.

"Our ambition is to go beyond Malaysia and Indonesia for now. We have the aspirations," Rao told a press conference yesterday after signing of a share purchase agreement with OSA Industries Pte Ltd for the acquisition of the majority stake in PT OSA Industries.

After Indonesia, Deleum is looking at Thailand and Vietnam.

Rao stressed that Deleum is in a strong financial position with a solid balance sheet and a leading role in the gas industry.

"So, as set by the chairman and board, we have to put our cash to work and not just let it sit in the bank and earn 3% interest. We have to, yes, in short, we are looking at many opportunities.

"But we've got to make sure that at the same time, we don't want to bite more than what we can chew. We're mindful of that. And also, the industry has gone through a lot of ... it's a volatile industry, let's face it. So, we don't want to get caught in that



OSA Industries Pte Ltd founder and director Ong Siow Aik signing the agreement while Deleum non-executive chairman Tan Sri Shamsul Azhar Abbas (left) and Rao look on.

either," he said.

Rao said Deleum has undertaken a balanced approach to growth via organic and inorganic means.

"Our financial position has enabled us to earnestly explore inorganic means of business

expansion to catapult our growth, increase our presence, and enhance our suite of solutions to better serve the energy majors."

Organically, Deleum enlarged its revenue base from RM587 million to RM792 million from the financial years ended Dec 31, 2020 to 2023.

Operating profits increased from RM27 million to nearly RM80 million in the same time frame.

The Deleum group, through its subsidiaries, provides supporting specialised products and services to the oil and gas industry.

Currently, Deleum's expansion into Indonesia focuses on control valves and pressure relief valves as the core product line.

In Malaysia, it has a market share of 36% for control valves, compared to 11% in Indonesia (for PT OSA Industries). For pressure relief valves, its market share in Malaysia is about 22%, compared to 5% in Indonesia.

"In terms of market size in Indonesia from opex, it's about US\$52 million, compared to Malaysia's approximately US\$25 million. So, there's a lot of opportunity in terms of the market size to tap into," Rao said.

He added that the expansion will also allow them to set the foundation to expand other product lines, particularly chemical.

"We have been working on chemicals but without a presence there, we couldn't move forward with it. This acquisition will allow us to

expand our product line, which is the main focus for us. We are also very successful in the chemicals sector in Malaysia," Rao said.

PT OSA Industries is a supplier of valves and valve maintenance services in Indonesia, including for the oil and gas industry. Since 2017, it has been the sole channel partner for Baker Hughes valves, such as safety and control valves, ball valves and actuators. PT OSA Industries serves energy majors supported by its service facility in Cikarang, Indonesia.

Deleum said the acquisition will complement and fortify the existing technical expertise and capabilities of its valve management segment through Deleum Services Sdn Bhd's subsidiary, Penaga Dresser Sdn Bhd.

"It is the sole channel partner for Baker Hughes valves for the oil and gas, and energy industries in Malaysia. The location of service facilities in Terengganu, Johor, Sabah and Sarawak positions Penaga Dresser favourably to provide on-to-offshore services to international customers and principals," it said.

The purchase consideration of US\$7 million will be fulfilled via internally-generated funds and bank borrowings.

As part of the exercise, PT OSA Industries will provide a profit guarantee of US\$2.7 million cumulatively across the financial years ending Dec 31, 2024 and 2025.

'Malaysia can become MNC regional headquarters hub'

➤ Govt urged to enhance digital adoption, strengthen regulations and logistics for smoother cross-border trade

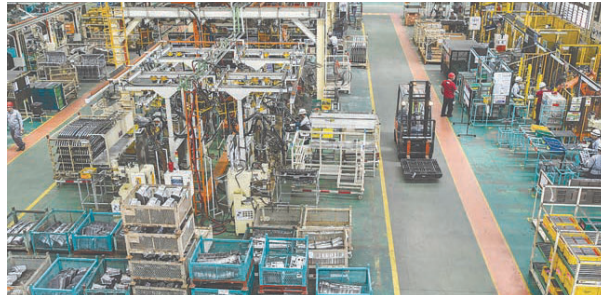
KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia can leverage its mature digital infrastructure and skilled workforce to become the focal point for regional headquarters of multinational companies (MNC) and high-skilled services and manufacturing.

Strategic advisory firm Bower Group Asia associate director Darryl Tan said that Malaysia – as chairman of Asean in 2025 – and each Southeast Asian country, has a niche in the global value chain that they can leverage.

He cited how Singapore serves as the regional headquarters for many MNCs, while Malaysia serves as a high-skilled service and manufacturing hub for these companies, and Indonesia and Vietnam focus more on the manufacturing side of the value chain.

As Malaysia assumes the chairmanship of Asean, Tan said, many of the strategies outlined by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim support the vision of leveraging each member country's advantages.

"Together, they can make Asean a competitive hub," he said in response to questions raised during the Bernama Global news programme on Dec 4 by host Jessy Chahal regarding the topic "Southeast Asia's



Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries each have a unique niche in the global value chain to leverage. - **BERNAMAPIX**

markets: Navigating Challenges and Opportunities in 2025".

This includes fostering digital adoption at every level of the supply chain, increasing regulatory cooperation as well as increasing logistical linkages to enable smoother transactions of goods and expertise across borders.

Tan said Putrajaya should also leverage its significant investments in renewable energy to attract companies that want to set up environmentally sustainable manufacturing plants in the region.

He highlighted that Malaysia should take advantage of its regulatory and policymaking experience – for example, in the digital and energy sectors – and share this knowledge to foster stronger regulatory cohesiveness across the region.

"Deeper economic integration within the region will allow Asean to position itself as a hub

for businesses at every level of the supply chain," he said.

Asked about Malaysia's economic outlook, Tan said the country would benefit from the overall tech boost, as "we are a major exporter of semiconductors and electrical and electronics (E&E) products".

There will be stable growth next year, with the economy expanding by 4.5-5.5% supported by the continued demand for E&E goods, as multinational companies invest heavily in new technologies, particularly artificial intelligence.

Contributing to Malaysia's stability will also be the sustained domestic demand.

Despite the government's plans to further rationalise petrol subsidies next year, he said any spillover effects from the increase in the cost of living would be offset by government initiatives, including the increase in the minimum wage and the rise in civil servant salaries. - Bernama

NTT Data to acquire land for new data centre in Johor Bahru

PETALING JAYA: NTT Data, an innovator of business and technology services, announced its proposed acquisition of a 68.5-acre parcel of land in Gelang Patah, Johor Bahru to develop one of the largest data center campuses in the APAC region, comprising of six dedicated buildings and offering a substantial IT load capacity of approximately 290 megawatts (MW).

The first building with an initial capacity of 48 MW is planned to launch in April 2027.

"With the APAC region emerging as one of the fastest growing and most influential markets for IT and data centers, our strategic land acquisition and development in Malaysia underscores our commitment to further expansion in the region," said NTT Data Global Data Centers CEO and president, Doug Adams. "Johor Bahru is an increasingly important cross-border economic zone due to its proximity to Singapore."

"Expanding in Gelang Patah enhances our digital infrastructure in Malaysia, drives APAC economic growth, strengthens regional ties, creates jobs, and fosters technological innovation," said NTT Data Global Data Centers executive vice president, managing director of Japan and APAC, Yasuo Suzuki.

NTT Data operates six facilities in Cyberjaya, with a total IT load capacity of 20 MW.

NTT Data operates one of the world's largest data center platforms, with over 150 facilities across 20 over countries.

Miti: No proposal for Malaysia to join New Development Bank so far

KUALA LUMPUR: There has been no proposal so far for Malaysia to join the New Development Bank (NDB), according to the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (Miti)

Miti said if there is a necessity to join the NDB, Malaysia needs to be ready to contribute to this financial institution and this step will add to the country's existing financial commitments.

"The country needs to take into account the government's policy to limit the national debt to 65% of the gross domestic product (GDP) and only rely on local financial agencies, given that Malaysia

has achieved the status of a graduate country among other multilateral development banks," it said in a written reply on the Dewan Negara website to a question by Senator Ros Suryati Alang who wanted to know if Malaysia would apply to become a member of the China-based NDB following the announcement of Malaysia becoming a partner country of BRICS.

The prospect of Malaysia's membership in the NDB was discussed by the Economy Minister with NDB president Dilma Rousseff during their meeting on the sidelines of the Heads of State and

Government in the BRICS Outreach/BRICS Plus Conference held in Kazan, Russia.

Miti said NDB membership is open to all members of the United Nations regardless of whether the country is a BRICS member country or otherwise.

To determine whether Malaysia will enjoy the benefits of membership in the NDB, a comprehensive cost and benefit analysis needs to be carried out.

"This analysis will consider the membership requirements, financial commitment and voting

power of Malaysia in the NDB," it said.

Miti said the government needs to hold engagement sessions with relevant stakeholders, including economic and development agencies, to get feedback to ensure membership in the NDB is in line with the country's development priorities.

"As an initial preparation, Malaysia can apply to be an observer in the NDB board meetings.

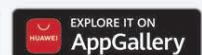
"This step will give Malaysia the opportunity to get a clear picture of the NDB's operations and governance before joining it officially," it said. - Bernama

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Petronas awards **four** new production sharing contracts

➤ PSCs cover nine fields and one exploration block located off Peninsular Malaysia and Sabah

KUALA LUMPUR: Petronas, through Malaysia Petroleum Management (MPM), has awarded Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for three Discovered Resource Opportunities (DRO) Clusters and one exploration block offered under the Malaysia Bid Round (MBR) 2024, which was launched earlier this year.

The awarded PSCs cover nine fields and one exploration block, featuring oil and gas discoveries located offshore Peninsular Malaysia and off the coast of Sabah.

These resources, situated within proven hydrocarbon basins, offer significant development advantages due to their proximity to existing infrastructure, enabling synergistic development and swift monetisation, ensuring efficient and cost-effective resource extraction.

Under the Small Field Asset PSC, the RAJA cluster – located offshore Peninsular Malaysia,

comprising Rhu, Ara and Janglau fields – was awarded to Dialog Resources Sdn Bhd, while the Erb South field was awarded to EPOMS Sdn Bhd.

The Ubah Cluster, located off the coast of Sabah, consisting of five fields – Ubah, Rempah, Bagang, Batai and Biris – was awarded to ConocoPhillips Malaysia New Ventures Ltd, Sabah Shell Petroleum Company Ltd, and Petronas Carigali Sdn Bhd (PCSB) under the Deepwater Revenue-over-Cost PSC.

Additionally, Block PM515, which is an exploration block, was awarded under the Enhanced Profitability Terms PSC to PCSB and E&P Malaysia Venture Sdn Bhd.

“We are pleased to see our petroleum arrangement contractors growing their portfolios in Malaysia,” said MPM senior vice-president Datuk Bacho Pilong.

“With their strong track records and proven capabilities, they continue to contribute significantly to the growth of Malaysia’s petroleum sector.

“Block PM515 holds great potential for significant discoveries while the DRO Clusters are primed for accelerated development due to their sizeable resources and proximity to nearby facilities.

“The Ubah Cluster can greatly benefit from

integration with the Kebabangan field, especially considering that both are operated by the same contractors – this integration can lead to various synergies and advantages for the operations of both fields.

“The year 2024 marks another successful year with the award of 18 PSCs across exploration, DRO and Late Life Asset.

“This is a testament of investors’ confidence in Petronas’ innovative asset offerings with high monetisation potential, solidifying Malaysia’s position as a preferred destination for upstream investments.”

Looking ahead, Petronas is gearing up for MBR 2025, scheduled for the first quarter of 2025.

The upcoming bid round offers significant opportunity for investors to explore Malaysia’s upstream oil and gas potential.

To enhance the investor experience, Petronas has established myPROdata, a smart platform offering exclusive access to comprehensive data and insights, thus empowering investors to make more informed decisions.

With these enhancements, Petronas is poised to deliver meaningful value and further reinforce Malaysia’s position as an attractive destination for upstream investments.

Cropmate optimistic about demand for fertiliser

KUALA LUMPUR: Cropmate Bhd is optimistic about growing fertiliser demand in Malaysia, particularly in the palm oil sector.

Its sales and technical director, Leong Fo Seong, highlighted that Malaysia’s limited land for oil palm expansion necessitates a focus on maximising yields.

“This means farmers will need to use fertiliser on their trees to achieve optimum yield.

“Another segment is durian, which has been performing well in Malaysia. As you can see, China has been importing around 1.2 million to 1.5 million tonnes of durian from us annually,” he told a press conference after the company’s listing ceremony here yesterday.

He further noted that the rising demand for durian and palm oil is expected to drive greater fertiliser use in the coming years.

Cropmate is primarily involved in the formulation and blending of conventional and speciality fertilisers.

The company plans to allocate RM3.2 million to establish a research and development (R&D) and testing laboratory to improve product quality and support future expansion plans.

“We have not yet achieved our full capacity. While our current capacity is about 220,000 tonnes, we are producing slightly over 100,000 tonnes. So, we still have extra capacity to cater to future demand,” Leong said.

“We will allocate part of the IPO proceeds to R&D to enhance quality and explore future environmental, social, and governance compliant fertilisers.”

The IPO entails the issuance of 210 million new shares and the sale of 50 million existing shares.

This involved an offering of 208.34 million shares to institutional and selected investors.

Meanwhile, a retail offering of 51.66 million shares was made available to the public, as well as to eligible directors, employees, and individuals who contributed to the success of Cropmate and its subsidiary. – Bernama



Bacho (centre) says Petronas is pleased to see its petroleum arrangement contractors growing their portfolios in Malaysia.

Jamf recognises CHN as first elite partner

KUALA LUMPUR: Jamf, the market leader in comprehensive solutions for Apple device management and security, has recognised Complete Human Network (CHN) as an elite partner in Malaysia, highlighting the company’s expertise and commitment to providing top-tier Apple management solutions.

Jamf, the only company in the world that provides complete management and security for an Apple-first environment, awarded CHN the highest tier in Jamf’s partner programme based on CHN’s capabilities in delivering the highest level of support, implementation, and management of Apple devices.

This further solidifies CHN’s best-in-class skillset and expertise in providing comprehensive device management solutions, ensuring the smooth integration of Apple devices across large-

scale government bodies, enterprises, SMEs, educational institutions and other sectors.

Through its partnership with Jamf, CHN is poised to support organisations in Malaysia and across Asean in securely managing their Apple devices at scale, enabling them to stay competitive in an increasingly digital world.

“We are honoured to be recognised by Jamf as their first elite partner in Malaysia. This advancement from professional partner to elite status reflects our continuous dedication to delivering best in class Apple management and security solutions,” said Complete Human Network Sdn Bhd founder and CEO Teh Chai Peng.

“Together with Jamf, we will continue to empower our clients with innovative solutions to enhance productivity, security, and user experience.”

Jamf APAC channel leader Lloyd Thomas said CHN’s dedication and expertise in the Apple ecosystem position them as an invaluable partner.

“Together, we’re empowering organisations to harness the full potential of Apple devices, ensuring the highest standards of security and user experience.”

To further align with the country’s digital transformation initiative, CHN is launching the Malaysia MacAdmin User Group to unite Apple enthusiasts, IT professionals, and organisations nationwide.

As this is the first MacAdmin technical user group, this platform encourages individuals and businesses to connect, innovate and enhance their expertise in the Apple ecosystem integration.

Knight Frank appointed exclusive agent for sale of 100-acre land in Prai

KUALA LUMPUR: Knight Frank Malaysia (KFM) yesterday announced its exclusive appointment for the sale of a 100-acre freehold industrial land in Prai, Penang.

This rare and highly coveted site is positioned to attract significant interest from local and international investors looking to tap into the thriving industrial market in Penang.

According to KFM land and industrial solutions executive director Allan Sim, “Penang has long been recognised as one of Malaysia’s key industrial hotspots, particularly for the electronics and electrical industry.”

“Since the establishment of the Penang Development Corporation 50 years ago, Penang has consistently evolved as a crucial investment destination.

“We are confident that the state will continue to play a prominent role in shaping its industrial real estate as an important platform for international and local industries.”

Knight Frank Penang branch head and executive director Mark Saw said this site is truly one of a kind and it may be one of the largest privately held freehold industrial lands in Penang.

“It’s strategically located with excellent road connectivity and is in close proximity to major seaports, making it an ideal site for industrial development, logistics, warehousing, and large-scale manufacturing operations.”

The 100-acre site in Prai comes equipped with essential infrastructure, including substantial electricity capacity, water supply and a gas pipeline.

Nvidia signs deal to help build Thai 'sovereign cloud'

BANGKOK: US chip giant Nvidia signed a partnership with Thai tech company SIAM.AI on Wednesday to build the country's first "sovereign cloud".

The deal was announced during a visit to Bangkok by Nvidia's Jensen Huang, CEO and founder of the leading semiconductor design business, during which he agreed to support the development of artificial intelligence in Thailand.

A "sovereign cloud" is the idea that a country, region or community will have control over its data – where it is stored, how it is accessed, who oversees it.

Huang said that the data stored on Thailand's sovereign cloud server could be used to power a local "AI ecosystem", such as a generative AI chatbot fed by Thai data.

It came after Huang said on Tuesday that it would work with the Thai government to develop "world-class AI infrastructure" in the kingdom.

On Wednesday, Huang added that Nvidia would partner with 40 Thai universities and over 50 startups so that local schools and enterprises "will have access to Thai AI".

"The data of Thailand ... it belongs to the Thai people. It is your natural resource."

According to data company OpenDataSoft, the sovereignty of the digital cloud "does a better job of protecting national interests by limiting third-party access to sensitive information".

Huang said the sovereign cloud could also be applied in Thailand's healthcare, agriculture, energy, digital and telecom sectors.

Nvidia, which makes specialised computer chips used for training AI models, has surpassed Apple to become the highest-valued company in the world.

SIAM.AI is a cloud platform that offers virtual servers and data storage.

Its CEO, Ratanaphon Wongnapachant, is reportedly related to former prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra, who made an appearance at the event.

Last year, then-prime minister Srettha Thavisin made a major push for investment from US tech giants during a trip to New York.

Thailand is Southeast Asia's second-largest economy, but its tech sector has lagged behind Singapore and Indonesia. – AFP



Huang speaking to members of the media during the 'AI Vision For Thailand' event in Bangkok. – REUTERS/SPIC

Bitcoin surges past US\$100,000 for first time

▶ Traders cheer Trump pick of crypto proponent as SEC chairman

HONG KONG: Bitcoin burst past US\$100,000 (RM442,000) for the first time yesterday, while Seoul stocks slipped as South Korea's president faced impeachment after his brief imposition of martial law this week.

After hovering around the mid-US\$90,000 mark in recent weeks, the popular cryptocurrency finally shattered the historic level in Asia after incoming US president Donald Trump picked crypto proponent Paul Atkins to take over as chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).

Atkins is founder of risk consultancy firm Patomak Global Partners, whose clients include companies in the banking, trading and cryptocurrency industries.

Trump's transition team noted he had co-chaired the Digital Chamber of Commerce, which promotes the use of digital assets, since 2017.

Atkins "recognises that digital assets and other innovations are crucial to Making America Greater than Ever Before", Trump said.

Stephen Innes at SPI Asset Management said Atkins has "a track record of critiquing the SEC's tough stance on cryptocurrency firms".

"This strategic move has electrified the crypto

community, fuelling investor optimism about a potentially more accommodating regulatory landscape under Atkins' watch."

After breaking the key level, bitcoin continued to push higher and hit a peak of US\$103,800 yesterday.

It has jumped more than 50% since Trump's victory – and around 140% since the turn of the year – on hopes the American president-elect will push through measures to deregulate cryptocurrencies.

On the election campaign trail, he pledged to make the United States the "bitcoin and cryptocurrency capital of the world".

The rally in bitcoin came as traders keep track of events in South Korea, after President Yoon Suk Yeol's dramatic declaration of martial law which was lifted within hours.

The nation's opposition has now pushed for his impeachment, while the defence minister has resigned over the crisis.

The upheaval comes as Asia's number-four economy struggles to gain traction, while worries build on the possible impact of Trump's presidency as he prepares to reignite his hardball trade policy when he takes power next month.

But analysts saw some optimism.

"The silver lining we think is that the swift reversal of the martial law underscores the resilience of South Korea's institutions," said analysts at BMI, a unit of Fitch Solutions.

"For now, we expect limited implications for the economy and financial markets as the Bank of Korea and the Ministry of Finance have responded swiftly by reassuring investors."

Trinh Nguyen, senior economist for emerging Asia at Natixis CIB, said the turmoil represented "a growth shock rather than a sovereign risk".

Seoul's Kospi fell 0.9%, having finished more than 1% down on Wednesday.

And the won – which initially hit a two-year low when the crisis erupted – remained at around 1,415 per US dollar, slightly up from its levels before the martial law declaration on Tuesday.

Investors are also keeping tabs on France after the three-month-old government of Prime Minister Michel Barnier was brought down in a no-confidence vote linked to a controversial budget proposal.

The news out of the eurozone's second-largest economy had been expected and the euro saw no major impact, but the move injected fresh uncertainty into an already fraught political situation in France after divisive elections earlier this year.

In early European exchanges, the euro was trading at US\$1.0544, a little stonger than recent days.

Paris stocks opened marginally higher.

Most other markets in Asia rose, tracking a record for all three main indexes on Wall Street, where soft data on jobs and services boosted hopes for a Federal Reserve interest rate cut this month.

Tokyo, Shanghai, Sydney, Singapore, Wellington, Mumbai and Taipei advanced but Hong Kong, Jakarta and Manila slipped.

London was flat at the open while Frankfurt was down. – AFP

France's Ubisoft to close San Francisco and Osaka studios

PARIS: France's largest video game maker Ubisoft has decided to discontinue development on *XDefiant*, its free-to-play first-person shooter title, it said on Wednesday.

As a result, Ubisoft will close its San Francisco and Osaka production studios and ramp down production in Sydney, leading to a loss of 143 jobs in San Francisco and a likely reduction of 134 people in Osaka and Sydney.

Ubisoft said half of the *XDefiant* team worldwide would transition to other roles within the company.

"The decision follows a thorough review of the game's performance, profitability, and market conditions, and aligns with the company's increased selectivity in its R&D investments," the company said in a statement.

"Season 3 of *XDefiant* will still launch and servers will remain active until June 3, 2025."

It said that although *XDefiant* generated initial excitement, it did not retain a large enough player base to establish it as a viable competitor to other free-to-play first-person shooter titles or to support Ubisoft's continued investment in it.

"The cancellation of the project shows how tough the shooter market is, where it is difficult to break through among strong IPs that have dominated the segment for years," Erste Group analyst Piotr Bogusz said. Ubisoft said it would apply the lessons learned from *XDefiant* to its future free-to-play titles.

The French group has been plagued by delays and the underperformance of some key titles, including *Star Wars Outlaws* which lagged sales expectations after its August launch.

Its shares have lost half of their value so far this year.

The company added that the Games-as-a-Service (GAAS) category remains its key strength and a central pillar of its strategy, with notable successes such as *Rainbow Six, The Crew* and *For Honor*. – Reuters

Bharti Airtel seals 'multi-billion' dollar 4G, 5G agreement with Ericsson

MUMBAI: India's Bharti Airtel on Wednesday signed a "multi-billion" dollar deal with Swedish telecom equipment maker Ericsson to boost its 4G and 5G coverage in the world's second-largest smartphone market.

Under the deal, which Reuters reported in October, Bharti Airtel will buy and deploy equipment from Ericsson, likely in 2025.

The companies did not disclose exact financial terms of the deal.

Demand from India's 5G market started to skyrocket last year, as Bharti Airtel and Jio, the telecommunications unit of Reliance

Industries, started to scale up 5G services.

Ericsson, Bharti Airtel's partner of more than two decades, will deploy centralised radio access network (RAN) and Open RAN-ready solutions, Bharti Airtel said in a press release.

Open RAN allows mobile operators to mix and match equipment from various suppliers, potentially increasing flexibility.

Ericsson will also upgrade the software of its deployed 4G radios, it said.

"This deployment will enable us to further improve the speed, reliability, and coverage of our network," Bharti Airtel's chief technology

officer Randeep Sekhon said in the release.

The company did not immediately respond to Reuters' request for comment.

The deal comes after Ericsson won part of a US\$3.6 billion (RM15.9 billion) contract to sell 5G equipment to Vodafone Idea earlier this year. It shared the contract with Nokia and Samsung.

The new deals are expected to boost Ericsson's revenue next year, after a big fall in contracts from India in the first half of the year.

Nokia also signed a "multi-billion" dollar deal with Bharti Airtel last month. – Reuters

UK to nationalise train operators

➤ Passengers set to face higher fares from March despite transition to public ownership

LONDON: Britain's Labour government will carry out the first renationalisation of a private train operator in May, Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander announced on Wednesday.

Returning all of the country's rail operators into public ownership is among the key policies launched by Prime Minister Keir Starmer since his

party's re-election five months ago. Train passengers in Britain suffer from frequent cancellations to their journeys in addition to high ticket prices.

"For too long, the British public has had to put up with rail services that simply don't work," Alexander said in a statement.

A complex system of private train

operators has too often failed its users."

Alexander said South Western Railway, offering journeys between London and towns in southern England, will be the first to transfer into public ownership in May.

This will be followed by two more operators serving English towns and cities by late 2025.

Despite the transition, passengers are set to face higher fares from March, based on an annual government calculation.

Alexander has been in the job just a few days, replacing Louise Haigh

who resigned as transport secretary last Friday.

That followed revelations that she pleaded guilty to a criminal offence before becoming a MP.

Haigh also oversaw the progress of Britain's new high-speed HS2 train line, which has been mired in controversy since the previous Conservative government axed key legs of the railway because of spiralling costs.

Four of the 14 operators in England are already run by the state owing to poor performance in recent years.

The main rail operators in Scotland and Wales, where transport policy is handled by the devolved administrations in Edinburgh and Cardiff, are also state-owned.

The government has said it will be able to avoid having to pay compensation fees to rail operators, with all the current contracts set to expire by 2027.

The privatisation of rail operations took place in the mid-1990s under then Conservative prime minister John Major, but the rail network remained public, run by Network Rail. – AFP

Staff at UK's Guardian strike over sister paper's planned sale

LONDON: Staff at Britain's *The Guardian* newspaper went on strike on Wednesday for the first time in more than 50 years over the proposed sale of its weekend sister paper *The Observer*.

Unionised staff members last month voted 93% in favour of the action, accusing the Scott Trust – the ultimate owner of Guardian Media Group (GTMG) – of "betrayal" over the potential sale of *The Observer*, the world's oldest Sunday newspaper.

Around 500 journalists at both papers began the 48-hour strike against the sale to the online news group Tortoise Media.

Tortoise said it had approached GTMG with

an offer to buy the publication and invest more than £25 million (RM146 million) over the next five years in the "editorial and commercial renewal of the title".

"While we respect the right to strike, we do not believe a strike is the best course of action in this case and our talks with the National Union of Journalists continue," a *Guardian* spokesman said.

"We have a plan in place to minimise the impact of strike action on staff, readers and subscribers and we will continue to publish online and produce the print edition as usual."

Tortoise, which is run by former BBC News director James Harding, says it will continue

publishing *The Observer* and combine it with its own podcasts and live events.

More than 70 UK cultural figures, including *Homeland* star Damian Lewis, actors Mark Rylance, Hugh Grant, Sienna Miller and Ralph Fiennes, and Man Booker Prize winning author Julian Barnes called in an open letter for the Scott Trust "to reject this ill-considered offer at once".

"While Tortoise is a respected media outlet, we believe that the move would be disastrous for the world's oldest Sunday newspaper and its journalists, for *The Guardian* and for liberal journalism," the letter said.

GTMG acquired *The Observer*, which was first published in 1791, in 1993. – AFP

Zepbound tops Wegovy in weight loss trial

NEW YORK: Eli Lilly said on Wednesday patients on obesity drug Zepbound lost 47% more weight than those who were given Novo Nordisk's Wegovy in the first large, head-to-head trial of the highly in-demand rival medicines.

In the 751-person trial sponsored by Lilly, Zepbound helped patients lose an average of 20.2% of their weight after 72 weeks compared to 13.7% for the group treated with Wegovy, Lilly said.

The data comparing the wildly popular medicines shows for the first time that when trial parameters are the same, Lilly's drug is more effective for weight loss.

Participants were either obese or overweight and had an additional related health issue such as obstructive sleep apnea or heart disease.

None of the trial subjects had diabetes.

Before the data was published, BMO Capital Markets analyst Evan Seigerman said in a note the market expects Lilly's drug to show superior efficacy.

A confirmation, however, "could be a differentiator when the market matures in the long-term and physicians are not capacity constrained, but can select... (a drug) more easily by efficacy alone – not availability", he wrote.

US approvals for the medicines were based on separate trials in which Zepbound helped patients lose more than 22% of their weight after 72 weeks, while Wegovy led to a 15% weight loss after 68 weeks.

Lilly said it would publish the results in a peer-reviewed journal and present it at a medical meeting next year.

Novo Nordisk said it will wait for the complete data, including the distribution of treatment doses in the two groups, after the trial is peer-reviewed and published.

It said Wegovy is the only obesity drug to reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke.

The companies have been racing to get the drugs approved to treat other ailments to help improve acceptance by insurers and governments.

American authorities approved Wegovy as a treatment for heart disease in March, while Zepbound is expected to get the green light as a treatment for obstructive sleep apnea.

Doctors had been prescribing the obesity drugs based on whichever was available to patients at the pharmacy given intermittent supply shortages.

The results may persuade insurers in the US and cost-conscious health authorities in Europe to give preferential coverage to Zepbound over Wegovy.

Both drugs are sold in the United States under different brand names – Novo's Ozempic and Lilly's Mounjaro – to treat type 2 diabetes. – Reuters



A JetBlue plane flying over Washington as it approaches to land at Dulles International Airport. – REUTERS/SPIC

JetBlue forecasts smaller 2024 revenue dip

NEW YORK: JetBlue Airways said on Wednesday it expects a smaller-than-expected drop in its 2024 revenue as domestic travel demand rebounded following the US presidential election.

JetBlue now expects annual revenue to decline between 3.5% and 4.5%, compared with the 4% to 5% fall projected earlier.

The airline had in October forecast a bigger-than-expected fall in 2024 revenue amid a moderation in domestic travel demand ahead of the US elections.

JetBlue said on Wednesday improved bookings closer to departure dates over the Thanksgiving week boosted revenue during the November holiday peak.

The New York-based airline also said bookings for December travel exceeded its previous expectations.

JetBlue said it now expects its 2024 revenue per available seat mile, a proxy for pricing power, to drop between 3% and 4%, compared with the 2.5% to 4.5% decline it estimated earlier. – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: DECEMBER 5

BURSA MALAYSIA

Trade Statistic

5 Dec 2024

Participation

Retail
Net (in RM million): -18.50 **20.39%**

Institutions
Net (in RM million): 140.05 **40.47%**

Foreign
Net (in RM million): -121.55 **39.14%**

Source: Bursa Malaysia
Preliminary stats (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to www.bursamalaysia.com
Detailed version available at our Facebook Page: iPacOnline

iPhone 16 Giveaway! Find out more at our Social Media channels!

iPacOnline @ipaconline1972 Inter-Pacific Securities iPac TV

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

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

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Bursa Indices		
INDEX		CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,328.10	+13.56
FBMVKLCI	1,615.64	+1.55
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	550.45	+0.07
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	175.32	-0.81
CONSTRUCTION	299.11	-1.28
FINANCIAL SERVICES	19,193.00	+59.31
ENERGY	820.56	+3.08
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	547.42	+7.47
HEALTH CARE	2,254.24	+34.27
TRANSPORTATION	1,050.36	+2.65
PROPERTY	1,094.81	-1.31
PLANTATION	7,778.25	+31.19
FBMSHA	12,304.10	-2.37
FBMACE	5,244.76	-20.49
TECHNOLOGY	61.45	-0.12
TURNOVER: 3.242 bil		VALUE: RM2.742 bil

Bursa ends in positive zone, thanks to late buying

LAST-minute buying mainly in financial and plantation heavyweights helped lift Bursa Malaysia to end yesterday's session on a positive note, erasing losses from the earlier sessions.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI increased 1.55 points, or 0.09%, to 1,615.64 compared with Wednesday's close of 1,614.09.

The index opened 2.05 points higher at 1,616.14 and moved between 1,610.77 and 1,617.78 during the day.

Advancers led decliners 538 to 537 on the broader market, with 519 counters unchanged, 862 untraded and 11 suspended.

Turnover decreased to 3.24 billion units valued at RM2.74 billion versus 3.60 billion units valued at RM3.30 billion on Wednesday.

An analyst noted that continued buying of banking stocks indicates increased investor confidence following stronger earnings in the third quarter of 2024.

Financial services heavyweights counters Public Bank and Maybank added four sen each to RM4.57 and RM10.22 respectively, RHB ticked up one sen to RM6.58, and Hong Leong Financial bagged two sen to RM18.50.

Meanwhile, CIMB Securities maintained its "Overweight" stance on the banking sector with further rerating catalysts being non-interest income (NI) bond gains and possible uplift to loan growth.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the local stock market remained stable yesterday after experiencing encouraging gains on Wednesday, with major global stock markets in the US continuing to hit record highs.

Newly-listed Cropmate remained the top active counter, increasing one sen to 21 sen, Supermax firmed 10 sen to 98.5 sen, JCY International bagged 1.5 sen to 50 sen, Bumi Armada gained 2.5 sen to 62 sen, and MYEG inched up half-a-sen to 91 sen. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives				
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
CRPMATE	0.210	0.010	5.00	2,167,563
HSI-PWB4	0.135	0.005	3.85	1,577,926
HSI-PWBB	0.040	0.010	33.33	1,112,530
SUPERMX	0.985	0.100	11.30	750,524
HSI-CWAM	0.115	-0.020	-14.81	733,761
ARMADA	0.620	0.025	4.20	681,492
MYEG	0.910	0.005	0.55	634,737
JCY	0.500	0.015	3.09	601,262
HSI-CY8	0.145	-0.030	-17.14	451,685
YNHPROP	0.705	0.050	7.63	424,499
HSI-CWAO	0.090	-0.015	-14.29	417,718
SRIDGE	0.490	-0.150	-23.44	408,861
HSI-PWB7	0.125	0.015	13.64	384,747
SNS	0.570	0.005	0.88	296,817
PBBANK	4.570	0.040	0.88	279,390
RL	0.345	-0.020	-5.48	278,400
TOPGLOV	1.250	0.030	2.46	276,765
HAWK	0.510	0.045	9.68	268,526
99SMART	2.510	0.060	2.45	262,431
HUBLINE	0.070	-0.005	-6.67	249,542



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
APOLLO	6.830	0.500	814
KLK	21.680	0.340	1,692
ALLIANZ	20.600	0.280	114
MPI	25.500	0.240	4,020
PGF-PA	1.600	0.190	450
FGN	28.160	0.160	115
HUMEIND	3.310	0.160	2,317
PARAGON	2.900	0.130	509
CANONE	2.380	0.120	408
GCB	3.710	0.120	31,797
PENTA	4.110	0.110	48,819
AMWAY	6.940	0.100	144
KUCHAI	1.150	0.100	29,978
SUPERMX	0.985	0.100	750,524
UTDPLT	31.500	0.100	4,297
DRBHCOMC3E	0.105	0.095	2,190
SOP	3.550	0.090	5,714
BKAWAN	20.040	0.080	225
TAANN	4.590	0.080	8,557
99SMART-CG	0.525	0.075	5,865

Top 20 Gainers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
DRBHCOMC3E	0.105	950.00	2,190
ANEKA-WA	0.010	100.00	1,450
IJM-C88	0.010	100.00	5,811
NHSIN-PA	0.020	100.00	8
SAM-CI	0.015	100.00	800
TOPGLOV-C4K	0.010	100.00	2,542
SIMEPROP-C34	0.065	85.71	250
SUPERMX-C4G	0.045	80.00	90
SUPERMX-C4L	0.175	75.00	45,107
ERDASAN-WC	0.025	66.67	4,052
SUPERMX-C4F	0.065	62.50	2,720
SUPERMX-C4E	0.040	60.00	12,861
SUPERMX-C4I	0.070	55.56	500
JCY-C15	0.015	50.00	4,900
MSM-CX	0.015	50.00	601
SAPNRG-WA	0.015	50.00	2,675
YTLPOWR-C53	0.015	50.00	16,222
SUPERMX-C4N	0.125	47.06	51,767
ARMADA-C95	0.110	46.67	925
RHBANKC58	0.095	46.15	1

World Stocks/Commodities			
INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	45,014.04	+308.51	+0.69
S&P 500 (US)	6,086.49	+36.61	+0.61
NASDAQ (US)	19,735.12	+254.21	+1.30
NYSE (US)	20,188.60	+2.79	+0.01
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	4,946.47	+27.45	+0.56
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,341.24	+5.43	+0.07
DAX (GER)	20,276.89	+44.75	+0.22
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	39,395.60	+119.21	+0.30
TOPIX (JPN)	2,742.24	+1.64	+0.06
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	19,560.44	-182.02	-0.92
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,921.59	-8.97	-0.23
SH SE COM (CHN)	3,368.86	+4.21	+0.13
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,441.85	-22.15	-0.90
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	186.87	-0.76	-0.41
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,474.92	+12.31	+0.15
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,744.51	+15.98	+0.18
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	82,005.81	+1049.48	+1.30
FBM KLCI	1,615.64	+1.55	+0.10
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,820.23	+20.29	+0.53
WTI (US\$/BBL.)	68.75	+0.21	+0.31
BRENT (US\$/BBL.)	72.51	+0.20	+0.28
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	2,669.90	-6.30	-0.24
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	31.82	-0.10	-0.31
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	948.20	+7.25	+0.77
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	422.15	+2.00	+0.48
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,083.00	-28.50	-0.31
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	429.50	-0.50	-0.12
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	550.25	+2.00	+0.36
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	41.78	+0.36	+0.87
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	9,401.00	+363.00	+4.02
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	206.40	+2.20	+1.08

As at 5pm, Dec 5

Top 20 Losers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	97.620	-0.560	690
CARLSBG	20.860	-0.260	1,299
DLADY	30.020	-0.200	171
SAM	3.950	-0.200	11,450
PPB	13.060	-0.190	3,058
LPI	12.980	-0.160	1,346
SRIDGE	0.490	-0.150	408,861
WARISAN	1.400	-0.150	585
HEIM	23.780	-0.120	1,544
BMGREEN	1.760	-0.100	15,848
KLCC	8.000	-0.100	1,120
LEBTECH	0.690	-0.100	123
SHH	1.200	-0.100	43
PCHEM	4.830	-0.090	29,347
AMLEX	0.320	-0.080	500
CHINHIN	2.420	-0.080	2,963
GAMUDA	9.120	-0.080	44,736
HLIND	14.920	-0.080	515
IJM-C80	0.080	-0.075	2,721
FAREAST	3.480	-0.070	745

Top 20 Losers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
BURSA-C88	0.010	-60.00	1,000
BURSA-C83	0.005	-50.00	13,101
BURSA-C85	0.015	-50.00	2,800
DRBHCOMC3H	0.005	-50.00	141
GENETEC-CC	0.005	-50.00	3,106
GENTINGC3F	0.005	-50.00	120
GTRONIC-C34	0.005	-50.00	300
HSI-CYC	0.010	-50.00	36,359
HSI-HW4	0.005	-50.00	350
KANGER-WB	0.005	-50.00	1,900
MNC-WC	0.005	-50.00	2
NIKKEI-HE	0.005	-50.00	320
OMESTI-WC	0.005	-50.00	18,985
YTLPOWR-C59	0.005	-50.00	17,291
IJM-C80	0.080	-48.39	2,721
DPS-WB	0.015	-40.00	10,360
IJM-C83	0.015	-40.00	11,720
INARI-C2N	0.015	-40.00	1,424
VITROX-C6	0.025	-37.50	185
SUNWAY-C33	0.065	-35.00	665

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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UOB forecasts 4.7% GDP growth for Malaysia next year

KUALA LUMPUR: United Overseas Bank (UOB) forecasts Malaysia's economy to grow 4.7% for 2025, reflecting normalisation from a high base effect, strong trade diversification and supportive domestic drivers.

UOB senior economist (Malaysia) Julia Goh said Malaysia continues to have strong domestic levers supported by its stable labour market conditions, ongoing investments, energy transition efforts, implementation of national masterplans and regional development despite higher external risks.

"With a total expenditure budget of RM421 billion or 20.2% of GDP for next year, the fiscal engine remains expansionary despite a narrower fiscal deficit target of 3.8% of GDP.

"Potential investments in the pipeline include RM25 billion by government linked-investment companies (GLICs) alongside several public-private partnership projects, and more than RM40 billion worth of government construction projects to commence in 2025," she said at UOB Global Economics and Market Research's 2025 Macroeconomic Outlook virtual media briefing yesterday.

Goh said that despite sound economic and financial fundamentals, the ringgit is vulnerable to external developments, especially the potential upcoming Trump tariffs which is expected to weigh on Asian foreign exchange.

She also expected the Qualified Resident Investor programme to offer flexibility for resident corporates to reinvest abroad after repatriation of foreign funds, and the liberalisation of foreign exchange policies for multilateral development banks and non-resident development financial institutions to issue ringgit-denominated debt securities for use in Malaysia and provide ringgit financing to resident entities. - Bernama

Ringgit extends gains amid rising confidence of US rate cut

THE ringgit extended gains to close higher against the greenback yesterday on rising confidence that there will be another US interest rate cut in the middle of the month.

At 6pm, the local currency bounced to 4.4250/4305 against the US dollar, compared to Wednesday's close of 4.4505/4550.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the ringgit was well supported with it rising as high as RM4.4173 against the US dollar in the morning session but headed lower to around RM4.4275 towards the end of the day.

"(The) trend was in tandem with the decline in the US Dollar Index (DXY) to 106.206 points. It seems that the US Federal Reserve (Fed) is on track to reduce the Fed funds rate by (another) 25 basis points in the upcoming Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting on Dec 17-18 as the US monetary policy remains restrictive and has affected the growth momentum.

"The latest print on the ISM Index for the non-manufacturing sector at 52.1 points in November from 56 points previously suggests that the US services sector is softening although it is still generally expansionary," he told Bernama.

The ringgit also traded higher against other major currencies. It strengthened versus the British pound to 5.6286/6356 from 5.6415/6472, appreciated against the euro to 4.6586/6644 from 4.6735/6782 and climbed against the Japanese yen to 2.9439/9478 from 2.9546/9580 at Wednesday's close.

The local unit traded mostly higher against Asean currencies. It improved against the Singapore dollar to 3.2985/3029 versus 3.3057/3093 on Wednesday, gained against the Indonesian rupiah to 278.9/279.4 from 279.2/279.6 and went up versus the Thai baht to 12.9462/9710 from 12.9563/9751 previously.

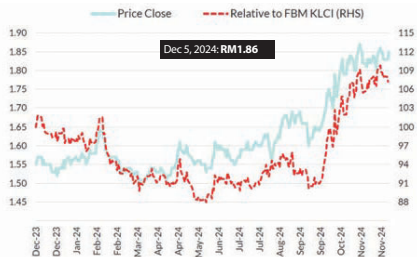
Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.4920	4.3560	4.3460
1 Australian Dollar	2.9050	2.7870	2.7710
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3400	3.2420	3.2340
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1880	3.1020	3.0900
1 Euro	4.7280	4.5730	4.5530
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6430	2.5450	2.5290
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3400	3.2420	3.2340
1 Sterling Pound	5.7110	5.5280	5.5080
1 Swiss Franc	5.1130	4.8930	4.8780
100 UAE Dirham	123.7100	117.2700	117.0700
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.8370	3.5710	3.3710
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.1800	59.5200	N/A
100 Danish Krone	64.9800	59.7700	59.5700
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.3200	55.4000	55.2000
100 Indian Rupee	5.3900	5.0600	4.8600
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0292	0.0264	0.0214
100 Japanese Yen	2.9880	2.8920	2.8820
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.9000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	41.7000	38.3400	38.1400
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6500	1.5400	1.3400
100 Philippine Peso	7.8300	7.3700	7.1700
100 Qatar Riyal	124.5500	118.2400	118.0400
100 Saudi Riyal	120.8100	114.6900	114.4900
100 South Africa Rand	25.6200	23.1400	22.9400
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5900	1.4600	1.2600
100 Swedish Krona	42.3800	38.5800	38.3800
100 Thai Baht	13.7000	12.1400	11.7400

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Sunway REIT

BUY. TARGET PRICE: RM2.07



Source: RHB Research, Bloomberg

TO add to our previous report on the REIT's strategic roadmap, management highlighted that the RM1 billion in external acquisitions since mid-2023 exceeded the cumulative amount reached previously. We think these purchases have been productive, securing high-yielding assets with strong positioning in their respective subsegments. For example, the six giant hypermarkets (RM520 million) immediately recorded a fair value gain of RM73 million, providing a yield of 8%, and enhancing the REIT's long-term earnings with a WALE of nine years vs SREIT's FY23 WALE of four years. Management expects to purchase more third-party assets, to reach its RM14 billion asset value target (currently at RM10 billion), as the pipeline from its sponsor could range RM1-2 billion.

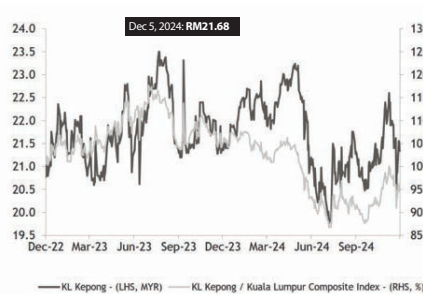
Sunway Resort Hotel's refurbishment has led to its average room rate doubling, while Sunway Carnival Mall post-renovation has enjoyed 50% higher retail sales psf. Looking ahead to FY25, near-term earnings growth should be driven by the AEs for Sunway Carnival Mall's existing wing (to be completed in Q3'25) and Sunway Pyramid's Oasis segment which opened on Nov 1. The latter now records more than double the average rental rate from >100 smaller tenants, compared to its lower-yielding anchor tenant previously. These include a wide variety of options, from the largest Muji in Malaysia to Caudalie Spa.

Sunway REIT has had a long journey in sustainability, beginning with the establishment of its sustainability working group in 2015. The REIT now has seven of its buildings green-certified (34% of 2023 GFA), and plans to have all its assets certified by 2034.

BUY with RM2.07 TP. - RHB Research, Dec 5

Kuala Lumpur Kepong Bhd

HOLD. TARGET PRICE: RM21.30



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

FY24 plantation EBIT (its mainstay) grew 36% YoY to RM1,587 million. For FY25, we see even higher upstream EBIT on higher CPO ASP (+5% YoY) and FFB output (+5% YoY) while anticipating a relatively flattish YoY unit cost. While KLK targets to grow its FFB output to 6.1mt (+11% YoY), we have a more conservative growth forecast of just 5.75mt (+5% YoY) for FY25.

KLK appears optimistic that FY25 will be a better year for both its oleo and refinery divisions. In FY24, we understand its profitable oleo division mitigated losses at its refinery division. The refinery division's losses were in part due to pre-commissioning losses (ie one-off) for an integrated complex in East Kalimantan. That facility is said to have delivered its first shipment in FY25. As for its oleo division, earnings are likely to improve further following the massive restructuring efforts in FY23-24 while oleo's demand is also expected to improve gradually. There was also some pre-operating losses (ie one-off) at its smallest glove division in FY24.

The RM180 million impairment on its 27%-associate, Synthomer, was in part triggered by the share of equity losses of RM136m/RM194m in FY24/FY23 respectively. As KLK anticipates sharply reduced share of equity losses from Synthomer in FY25, the likelihood of further impairment is remote at this juncture (although we note that KLK's investment value in Synthomer is still hefty post impairment, estimated to be RM2 billion). If Trump imposes higher import tariffs on China's gloves, KLK believes it will benefit Synthomer as it supplies feedstocks to glove makers in Malaysia.

HOLD with RM21.30 TP. - Maybank Investment Bank, Dec 5

AMMB Holdings Bhd

OUTPERFORM. TARGET PRICE: RM6.40



Source: Kenanga Research

FROM its recent reporting, AMBANK has grown its loan books by only 2.4% CY24-YTD as opposed to the industry's 4.1%. This is attributed by the group's renewed focus to acquire better quality yet higher margin loans in the retail SME and mid corporation segments. To ensure a steady pipeline, AMBANK is building presence outside of Klang Valley which is largely untapped by the group, namely Penang and East Malaysia which are slated to see growth in their economic supply chain.

Meanwhile, retail strategies entails being much less aggressive in the mortgage markets, preferring to target higher value accounts (>RM750k homes) typically undertaken by more affluent customers with a better propensity to be cross sold other products (i.e. wealth management, insurance).

On the liabilities front, the group is recalibrating its funding sources to see a higher retail deposits mix, which was previously dominated by higher costing corporate wholesale accounts. Other considerations for funding also include debt instruments which also attract lower interest cost to the group.

These efforts have translated to a healthier NIMs in Q2'25 at 1.96% (Q1'25: 1.89%, Q2'24: 1.82%) of which the group anticipates sustaining throughout FY25.

While AMBANK's cost-to-income ratio of 44% is below the industry's average of 50%, it holds an aspired 40% level in its 2029 Strategy. This would elevate the group to being in the Top 3 in terms of cost efficiency while pumping up its return on assets. However, given continued investments into building its business banking unit as well as IT spends into big data and AI-related infrastructure, its cost-to-income ratio will not be expected to trail down in the near term.

OUTPERFORM with RM6.40 TP. - Kenanga Research, Dec 5

Sweet holiday indulgence

➤ As festive season sets in, celebrate with delightful treats that warm your heart

WHAT is a holiday without a little indulgence? As the festive season approaches, it is time to enjoy some of the latest creations. This limited-time menu promises to make your holidays extra special.

Lay's Double Crunch
 Popular potato chip brand Lay's has introduced its latest innovation Lay's Double Crunch. With its deep-ridged texture and intense flavour, Lay's Double Crunch is set to delight snack lovers.

Featuring deeper ridges and more crunch per bite, Lay's Double Crunch is packed with flavour that satisfies the cravings of snackers looking for something truly unique.

There are three flavours available: Overloaded Nori Seaweed, Extra Cheese and Smokin's Barbecue, available in 170g for RM13.60 (sharing packs) or 50g for RM3.50 (single packs).

Royce Christmas Collection
 The Japanese chocolatier has revealed its new 2024 Royce Christmas Collection that is ideal for corporate gifting, family celebration or pure personal indulgence.

With an array of unique seasonal confections to give or share, each offering captures the holiday spirit. The Christmas collection will bring a smile to any chocolate lover and gift-giver alike.

Choose from a limited-edition range, including Royce Holidays Selection

(comprises 32 pieces of chocolate for RM205), Royce Christmas Advent Calendar 2024 (RM205), Royce Chocolate Na "I-e" (RM70), Royce Happy Selection Box (RM105) or Royce Christmas Decoraton Ball (RM55).

Cinnabon's Lotus Biscoff Series
 With the festive season fast approaching, Cinnabon Malaysia has unveiled its Lotus Biscoff Series, featuring the new Lotus Biscoff Cinnabon that combines its cinnamon rolls with the caramelised richness of Lotus Biscoff.

Cinnabon Malaysia has also innovated a Lotus Biscoff flavoured cream cheese frosting, which tops its classic cinnamon rolls, along with caramel and Lotus Biscoff cookie crumbs.

Available in classic and mini sizes, these limited-time Lotus Biscoff



Royce 2024 Christmas Collection.



A treat that marries premium whisky and gourmet ice cream.

K Fry Urban Korean's Caramel Pudding Bingsoo

This creamy dessert takes its signature milky bingsoo to new heights, topped with silky caramel custard and a drizzle of rich caramel sauce. Priced at RM22.90, the sweet indulgence is designed to bring a smile to anyone's face this holiday season.

K Fry has also crafted two refreshing beverages that embody the vibrant spirit of the holidays. Its Peach and Strawberry Twist Sparkling, a fizzy blend of peaches and strawberries, is priced at RM23.90. Meanwhile, the Kiwi and Orange Crush, priced at RM16.50, pairs the kiwi's sweetness with a burst of orange zest, delivering a refreshing sip with every glass.

Distillery's "A Tale Of..." series, which showcases its whisky creators' imagination.

Inspired by the flavours of an ice cream parlour menu, for the first time, high-vanillin casks were used to bring the whisky's sweetest, creamy vanilla notes to their tantalising best. Combining melting notes of peach melba, scoops of vanilla and lemon sorbet, topped with coconut flakes and toffee sauce, A Tale of Ice Cream is a treat for the senses.

To mark this special release, Glenmorangie has partnered with The Ice Cream Bar to create an exclusive, limited-edition flavour that caters to discerning palates.

This collaboration brings to life the spirit of indulgence with rich layers inspired by one of its signature cocktails. Enjoy this decadent treat as a dessert to end a festive meal.

Cinnabon offer a delightful blend of comfort and festive flair, making it ideal for solo indulgence or sharing.

The series includes two new drinks: the Lotus Biscoff Latte and Lotus Biscoff Chillatta. These drinks feature the distinct tastes of Lotus Biscoff, promising to be a warm and comforting delight to anyone who tries them.



K Fry's Caramel Pudding Bingsoo.



Lay's Double Crunch is for potato chips lovers.



Cinnabon takes two sinful food, biscoff and cinnamon rolls, to make the ultimate guilty pleasures.

Your weekend horoscope



ARIES
March 20 – April 19
This week calls for some introspection. Take some time for yourself to reflect on your recent experiences. Be honest when reflecting on the events and evaluate the lessons you may learn from them. It will help determine and realise your hopes as well as dreams. Do not be afraid to let your inner planner shine.



TAURUS
April 20 – May 20
A social opportunity could present itself this week. Be open to new connections and conversations. There is a possibility you may meet someone who shares your interests and becomes someone dear to you. At the same time, do not forget to build strong relationships and nurture the ones you already have.



GEMINI
May 21 – June 20
Your social skills will likely be on fire this week, making it an ideal time to express your thoughts and ideas at work. A work project may require your attention, so stay focused and organised. Do not be afraid to give your input and share your expertise. They may require your attention and assistance for a project. Put your interpersonal skills to work.



CANCER
June 21 – July 22
This week, you may feel a strong desire to connect with loved ones. So, spend some quality time with family and friends. Do not be afraid to share your feelings with them as they may appreciate and thank you for it. Be sure to listen to them as a creative endeavour could bring you joy and satisfaction.



LEO
July 23 – Aug 22
Your confidence levels are high this week, making it an ideal time to take on new challenges. At work, you may be presented with the opportunity to take charge and solve an issue. Do not be afraid to seize the moment. Let your inner leader shine through. No good comes from staying inside your comfort zone. Relationship-wise, take time to be there for your friends.



VIRGO
Aug 23 – Sept 22
You may feel a need to learn and grow this weekend. Take some time to read, research or attend a workshop. A new skill or hobby could spark your interest and teach you something new about yourself. Do not worry about striving for perfection. No worthwhile endeavour starts off without mistakes. So, be easy on yourself and embark on that first step.



Smith is enjoying a late career revival as The Cure's new album hits new highs. – PIC FROM FACEBOOK @THECURE

New chapter in The Cure's history

» *Songs of a Lost World* is prime goth served with extra helpings of gloom

■ BY **R.BALA**

WELL, what do you know, there is still a market for slow burn gothic gloom in a world seemingly dominated by K-pop and massive pop starlets such as Taylor Swift, Sabrina Carpenter and Olivia Rodrigo.

Songs of a Lost World is The Cure's first new music in 16 years and, lo and behold, it hit number one on the UK Album Charts shortly after its Nov 1 release. But, is it a mere exercise in nostalgia or can it be compared with the band's significant back catalogue. It was also one of the fastest selling albums of 2024, having at one point outsold the entire top 10 of the week combined in the UK. It also reached number one in Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Sweden and Switzerland.

Is it a dark introspective work that recalls *Disintegration* and *Wish*, or does it have the radio-friendly pop sound that established the band as steady chart staple in the 1980s?

Make no mistake, this long player is very much the dark, brooding variety with songs constantly pushing past six minutes, with album closer *End Song* hitting the 10-minute mark.

This alone gives a clear indication where the band is at with its approach, favouring long passages of atmospheric gloom washing over listeners with its deep introspection.

Teaser single *Alone* is suitably dark and atmospheric, shrouding the listener with a thick blanket of gloom-like dark, heavy drapes that

cut out the sunlight. Far from being a depressive listen, it envelops the listener in the comforts of solitude with Robert Smith's vocals hitting all the right bittersweet notes. Taking inspiration from a poem by Ernest Dawson titled *Dregs*, the tune is full of references to mortality and the fragility of life.

Deep sense of melancholy continues on *And Nothing Is Forever* made all the grander with the introduction of a string section that elevates the tune beyond the ordinary. A song about ties that withstand the passage of time, Smith sings it with the appropriate vigour of an elder statesman. No *Lovecats*-style playfulness here.

A Fragile Thing was also released as a single which sees the band revisiting the soundscapes of its epic *Disintegration* album while *Drone: Nodrone* sees it dipping its collective toe in heavier waters with a gargantuan riff.

Completely written, conceived and produced by Smith, this album obviously carries his deep sense of pathos and grief, best exemplified by *I Can Never Say Goodbye* that was written about his brother's passing.

While this is not a classic album, it does hold its own and is a worthy addition to the band's discography. Maybe music fans just need a dollop of darkness to balance the multi-colour day glo of today's pop stars. This is a very welcome return for Smith and co, underlining this veteran outfit still has legs in it.

Songs of a Lost World is available to stream on all major platforms. Vinyl editions have been spotted with price tags upwards of RM180.



The album hit number one in various countries.



LIBRA
Sept 23 – Oct 22
A social gathering could be on the horizon for you. Be prepared to meet new people and engage in new topics of conversation. Your new friends may just value and benefit from your input. Be sure to focus on your existing relationships too. Your friends and family are longing for your call. Spare some time to interact with them this weekend.



SCORPIO
Oct 23 – Nov 21
You may feel a strong pull towards your career goals this weekend. Do not resist the instincts and let them lead you further to your professional aspirations. You can start by strengthening your professional skills through attending seminars or workshops. You may just surprise yourself with how far you will be able to go with new skills.



SAGITTARIUS
Nov 22 – Dec 21
A sense of adventure may inspire you this weekend. Consider taking a short trip or exploring a new hobby. You may just surprise yourself with what you discover. If finances are an issue, embark on more affordable trips and hobbies. Your local town may just be a good place for you to start, allowing time to discover yourself.



CAPRICORN
Dec 22 – Jan 19
Finances are crucial for you this weekend. It is time to review your budget and make adjustments where it is needed. A practical approach to money matters will help you achieve your goals. If not sure, take time to learn through attending workshops or speaking with someone experienced. This will reduce some of the pressures.



AQUARIUS
Jan 20 – Feb 18
Your unique perspective may be valued today. So, do not be afraid to share your ideas with your friends, family and colleagues. They are in dire need of your input as they see the value you bring to them. Creatively, be sure to think outside the box. Take time to learn new ways to improve creatively and spark your imagination.



PISCES
Feb 19 – March 20
A sense of empathy and compassion will guide you this weekend. Follow that instinct and let it allow you to show up for your loved ones. Be it emotionally or intellectually, let them know of your love and care for them. Your inner self could use some compassion too. Be sure to connect and evaluate how you have been treating yourself.



Johnson's Maui is as charming as ever, balancing his cocky demeanour with moments of genuine heart.

BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ

DIRECTED by Jason Hand, Dana Ledoux Miller and David Derrick Jr., *Moana 2* invites audiences back to the lush seas of Oceania for another epic adventure. While the film does not quite reach the emotional heights of the original, it serves as a respectable sequel filled with heartfelt moments, spirited characters and a new batch of original songs. Fans of Disney's magic will find much to enjoy but it is clear the shadow of the first film looms large.

New voyage

The story picks up three years after the first film, with Moana embracing her role as a Wayfinder and exploring the vast ocean. A vision from her ancestors sets her on a mission to uncover and restore a mystical island Motufetu, which holds the key to reconnecting humans with the ocean. Along for the ride are a quirky crew of companions, including the brainy Loto, Maui's starstruck fan Moni and a grumpy farmer named Kele.

Meanwhile, Maui faces his struggles with a storm god named Nalo, creating a dual narrative that keeps the stakes high and the pace brisk. The film's exploration of teamwork and self-discovery is engaging, though the storyline feels a touch overstuffed at times. The ending delivers the emotional punch audiences expect from a Disney film but it does not quite land with the same impact as the first movie's cathartic conclusion.

Hits and misses in music department

One of the most anticipated aspects of any Disney movie is its music and *Moana 2* does not shy away from ambitious numbers. With contributions from Abigail Barlow, Emily Bear, Opetia Foa'i and Mark Mancina, the soundtrack offers a mix of uplifting anthems and soulful ballads. However, the results are uneven.

A few songs, such as Moana's stirring solo about determination, hit all the right notes and evoke the same magic as *How Far I'll Go*. Others, particularly some of the comedic numbers, fall flat or feel too forced. Maui's big song moment does not quite recapture the charm of *You're Welcome* but Dwayne Johnson's charismatic delivery helps elevate it. While the soundtrack has its highlights, it lacks the consistency that made the first film's music iconic.

Stellar performances by main voice cast

The voice cast delivers strong performances across the board. Auli'i Cravalho once again shines as Moana, bringing a mix of strength, vulnerability and warmth to the character.

Cast:

Auli'i Cravalho,
Dwayne Johnson,
Hualalai Chung,
Rose Matafeo,
David Fane

Directors:

Jason Hand,
Dana Ledoux Miller,
David G. Derrick Jr.

E-VALUE

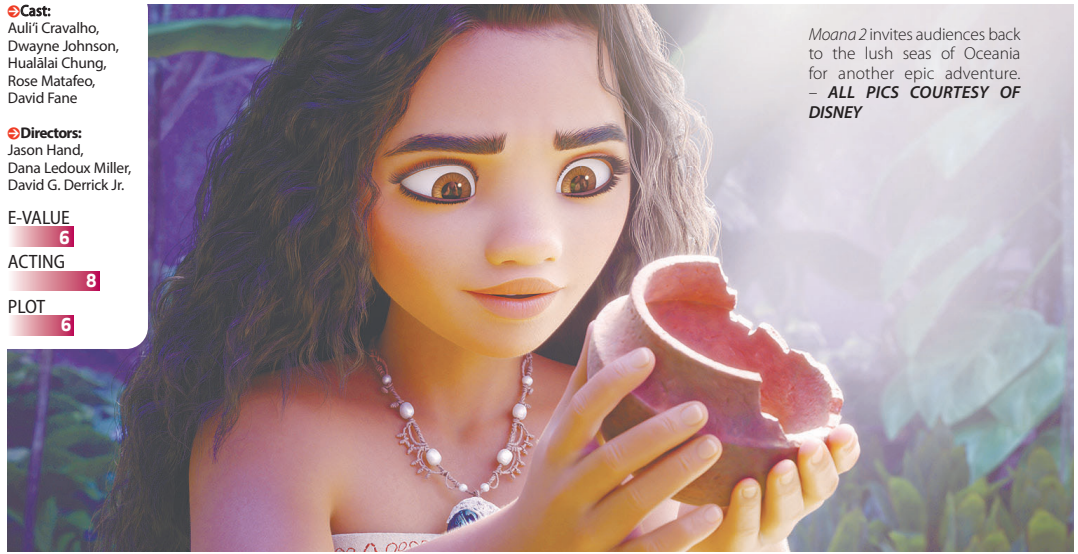
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ACTING

8

PLOT

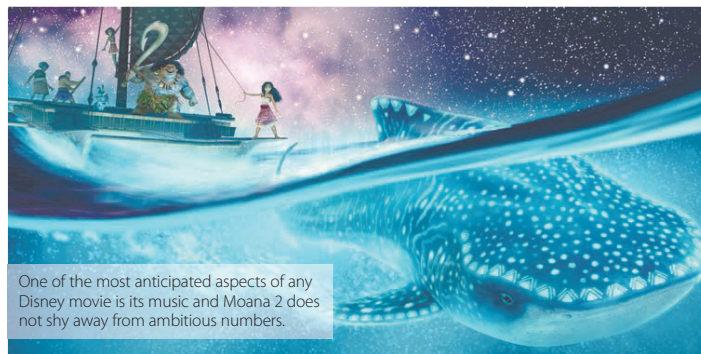
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Moana 2 invites audiences back to the lush seas of Oceania for another epic adventure. — ALL PICS COURTESY OF DISNEY

Disney sequel with familiar waves

While not as impactful as original, *Moana 2* offers enough heart, humour



One of the most anticipated aspects of any Disney movie is its music and *Moana 2* does not shy away from ambitious numbers.

Johnson's Maui is as charming as ever, balancing his cocky demeanour with moments of genuine heart.

The new additions to the cast add colour to the story, with Rose Matafeo's Loto and David Fane's Kele standing out as memorable companions.

Alan Tudyk's return as Heihei provides some much-needed comic relief and Temuera Morrison's expanded role as Chief Tui gives the story an added layer of familial depth.

Visuals that capture ocean's magic

As expected from Disney, the animation is stunning. The ocean remains a living, breathing character in the story, with breathtaking sequences that showcase the power and beauty of the sea. The mystical island of Motufetu is a visual treat, with its rich colours and intricate designs adding a layer of wonder to the film.

The character designs are expressive and lively, especially for new characters such as the storm god and Matangi. The visual storytelling is



Themes of legacy, teamwork and self-belief resonate throughout the film.

as strong as ever, compensating for some of the film's narrative shortcomings.

Heartfelt moments that (almost) bring tears While the film does not hit the emotional highs of the original, it still manages to tug at the heartstrings.

Themes of legacy, teamwork and self-belief resonate throughout, giving the story an emotional core that feels true to Disney's brand. Moana's interactions with her ancestors and her growing bond with her crew provide some touching moments that leave a lasting impression.

The ending, while not as good as the first film's resolution, does manage to wrap up the story in a satisfying way. It is the kind of conclusion that might leave a few eyes misty, even if it does not deliver a full-blown sob session.

Worthy, if imperfect, follow-up

Ultimately, *Moana 2* is a sequel that is enjoyable on its terms but does not quite live up to the brilliance of its predecessor. It is a film best approached with moderate expectations, appreciate it for what it is rather than comparing it too closely to the original. The songs, while uneven, provide a few memorable moments and the heartfelt story will likely resonate with fans of the first movie.

With stunning visuals, a talented voice cast and just enough emotional weight to leave a mark, the film proves Moana's story is far from over. For fans of Disney's magic and oceanic adventures, this sequel offers a worthwhile journey, even if the waves are not quite as big this time around.



Moana 2 brings back old characters such as Heihei and introduces new ones.



Moana (second from right) and her new, quirky crew of companions, consisting of (from left) Loto, Moni and Kele, off to uncover Motufetu island.



theSun Motoring

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Simply brilliant

Jaecoo J7 has everything you need in an SUV, no wonder it is so popular

BY KESHY DHILLON

IT IS said that there are over 150 car brands currently active in China. So, it should not come as a surprise that we are hearing of a new Chinese brand launched here on a near monthly basis.

Some brands we are familiar with, and some we are not. Take Jaecoo for example, just about a year ago, the Chinese brand was largely unheard of in Malaysia. But today, it is leading the charge to solidify the position of Chinese brands in Malaysia, particularly those under the Chery umbrella.

As far as brands go, Jaecoo is still in its infancy in the grand scale of global automotive brands. While some brands have been at it for over a century, Jaecoo was only established in 2023, together with Omoda.

Both Jaecoo and Omoda, collectively known as the O&J, were established by the Chery Group in the early part of 2023 to cater for export markets, and as such are only available



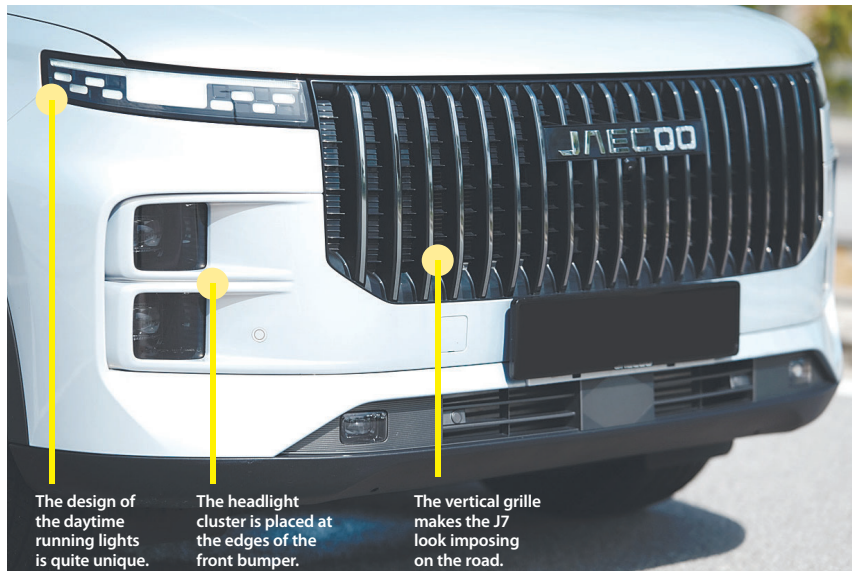
The 19-inch wheels look great.

in markets outside of China.

According to online literature, the Jaecoo name is based on the German word Jager which stands for hunter, and the English word – cool.

The brand was introduced to Malaysia earlier this year to much fanfare with the J7 being the first model to fly the Jaecoo flag.

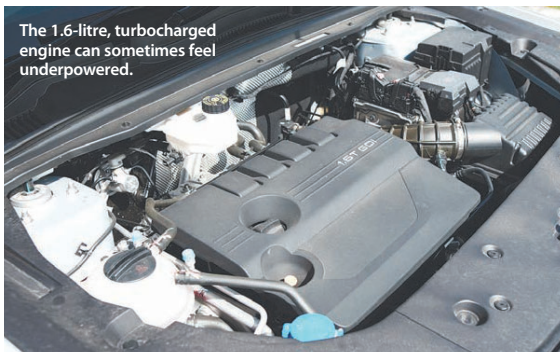
The J7 was an immediate hit and is



The design of the daytime running lights is quite unique.

The headlight cluster is placed at the edges of the front bumper.

The vertical grille makes the J7 look imposing on the road.



The 1.6-litre, turbocharged engine can sometimes feel underpowered.



Retractable door handles aid fuel efficiency.

loved for its good looks and features with some saying that it is the best value for money SUV currently in the Malaysian market.

In fact, according to the official registration figures from JPJ, the Jaecoo J7 was the best-selling non-national SUV for the month of October.

And after spending a few days with the J7 All-Wheel-Drive (AWD) variant, we understand what makes it so popular.

Dashing good looks

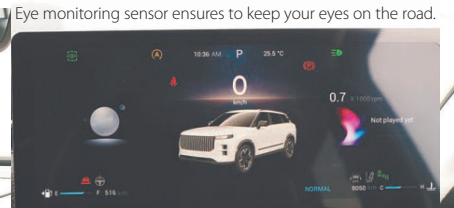
Simply put, the J7 does not have an



The J7 offers a Sony sound system.



The massive 14.8-inch infotainment screen gives you access to all of the car's controls.



Eye monitoring sensor ensures to keep your eyes on the road.

ugly side to it. No matter which way you look, the J7 is a good-looking SUV.

The vertical louvred front grille is quite imposing on the road and when paired with that pixelated daytime running light, it makes the front end of the car look quite unique and unlike any other car in the market.

Compare the design of the J7 to the usual suspects from Honda and Toyota, the J7 seems a lot more outlandish, and in this instance, that's a good thing.

Even those 19-inch wheels that it rolls on look great out of the box.

Also, some say that the design of the J7 looks like it was inspired by Range Rover, but this writer struggled to find the similarity.

I squinted, bent down, looked at it through my fingers and tried every angle to find an element from Range Rover but found none.

I'll say that it is good-looking and unique, but a Range Rover it is not. But then I stepped inside and found what I was looking for.



Interior is minimalistic yet futuristic.

Simplistic yet modern interior

When you first step inside, the interior seems minimalistic yet futuristic. The dash is utterly dominated by a massive 14.8-inch infotainment screen that looks like it may rotate, but it does not.

It is through that screen that you access all of the car's controls, including air-conditioning, entertainment, select one of the seven drive modes and even access safety systems such as lane departure warning and window locks.

You also must dive deep into the layers of menu to open or close the shade for the panoramic roof.

At first this may seem like an inconvenience because you constantly must take your eyes off the road, much to the detriment of the eye movement radar placed behind the steering wheel, that in turn scolds you for taking your eyes off the road by emitting constant pings.

But the good thing here is that because the screen is gigantic and you soon memorise where all the controls are, it becomes easier to navigate the controls hidden behind the layers of software.

And then, there is the Range Rover inspiration, and that lays with the steering wheel as well as the seats.

Now these do look like they came off the iconic British marque, but they don't only look great but feel good too.

The steering wheel feels chunky though those haptic buttons require some getting used to and are not very friendly for sweaty palms. But they work better than those on a Mercedes-Benz or a Volkswagen.

Then there are the seats - big, comfortable and ventilated as well. And that makes them perfect for daily life on Malaysian roads.

There is also some inspiration from Volvo as well, namely the vertical air-conditioning vents up front.

The instrument cluster on the other hand is also digital and measures in at 10.25 inches. And in typical Chinese fashion, it tries to feed you too much information than is necessary, and that makes it difficult to read sometimes.



Decent 412-litres of boot space.

But just like the infotainment screen, you get used to it after you figure out where everything is.

Fantastic, but how does it drive?

Better than you would imagine, and when compared to its Japanese competitors, it has to be said that its refinement levels is quite impressive.

At highway speeds, the interior is hushed while the suspension does a stellar job at isolating the cabin from the road, absorbing dips, ruts and everything the road can throw at it.

Wind noise too is down to a level that is barely audible except at some seriously illegal speeds. And this is achieved through the use of double panel windows, which is not something you usually get at this price range.

Handling is impressive as well with the suspension working to minimise body roll when the roads get interesting.

And the Jaecoo team deserves some credit for this because finding the sweet spot between comfort and control is something not all car makers are capable of.

In fact, Chinese car makers are notorious for putting out overly soft suspension that sometimes nauseates passengers. So, we tip our hat to the

chunky gear lever.

You must adjust your driving style to the J7 as there are things about it that takes some getting used to.

Speaking of drive modes, there are a total of seven different driving modes for this variant (the two-wheel-drive model gets three driving modes), and those are just way too many driving modes.

Just to sate your curiosity, the seven modes are - Eco, Normal, Sport, Sand, Mud, Snowfield and Off Road.

Jaecoo markets the J7 as an urban off-roader and even when it was first launched, the Malaysian Jaecoo team was keen to show off its off-roading prowess by getting members of the Malaysian automotive media to drive the J7 on an off-road course in Semenyih.

The J7 handled the course like a champ, and it is comforting to know the SUV has a water wadding capability of 600mm with a ground clearance of 200mm.

That is great to have particularly during the monsoon season, but we doubt many owners will be taking the J7 off-roading.

However, should you decide to visit a durian plantation, selecting one of those drive modes is just a turn of a knob away, making it incredibly easy to switch modes.

The one thing about the AWD variant is that it can be quite thirsty, with the official fuel consumption figure putting it at 7.7-litres per 100km, while we saw a real-world figure of 8.5-litres per 100km.

But that is to be expected of an AWD car since all four wheels are constantly turning. Even this writer's own Mazda CX-5 2.5T has an AWD powertrain, and the fuel needle drops like an anchor on highways.

So, what gives?

There is no such thing as perfection



You get a full sized spare wheel with the J7.

team at Jaecoo for how the J7 handles and feels.

What about the powertrain?

Powering the J7 All-Wheel-Drive model is a 1.6-litre, four-cylinder, turbocharged engine putting out 194hp and 290Nm of torque.

It is not exactly the final word in power for its segment and there are times when you wish there was more power on tap.

This is further accentuated by the obvious turbo lag particularly in Normal drive mode.

To counter this, you are better off driving in Sport mode, but that makes the accelerator feel a little too choppy and difficult to modulate.

Steering mounted pedal shifters would have been brilliant but you can also shift gears manually using the

and there is bound to be something or other that has to be sacrificed. For the Jaecoo J7, the handling of the car is something to look out for.

We felt a disconnection between the steering wheel and the wheels up ahead with dull spot in the middle where the steering simply did not respond.

Next is the spaciousness, taller drivers and passengers may find the seats up ahead to be a little cramped, but the rear seats are fine if you are about six foot tall. Any taller and you may find your knees rubbing against the front seats.

Then there is the single air-conditioning vent at the back, which is quite odd for a people-moving SUV.

If you have kids, they are surely going to be arguing over who gets the A/C vent, but there are two USB ports at the back so they might be distracted with their noses in their devices.

Should you buy one then?

At RM148,000, the simple answer is yes, the Jaecoo J7 AWD variant is a nice SUV that seemingly checks all the boxes in our list. It is not a perfect package, but most cars fall short of that accolade as well.

It also comes with the best warranty package in its segment, with a seven-year or 150,000km warranty on the car, and a 10-year or one-million-kilometre warranty on the powertrain.

And as we explained in our video review of the Jaecoo J7, that is the icing on a very nice cake and should put to rest any negative perceptions about Chinese brands.

Specifications

ENGINE: 1.6-litre, 4-cylinder, turbocharged
POWER: 194hp
TORQUE: 290Nm
ACCELERATION (0-100KPH): 9.9 seconds
TOP SPEED: 180kph
PRICE (AS TESTED): RM148,000
WE LIKE: Good looks, quality, refinement.
WE DON'T LIKE: Can sometimes feel underpowered.

S70 R3's maiden outing

Team Proton takes fifth-place in S1K race despite significant setbacks

TEAM Proton R3 (R3), the motorsport division of Proton, achieved a commendable fifth-place finish in the Malaysian Touring Car (MTC) category during the 2024 Sepang 1000KM (S1K) race.

The event marked the competitive debut of the Proton S70 R3, a milestone that showcased the team's determination despite significant setbacks, including the early retirement of one car and a lengthy pit stop for another due to technical issues.

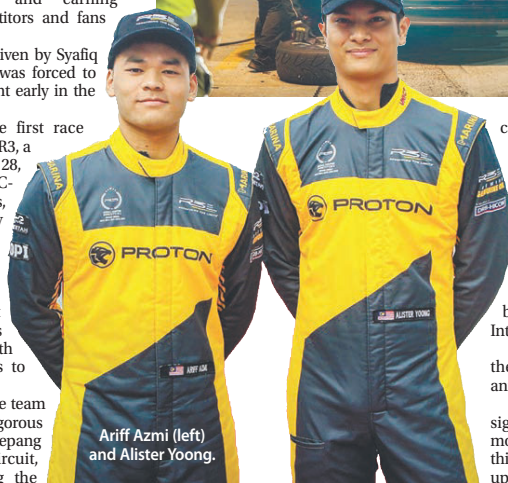
Car 82, piloted by Ariff Azmi and Alister Yoong, delivered a notable performance despite the challenges, demonstrating remarkable resilience and earning admiration from competitors and fans alike.

Meanwhile, car 81, driven by Syaifi Ali and Fahrizal Hasan, was forced to withdraw after an incident early in the race.

The S1K marked the first race outing for the Proton S70 R3, a car introduced on Nov 28, 2023. As Proton's first C-segment sedan in 12 years, the S70 has quickly established dominance in its segment, outperforming long-standing rivals.

The decision to debut the S70 in motorsport was made over a year ago, with R3 dedicating its efforts to field two race-ready units.

Ahead of the event, the team and drivers undertook rigorous testing at the Petronas Sepang International Circuit, progressively enhancing the



Ariff Azmi (left) and Alister Yoong.

car's performance.

Despite the lack of racing mileage and the steep learning curve against more seasoned competitors, the Proton S70 R3 demonstrated competitiveness from the initial practice sessions.

Looking ahead, plans for R3 and the Proton S70 R3's next race are underway. However, fans can view car 82, preserved in its post-race condition, at Proton's booth during the Kuala Lumpur International Motor Show (KlIMS) 2024.

The event will also feature appearances by the team's drivers, with schedules to be announced in the coming weeks.

The strong debut of the Proton S70 R3 signals a promising future for R3 in motorsport, as the team prepares to build on this year's performance and aim higher in upcoming racing seasons.



smart #3 wins award at Coty 2024

SMART Malaysia proudly announced that its all-electric crossover, the smart #3, has been awarded the "Best Compact Premium EV" at the Car Of The Year (COTY) 2024 awards.

Organised by *Carlist.my* and *WapCar*, this accolade celebrates the vehicle's innovative design, advanced technology, and exceptional performance in the premium electric vehicle segment.

The smart #3 has redefined urban mobility with its aerodynamic design, spacious interior, and cutting-edge smart technology.

Its innovative Hello smart App offers seamless connectivity, enabling users to remotely control the car, monitor charging status, and plan routes using Malaysia's extensive EV charging infrastructure.

Beyond its technological features, the smart #3 delivers an engaging driving experience.

Its eco-conscious materials and luxury interior highlight a commitment to sustainability, ensuring drivers enjoy premium comfort without compromising environmental goals.

smart Malaysia credited this success to the dedication of its nationwide dealer network and the loyalty of its customers.

By achieving this milestone, the smart #3 is accelerating the adoption of electric vehicles in Malaysia and paving the way for a smarter, greener future.

The award also reinforces smart Malaysia's mission to deliver innovative mobility solutions while inspiring meaningful connections.

As it celebrates this achievement, the company remains focused on excellence, determined to lead the EV market with forward-thinking technology and sustainable practices.

Manthey unveils Porsche 911 GT3 RS upgrade

AHEAD of the much-anticipated reveal of the updated Porsche 911 GT3 RS, Manthey Racing, a German auto racing team, has introduced a factory-approved aerodynamic upgrade kit for the outgoing model.

Backed by Porsche, which owns a 51% stake in Manthey, the package offers significant performance enhancements while maintaining the vehicle's warranty.

The most noticeable change is the replacement of the rear window with a lightweight carbon fibre panel, which is 25% lighter than the original.

The new panel integrates a shark fin antenna, inspired by the Porsche 963 endurance racer, and works in tandem with six smaller fins mounted on the roof.

These fins direct hot air from the front radiators away from the rear intakes, allowing for cooler and more efficient airflow.

In the rear, the 911 GT3 RS is equipped with a redesigned carbon rear wing featuring modified endplates to boost

downforce. A larger diffuser enhances stability, while carbon fibre aerodisc wheel covers reduce air resistance.

These combined modifications enable the car to generate over 1,000kg of downforce at speeds of 284kph.

Beyond its aerodynamic tweaks, the Manthey kit also includes mechanical upgrades. The package also features aesthetic touches.

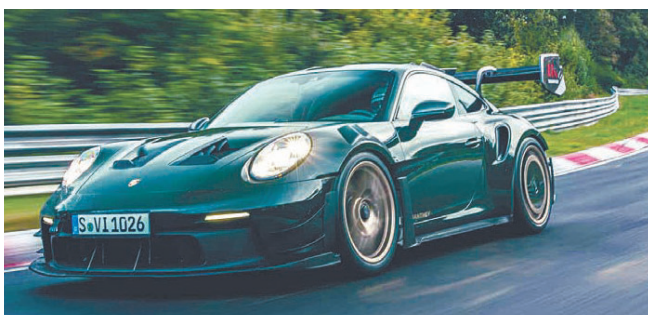
Manthey's engineers spent two years developing the kit, subjecting it to extensive testing across European racetracks.

The company has hinted at plans to showcase its performance with a timed lap at the Nurburgring.

For GT3 RS owners eager to upgrade, the new kit is already available for order.

It will be delivered to European Union markets starting in January 2025, with availability in non-EU regions following in March.

The price for this specific kit has not been disclosed.



Celebrating a legacy of performance excellence



TOYOTA has unveiled the Supra A90 Final Edition, a limited-production model marking the end of the current Supra lineup and celebrating Toyota's high-performance heritage.

Alongside this announcement, the 2024 Supra 3.0 receives significant updates, enhancing performance, handling, and styling.

Since its 1978 debut, the Supra has gained worldwide acclaim for its front-engine, rear-wheel-drive layout, and in-line six-cylinder engine, with a legacy reinforced by motorsport achievements and the rebirth of the GR Supra in 2019 under Akio Toyoda's vision.

The 2024 Supra builds on this legacy with key upgrades such as optimised active differential tuning, larger Brembo brakes, improved suspension with reinforced stabilisers, and enhanced body rigidity for precise handling.

Exterior updates include matte black wheels, a carbon-fiber ducktail spoiler, and bold aerodynamic elements, while the interior features GR-embroidered Alcantara seats and red accents.

The Supra A90 Final Edition, inspired by the GR Supra GT4, pushes boundaries further with a 3.0-litre in-line six-cylinder turbocharged engine delivering



435PS and 570Nm of torque, aided by revised intake pathways and enhanced cooling systems.

Its KW adjustable dampers, wider Michelin Pilot Sport Cup 2 tires, and advanced bracing systems ensure exceptional grip and cornering precision. Exclusive design elements include a carbon-fiber front spoiler, swan-neck rear wing, Recaro bucket seats, and red-accented Alcantara finishes.

While the A90 Final Edition concludes this generation, Toyota Gazoo Racing will continue evolving the Supra through motorsport, ensuring its spirit endures as a symbol of driving exhilaration and engineering excellence.



SHORTS

Rahul to open for India

ROHIT SHARMA will bat down the order in the pink-ball second Test against Australia in Adelaide, with the returning skipper saying KL Rahul had earned his place as an opener.

Rohit, who usually opens, missed their 295-run first Test victory in Perth last week for the birth of his second child.

In his place, Rahul scored a patient 26 in the first innings then a solid 77 in a crucial 201-run opening stand with century-maker Yashasvi Jaiswal.

"KL will open. The way he batted and his partnership with Jaiswal was instrumental in that first Test win," said Rohit ahead of the game starting later today.

"The way he has batted outside India, he deserves it. I will bat somewhere in the middle.

"It was a fairly simple decision. Personally, it wasn't easy, but for the team, it was an easy decision to make."

Rohit would not reveal India's starting XI, nor where exactly he will bat.

But with regular No. 3 Shubman Gill set to return from a thumb injury, he will probably come in at five, after Virat Kohli and before Rishabh Pant.

Devdutt Padikkal and Dhruv Jurel appear likely to make way.

Veteran spinner Ravichandran Ashwin and allrounder Ravindra Jadeja were both overlooked for Perth and it remains unclear whether they will play.

Black Caps unchanged for second Test

NEW ZEALAND will field an unchanged team against England for the second Test in Wellington, captain Tom Latham (pic) said yesterday, with the four-pronged seam attack retained and spinner Mitchell Santner left out of the side.

The Black Caps were thumped by eight wickets in the first Test in Christchurch on Sunday and coach Gary Stead said on Monday that they were thinking about bringing in specialist spinner Santner for the second Test starting today.

Santner was considered for the match based on a 172-run loss to Australia at the Basin Reserve in March in which winning off-spinner Nathan Lyon took 10 wickets.

Latham, though, said a look at the wicket and the results of recent first class games played at the ground had convinced the selectors they would only need part-time spin against England.

"We obviously saw last (season) that the wicket took a little bit of spin, which sort of surprised us," Latham told

reporters in the New Zealand capital.

"I think the balance we've gone in with is the right balance for this wicket.

"We obviously have some spin options in that top seven anyway and so we think it's the right fit and the guys are looking forward to the challenge."

Tough transition for ageing Aussies

INCOMING Cricket Australia (CA) boss Todd Greenberg said Australia will need tough conversations about regenerating an ageing team amid concerns of a coming exodus of senior players.

Australia fielded only one player under 30 in debutant opener Nathan McSweeney in the first Test against India in Perth where Pat Cummins' side were thrashed by 295 runs.

Greenberg, who will take over from Chief Executive Nick Hockley at the end of the year, acknowledged the challenge facing Australia, while noting players are enjoying longer careers due to better management.

"We do have a more ageing side, particularly in red-ball cricket, and that won't be easy," Greenberg told Australian media in Adelaide yesterday.

"There have to be hard and honest conversations between players and staff, and I think those are happening, to be fair.

"In saying that, though, the professionalism of modern athletes are tending to take them longer in their careers; the way we take care of them, the way we rehab them, the way they take care of themselves.

"I think it's a very fine balance."

Windies duo fined for behaviour

WEST INDIES cricketers Jayden Seales and Kevin Sinclair were both fined yesterday for breaching the International Cricket Council's code of conduct during the second Test defeat by Bangladesh.

Fast bowler Seales was fined 25% of his match fee "for making aggressive gestures" towards the Bangladesh team after taking a wicket. He also received one demerit point for the offence.

All-rounder Sinclair, who was not in the original XI but came on as a substitute fielder, was docked 15% of his match fee for sledging.

The ICC said he "ignored warnings" from the umpires and "continued using aggressive language" towards the Bangladesh players.

Seales recorded outstanding figures of 4-5 in 15.5 overs in Bangladesh's first innings in Jamaica, but the tourists won the match by 101 runs to level the two-match series.



322 Notices

FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358698-H)
NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNTUK DILELONG SEPERTI SEDIA ADA TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG : East Coast Region (Kota Bharu, Kuantan & Temerloh) 11-12-2024 (Rabu) Pukul 11.00pagi
TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Pukul 9.00pagi - 4.00petang)
PERTANYAAN (Tel): Kota Bharu 07-7747972, Kuantan 017-4973133, Temerloh 012-428 7538
FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) En Mohd Fawzi Bin Ibrahim (32954) & Mr Mazenan Bin Haji Mohamad (0172024)
Alamat: Lot 5198, Petak 41 Jalan 20, Kawasan Perindustrian Pengkalang Chepa, Fasa 2 Pengkalang Chepa, 15100 Kota Bharu
: Lot 10869, Lot 10870 & Lot 10871 Jin Tanah Putih, Tanah Putih 25100 Kuantan
: PT5101 & 5102, KAMPUNG MEGAT SEGAMA, 28000 TEMERLOH
SILA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : <http://www.focalpark.com.my>

Item	Reg No	Jenis & Model	Tahun
AM1	VEL7842	PERODUA AXIA 1.0	2018
AM2	JRY2358	PERODUA MYVI 1.5 AUTO	2017
AM3	CDY7563	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2017
AM4	NH3811	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2017
AM5	VBF407	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2018
AM6	CC08905	TOYOTA INNOVA 2.0	2008
AM7	SD441T	TOYOTA VOXY 2.0	2018
AM8	NU87820	HONDA CITY 1.5	2018
AM9	WST2170	HONDA CRV 2.0	2009

(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perolehan akan dilelong semula pada 18-12-2024)

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR IN THE STATE OF WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR (COMMERCIAL DIVISION) COMPANIES (WINDING UP) NO.: WA-28NCC-880-09/2024

In the matter of Section 465(1)(e) and (f) and Section 466(1)(a) of the Companies Act, 2016;

And

In the matter of EVW Hotel (Sg. Besi) Sdn Bhd (Registration No.: 201301008530 (1038372-H))

And

In the matter of Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

Between

1. CHUNG SHAN TAT (NRC NO.: 81111-14-5659)
2. EILEEN EDWARD (NIC NO.: 790815-12-5410) ... PETITIONERS

And

EVW HOTEL (SG. BESE) SDN BHD (REGISTRATION NO.: 201301008530 (1038372-H)) ... RESPONDENT

NOTICE OF WINDING-UP ORDER

In the matter of EVW HOTEL (SG. BESE) SDN BHD (Registration No.: 201301008530 (1038372-H)).

Winding-up Order made on 27th November, 2024.

Name and Address of liquidator appointed by this Honourable Court:

Official Receiver of Malaysia
Malaysia Department of Insolvency (Liquidation Department)
Kuala Lumpur Branch
22, 23, 24 & 25, Menara TH Perdana
1001, Jalan Sultan Ismail
50250 Kuala Lumpur

Dated this 4th day of December 2024.

.....s.g.d.....
Messrs Kee Sern, Siu & Huey
Solicitors for the Petitioners

This **NOTICE OF WINDING-UP ORDER** is filed by Messrs. Kee Sern, Siu & Huey, solicitors for the Petitioners herein and whose address for service is at No. 46B-11E(2), 2nd Floor, Block C, Rivervilla, Jalan Sultan Azlan Shah (formerly Jalan Ipoh), 61200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: (603) 9212 2688 Fax: (603) 4044 0448 Email: general@kshlegal.com (Ref: ASX/KS/GL06/CST&E-EWV202415)

Mr. Das Biswajit holder of India Passport No. 00564812 and Miss Montejo Elen Grace holder of Philippines Passport No. P7353552C intend getting married at the High Commission of India, Kuala Lumpur under the Foreign Marriage Act, 1969 of India. Objections, if any, may be conveyed to the High Commission of India, Kuala Lumpur within 30 days.

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016

AND IN THE MATTER OF TECK CHIAM SDN BHD (19790100202 (4443-K)) (In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT at a Members' Meeting of Teck Chiam Sdn. Bhd. duly convened and held at Unit No. 203, 2nd Floor, Block C, Damansara Intan, No. 1, Jalan SS20/27, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor on 1st December, 2024, the following Special Resolution was duly passed -

- That the Company be placed in members' voluntary winding up;
- That Ms. Chua Yoke Bee of Unit No. 203, 2nd Floor, Block C, Damansara Intan, No. 1, Jalan SS20/27, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor be appointed as the Liquidator of the Company for winding-up the Company's affairs and distributing its assets either in cash or in specie amongst the contributors; and
- That unless caused by negligence of the Liquidator, the Liquidator be indemnified by the Company against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred in or sustained by her in the discharge of her duties as Liquidator and in relation thereto.

See Cheng Siang
Director
Petaling Jaya
6th December 2024

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the creditors of the above-mentioned Company which is being wound up voluntarily are required on or before 15th January, 2025 to send in their names and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to Ms. Chua Yoke Bee of Unit No. 203, 2nd Floor, Block C, Damansara Intan, No. 1, Jalan SS20/27, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor, the Liquidator of the said Company and, if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are, by their solicitors or personally, to come in and prove their said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts are proved.

Chua Yoke Bee
Liquidator
Petaling Jaya
6th December 2024

302 Jobs

theSun
Malaysian Paper

WE ARE HIRING

1 MEDIA SALES EXECUTIVE / ACCOUNT MANAGER

Job Description:

- Building and sustaining strong working relationship with advertising agencies and clients.
- New business development and business retention.
- Conceptualize, plan, and execute creative and innovative marketing campaigns to enhance brand visibility and engagement.
- Create, develop and continuously improve marketing material, presentations and proposals that showcase our products/services effectively.

Requirement:

- SPM Level with at least 2 years of experience.
- Diploma or Bachelor's degree in business, marketing or other related fields.
- Fresh graduates are encourage to apply, training will be provided.
- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing
- Possess own transport and willing to travel.
- Able to start work immediately.

Office based in Petaling Jaya (5 days a week)

2 MEDIA SALES REPRESENTATIVE / AGENT (FREELANCE)

Requirement:

- Minimum 1 year sales experience in classified ad, print and digital advertising
- Those without sales experience but with media advertising knowledge can apply.
- Attractive commission package and incentive.
- Able to start immediately.
- Central, Northern, Southern, East Coast and Sabah/Sarawak.

Send in your CV with your photo via email to : thesun.hr2@gmail.com

302 Jobs

theSun
Malaysian Paper

WE ARE HIRING!

HR & ADMIN EXECUTIVE

Job Description:

- Maintain HR records, including employee files, salaries and benefits information.
- Handle employee attendance records, payroll and claims.
- Handle employee relations and resolve any workplace conflicts or issues.
- Provide HR support and guidance to managers and employees.
- Ensure compliance with all employment laws and regulations.
- Stay updated on changes in work legislation and industry standards.
- Handle employee training and development programs.
- Manage employee benefits programs and ensure compliance with regulations.
- Stay updated on current industry trends and best practices in HR management.
- Handle Recruitment matters.
- Handle General Admin and other HR works.

Requirement:

- Diploma / Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management or related field.
- 1+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field.
- Fresh graduates are encourage to apply for Assistant Executive Post.
- Basic HR knowledge and proficiency in Microsoft Office.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

Send in your CV with your photo via email to : thesun.hr2@gmail.com

LPGA bars players who have gone through male puberty

THE Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) updated its gender policy yesterday, and players assigned male at birth and who have gone through male puberty will not be eligible to compete.

The new policy comes into effect in the 2025 season, and covers the LPGA Tour, Epson Tour, Ladies European Tour, and all other elite LPGA competitions, where athletes who are assigned female at birth are eligible to compete.

"Our policy is reflective of an extensive, science-based and inclusive approach," LPGA Commissioner Mollie Marcoux Samaan said in a statement.

"The policy represents our continued commitment to ensuring that all feel welcome within our organization, while preserving the fairness and competitive equity of our elite competitions."

The policy was informed by a working group of top experts in medicine, science, sport physiology, golf performance and gender policy law, the LPGA said.

This working group advised that the effects of male puberty give competitive advantages in golf performance compared to players who have not undergone male puberty.

A player whose sex assigned at birth is male must satisfy an expert panel that they have not experienced any part of male puberty, and since receiving gender reassignment treatment the concentration of testosterone in their serum must remain below a set limit.

Trans golfer Hailey Davidson, who came up short in an LPGA qualifying event in October, had hoped to get into a few Epson Tour events next year but said on social media yesterday that she was "banned" from both circuits.

"All the silence and people wanting to stay 'neutral' thanks for absolutely nothing," she wrote on *Instagram*. "This happened because of all your silence." - Reuters

Perez replacement to be named after Abu Dhabi race

RED BULL chiefs will reportedly meet on Monday, hours after the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix, to finalise Max Verstappen's teammate for the 2025 season.

Sergio Perez is set to finish nearly 300 points behind his teammate in the Drivers' Championship and speculation has persisted for months over his future.

Autosport claim that Perez is heading for the exit and will be replaced by Liam Lawson, who would step up from VCARB after taking over from Daniel Ricciardo mid-season.

Lawson, Yuki Tsunoda and Franco Colapinto were all thought to be in the running for a position at Red Bull, but the New Zealander is expected to be given the nod over his rivals.

Red Bull shareholders are meeting on Monday to discuss the second seat, amongst other end-of-season matters, with patience running out for the 34-year-old.

The Mexican driver has consistently reiterated that he would be in place at Red Bull for the 2025 season, as per his contract, but has finished on the podium just four times this season - all of them coming in the first five races of the campaign.

"I'm going to let Checo (Perez) come to his own conclusions; nobody's forcing him one way or another," team principal Christian Horner said after another DNF in Qatar last time out. "It's not a nice situation for him to obviously be in."

Colapinto's emergence at Williams had appeared to be the ideal solution, with James Vowles' side already committing to Carlos Sainz and Alex Albon moving forward, before the Argentine made an impressive start to life on the F1 grid.

With Colapinto's future unclear, he began picking up points for the team having replaced Logan Sargeant.

But recent expensive crashes in Brazil and Las

Vegas, coupled with an expected eight-figure fee for Williams to release their reserve driver, has since put Red Bull off the prospect of hiring an external candidate.

Since Lawson replaced Ricciardo at VCARB, many felt that he was in a straight shoot-out with teammate Tsunoda for a promotion.

After the 22-year-old stepped in at the United States Grand Prix, Tsunoda has finished higher than Lawson on three occasions, with the Kiwi doing so twice, proving an incredibly difficult decision to make for the Red Bull hierarchy.

For Perez, there is no obvious route back to the grid next season and it remains to be seen what terms he will leave Red Bull on.

He could become the team's reserve driver after Hadjar's promotion, or wait until 2026 when new team General Motors-Cadillac enters the fray. - Express Newspapers



LEWIS HAMILTON will bring down the curtain on his Mercedes career in Abu Dhabi on Sunday as his past and future Formula One teams, McLaren and Ferrari, fight for a constructors' title to end years of waiting.

Even if Red Bull's Max Verstappen secured his fourth successive championship last month in Las Vegas, eras will end with the final chequered flag of the season under the Yas Marina floodlights.

McLaren, who took Hamilton to his first title in 2008 but were last champions in 1998, are 21 points clear of Ferrari, the sport's oldest and most successful team chasing a first crown since 2008.

Whoever comes out on top will end a 15-year run where only Red Bull and Mercedes have won championships.

Hamilton, the most successful driver in the history of Formula One with seven titles and 105 wins, has been part of the Mercedes "family" for 26 years but is joining Ferrari at the end of the month.

"This weekend is a celebration," said Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff. "A celebration of everything

that we have accomplished together. For now, though, our full focus is on the race weekend."

Hamilton, twice a winner this season, can only agree after the low of 12th in Qatar last Sunday with two penalties and a puncture.

"I'm still standing, it's not how you fall, it's how you get back up," the 39-year-old Briton said then.

McLaren, with Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri showing plenty of team spirit, are favourites for the constructors' title but nothing can be taken for granted.

"Twenty-one points requires a perfect weekend from Ferrari and a bad weekend from McLaren," said Carlos Sainz ahead of what will be the Williams-bound Spaniard's last race for the Italian team alongside Charles Leclerc.

"We're going to give it our best shot. I think if we nail a good weekend, we could still make it happen. Nothing to lose. We're going to throw everything in to make sure we give ourselves the best chance."

Ferrari boss Fred Vasseur said his team would "fight until the last corner of the last lap".

Verstappen will be chasing his 10th win of the season after victory in Qatar and a rancorous falling out with Hamilton's team mate George Russell.

The governing FIA will also be in the spotlight amid criticism from teams and media of race direction and stewarding decisions.

Red Bull will be saying goodbye to Jonathan Wheatley, the future principal of Sauber/Audi, having already parted with top designer Adrian Newey.

Nobody would be surprised if Verstappen's underperforming teammate Sergio Perez left also, despite the Mexican having a contract for 2025.

Renault-owned Alpine, in a tight battle with Haas for sixth place overall, have already said farewell to Esteban Ocon with Australian replacement Jack Doohan set for a race debut ahead of schedule.

Other goodbyes will be said at Haas (Kevin Magnussen) and Sauber (Valtteri Bottas and Zhou Guanyu) as Formula One prepares for a new wave of young talent next season. - Reuters

SHORTS

LIV Golf rumours not true: Finau

TONY FINAU cleared the air yesterday amid rumours that he was leaving the PGA Tour to join LIV Golf, *Golfweek* reported yesterday.

Finau withdrew from this week's Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas and was not yet registered to play at The Sentry, the 2025 season-opening event at Maui next month.

That fueled false rumours that the No. 26 player in the world was leaving the PGA Tour.

In a conversation with *Golfweek*, Finau said yesterday that his absence in the Bahamas this weekend is due to a recent "standard" cleanup procedure to repair a torn meniscus and remove cartilage in his left knee. He previously had a similar issue with his right knee.

The additional recovery time this week will indeed allow Finau, 35, to be ready for The Sentry

from Jan 2-5 at Kapalua, Hawaii.

"I'm more than happy where I'm at on the PGA Tour and looking forward to 2025," Finau told *Golfweek*. "When I tee it up in Maui, (the rumors) will all go away, so I don't worry about it one bit."

End of the road for Dutch GP

THE Dutch Grand Prix will no longer be part of the Formula 1 calendar after 2026.

F1 announced a one-year extension for the event at Circuit Zandvoort yesterday but confirmed that the 2026 race will be the last in the Netherlands.

The Dutch GP, originally held from 1950 to 1985, returned to the F1 calendar in 2021.

"I am incredibly grateful for the work that the team at the Dutch Grand Prix have done in recent years," F1 CEO and president Stefano Domenicali said.

"They raised the bar for European Grands Prix in

terms of event spectacle and entertainment, supported the development of young talent by hosting F2, F3 and our F1 Academy series, and have also pioneered sustainable solutions that have inspired our events around the world as we drive towards being Net Zero by 2030.

"All parties positively collaborated to find a solution to extend the race, with many options, including alternation or annual events on the table, and we respect the decision from the promoter to finish its amazing run in 2026.

"I want to thank all the team at the Dutch Grand Prix and the Municipality of Zandvoort who have been fantastic partners to Formula 1."

Leclerc and Leclerc a first for Ferrari

CHARLES and Arthur Leclerc will be the first brothers to drive in a Formula One session as teammates when they turn out for Ferrari in opening practice at the Abu Dhabi Grand

Prix today.

Ferrari posted a picture on *X* yesterday showing the brothers together in matching overalls with the caption "history makers".

Arthur, 24, will take the place of departing Spaniard Carlos Sainz alongside Charles, 27, at Yas Marina to fulfil the team's young driver commitments.

Britain's Oliver Bearman, the team's reserve, is ineligible as he has already taken part in three races this season with Ferrari and Haas.

Arthur Leclerc raced in Formula Two last season and is currently a Ferrari development driver, supporting the team in the simulator at Maranello while also racing in the Italian GT championship.

Brothers have raced each other in Formula One, notably grand prix winners Michael and Ralf Schumacher, but not with the same team.

Mexicans Pedro and Ricardo Rodriguez did both race for Ferrari, but not at the same time.

SHORTS

Girona knocked out on penalties

LAST YEAR'S surprise package Girona were shocked by fourth-division side Logrones yesterday as they were knocked out 4-3 on penalties from the Copa del Rey in the second round of the competition thanks to an unlikely hero for the lowly hosts.

That was Pol Arnau, a 19-year-old leftback who had to step up and play as a stand-in goalkeeper after starter Kike Royo sustained an injury in extratime when Logrones manager Sergio Rodriguez had already used all the substitutions allowed.

Arnau, who is the son of the late Barcelona and Malaga goalkeeper Francesc Arnau and brother of fifth-division Mollerussa keeper Marc Arnau, showed he is no stranger to the task and made several saves to withstand Girona's pressure and take the match to a penalties shootout following a goalless draw.

Then, Arnau once again flashed and saved a spot-kick from Girona star striker Abel Ruiz, with Cristhian Stuani hitting the crossbar later to seal the home side's stunning victory.

Fiorentina dumped out of Italian Cup

EMPOLI reached the quarterfinals of the Italian Cup yesterday after beating Fiorentina, who were playing their first match since Edoardo Bove's collapse, 4-3 on penalties.

Sebastiano Esposito struck the winning spotkick after also netting the goal which took the match to a 2-2 draw and the decisive shootout.

On loan from champions Inter Milan, Esposito brilliantly dinked in his leveller in the 75th minute after Riccardo Sottil and Moise Kean – who ballooned over his penalty – had briefly put the hosts a goal ahead.

Bove, who collapsed with 16 minutes played of Fiorentina's called-off Serie A match with Inter Milan on Sunday, is in Florence's Careggi hospital where he is undergoing tests to determine what caused him to lose consciousness.

The 22-year-old didn't want a big fuss made of him, telling his teammates that he didn't want to see them wearing a special T-shirt in the pre-match warm up.

Instead they held up held up two banners which read "You didn't want a T-shirt, well here's a banner" and "we're waiting for you Edo".

Atletico's Le Normand available after brain injury

ATLETICO MADRID defender Robin Le Normand will be available to compete in today's Copa del Rey second-round game at CP Cacero after recovering from a brain injury, manager Diego Simeone said yesterday.

The 28-year-old suffered a traumatic brain injury following his collision with Real Madrid's Aurelien Tchouameni late in their 1-1 draw on Sept. 29 and needed medical attention on the pitch.

Le Normand has so far made eight appearances with Atletico since joining from Real Sociedad in the close season after winning the Euros with Spain.

"First of all, we were thinking about the health of the player. That's what the club, doctors, and physios focused on as a first step," Simeone told reporters.

"Then comes the player, who started to get in shape and is now ready to start competing from tomorrow. Seeing the enthusiasm that he transmits, he is very happy and eager to help the team."

Atletico, who are on a seven-match winning streak ahead of today's game, are looking to extend their victorious run across all competitions but Simeone said the side needs to maintain consistency in the season.

"We have things to improve, the team grows from a block and I always call that block a team, neither offensive nor defensive," Simeone said.

"From there, we need that consistency, which is the most difficult thing to maintain during the season." – Reuters

Wolves boss O'Neil understands 'sack' taunts from own fans

■ BY CARL MARKHAM

WOLVES head coach Gary O'Neil insists he is happy to look fans in the face and take the criticism which comes his way after his team were jeered off after losing 4-0 to Everton at Goodison Park.

It was the fourth time this season they had conceded four or more and the performance showed why they have the Premier League's worst defence.

When O'Neil and the players went over to acknowledge the visiting supporters there were boos for a run of two wins in 14 league matches.

"Whatever the fans think of me, there is definitely no-one working harder than me and I will continue to do so until someone tells me not to," said O'Neil, who is under increasing pressure with his side second bottom of the table.

"I go over there to see them because I appreciate every one of the Wolves fans. They have given me unbelievable support since I arrived at the football club," he said.

"We managed to produce some unbelievable stuff last season with a team that was heavily tipped by most of the nation for relegation. We managed to enjoy it together.

"Now it is tough. I was happy to go over

there and look them right in the face and take any criticism they want to throw at me.

"I accept responsibility for my part in that. Whatever criticism they want to throw at me will not change how I feel about them.

"Everyone at this football club needs to do more. We will get back to be ready to fight again on Monday (another crucial game against West Ham, whose manager Julen Lopetegui's tenure is hanging by a thread).

"I will work with everything I have. I will back myself to get the most out of the group. I understand the drive for change (but) you never know how much of a percentage of supporters it is." – The Independent

'Sad, disappointed' Mbappe pays penalty as Bilbao beat Real Madrid

REAL MADRID coach Carlo Ancelotti said Kylian Mbappe was "sad" after missing another penalty as champions Real Madrid fell to a 2-1 defeat at Athletic Bilbao in La Liga yesterday.

A week after the French superstar failed from the spot in the Champions League against Liverpool, he endured further misery from 12 yards as Los Blancos allowed league leaders Barcelona to retain their four-point advantage.

Alejandro Berenguer fired Bilbao ahead early in the second half, with Jude Bellingham levelling for Madrid after Mbappe's penalty miss.

However, substitute Gorka Guruzeta snatched fourth-place Athletic victory in the 80th minute after a Fede Valverde mistake.

The defeat and Mbappe's penalty miss will heap further pressure on to the former Paris Saint-Germain striker's shoulders after plenty of criticism in recent weeks.

"Obviously (Mbappe) is sad, disappointed, but he has to continue," Ancelotti told reporters.

Mbappe has scored 10 goals in his first 20 games for Madrid across all competitions but is struggling for consistency.

"He's not at his best level but we have to give him time to adapt, he's scored 10 goals, he can do better and he's working to do that," said Ancelotti.

"It was an even game, Athletic is a very dangerous team, at home above all... for me it should have been a draw... we continue in the

fight (but) it could have been a better result.

"Bit by bit we will get players back (from injury) and we will improve our level," pledged Ancelotti.

Madrid were hoping to build on three consecutive wins in La Liga, despite missing Vinicius Junior and other injured stars, with Ancelotti bringing French midfielder Aurelien Tchouameni back into the starting line-up.

Thibaut Courtois made an important early intervention to deny Spain winger Nico Williams,

with his brother Inaki Williams lurking dangerously.

It was a first

half of few clear chances, but one played with intensity in front of a packed San Mames stadium.

Mbappe found the net but the goal was ruled out for offside and the referee reviewed a Rodrygo penalty appeal but decided the Brazilian winger went down too easily.

At the other end, Berenguer should have put the hosts ahead but blasted high over the bar after Inaki Williams' clever backheel teed him up.

The forward made amends early in the second half by bundling home from close range after Courtois could only palm an Inaki Williams cross into his path.

Mbappe had the chance to level for Madrid from the spot when Athletic goalkeeper Julen Agirrezabala barrelled into Antonio Rudiger.

After missing his penalty against Liverpool, Mbappe agreed to let Bellingham take one against Getafe on Sunday.

However this time the French forward stepped up himself but his weak effort, again to the goalkeeper's left, was at a comfortable height for Agirrezabala to parry.

"These days we study everything a lot, I knew he was a good taker and he'd missed the last one, I thought he would go the same way and luckily he did," Agirrezabala told DAZN.

"I'm very happy for what was an incredible night, beating Real Madrid in front of our fans is so nice." – AFP



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham (centre) in action with Athletic Bilbao's Yera Alvarez (left) and Andoni Gorosabel. – REUTERS/SPIC

Atalanta eye Serie A summit

ATALANTA take on AC Milan tomorrow (3.45am Malaysian time) with Serie A's top spot in their sights and a growing belief that this could be their year for unprecedented *Scudetto* glory.

A point behind current leaders Napoli, Atalanta are gunning for a club record-equaling ninth straight win in Italy's top flight and are, for the first time in their history, genuine title challengers.

Atalanta have never finished higher than third in Serie A, which they did three seasons in a row between 2019 and 2021 with a

thrilling team featuring an all-action attack of Josip Ilicic, Duvan Zapata and Papu Gomez.

However the current line-up, still on a high from last year's historic Europa League triumph and the division's top scorers with 36 goals, looks capable of going even further in Gian Piero Gasperini's ninth season as coach.

Atalanta have won 11 of 12 matches in all competitions – drawing the other – since the start of October and after Monday night's 2-0 success at Roma, Claudio Ranieri said they were

"ready, really ready" to fight for the league crown.

"Winning the Europa League really helped those who took part in it grow as players, and a lot of new faces have arrived who are also developing. That's the reason for these results," said Gasperini after his team hit Young Boys for six last month.

A win over Milan would put Atalanta top at least for two days as Napoli host Lazio on Monday, and equal a Serie A wins record established in 2020 when Bergamo was the European

epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic.

That year Atalanta stunned Europe by reaching the quarterfinals of the Champions League, where two late goals denied them a win over mega-rich Paris Saint-Germain and a spot in the last four.

Milan, who are 10 points behind Napoli with a game in hand but have won their last three matches against the modest opposition of Slovan Bratislava, Empoli and Sassuolo, netting 12 times in the process. – AFP

Maresca loves 'we've got our Chelsea back' chant by Blues' fans

BY ED ELLIOT

ENZO MARESCA savoured chants of "we've got our Chelsea back" from travelling fans following a 5-1 Premier League thrashing of 10-man Southampton at St Mary's.

Blues supporters also sang the name of head coach Maresca during the closing stages of an emphatic success sealed by goals from Axel Disasi, Christopher Nkunku, Noni Madueke, Cole Palmer and substitute Jadon Sancho.

Bottom club Southampton briefly levelled through Joe Aribo but were a man down from the 39th minute after captain Jack Stephens was

sent off for pulling the hair of Marc Cucurella. Chelsea climbed above Arsenal and into second place on goal difference, seven points behind leaders Liverpool.

"It was a very good feeling, especially because you can see that they are happy, that is our target," Maresca said of the atmosphere in the away end.

"We work every day to keep them happy and tonight was a very good feeling, especially the one that they can see that Chelsea's back. This is an important thing."

Maresca rotated his squad in Hampshire, making seven changes following Sunday's

impressive 3-0 win over Aston Villa. Following a sloppy start, his side, who stretched their unbeaten run to six top-flight games, could easily have won by more as they hit the woodwork three times, in addition to squandering a host of chances.

"I'm very happy with the five we scored," said the Italian.

"I'm not happy with the first 15, 20 minutes, where we struggled. The reason why we struggled is because we prepared the game to press them man to man and the first 15, 20 minutes we were not pressing them man to man."

"After 15, 20 minutes we adjust that and the

game was much better. For sure we could score more but five goals they are enough."

Southampton manager Russell Martin rued a costly "moment of madness" from skipper Stephens.

"I don't think anyone will be as disappointed as Jack," Martin said of Stephens. "He will be hurt more than anyone and it's changed the game for us tonight, which is disappointing."

"I think they have to describe it as violent conduct; it's not violent really but there's no other explanation for that really. It's a moment of madness that's really cost us and Jack." - The Independent

We needed it: Guardiola

BY ANDY HAMPSON

PEP GUARDIOLA spoke of his relief after Manchester City finally got back to winning ways with a comfortable 3-0 defeat of Nottingham Forest yesterday.

The champions had descended into crisis after a run of seven games without a win - six of which were defeats and the other an embarrassing 3-3 draw after leading 3-0.

Four of those losses had come in the Premier League, heavily damaging their chances of claiming a fifth successive title, but they appeared to turn the corner by sweeping Forest aside at the Etihad Stadium.

"We needed it," said Guardiola. "The club, the players, everyone needed to win."

"But it is just one game and in three days we are at Selhurst Park, where it has always been difficult."

"We played good. We still conceded some transitions and missed some easy things and lost some passes that you have to avoid, but in general, the most important thing was to break this routine of not winning games and we won it."

Kevin De Bruyne, making his first start since September after overcoming a pelvic injury, made a huge difference to a side that appeared rejuvenated.

His powerful header was turned in by Bernardo Silva for the opening goal and the Belgian followed up with a powerful strike to make it 2-0.

The 33-year-old is out of contract at the end of the season but it was a strong riposte to recent suggestions of a rift with Guardiola.

"I'm so happy for him," said Guardiola of De Bruyne's telling contribution. "Last season he was many months injured and this season as well."

"I'm so happy he's back. He fought a lot, he's worked and he's back with his physicality. The minutes he played in Anfield were really good and today he played 75 fantastic minutes."

Jeremy Doku wrapped up a pleasing win when he finished a rapid counter-attack just before the hour but there was still a downside for City with injuries to defenders Nathan Ake and Manuel Akanji.

Guardiola said: "For Nathan it doesn't look good and Manu has struggled a lot over the last two months. We will see."

"Phil (Foden) has bronchitis but when he doesn't have fever he will be ready."

Despite City's dominance, Forest did have some bright moments and manager Nuno Espirito Santo was not downbeat.

He said: "When you lose 3-0 and you say it was a good performance maybe people don't understand, but I will not say that was a bad performance."

"There are positive things for us in the game. Of course there are a lot of bad things, mistakes, but we had chances."

"We didn't achieve but I think we come out proud of ourselves because we tried. For sure, this game will allow us to grow." - The Independent



Slot acknowledges mixed feelings after Liverpool let late lead slip at Newcastle

LIVERPOOL produced a strong second half at Newcastle United to twice come from behind and see Mohamed Salah inspire them to what looked like another three points - only for a late Fabian Schar equaliser to deny them victory.

An error-strewn first half saw the Premier League leaders fortunate to only be one down after Alexander Isak's ferocious hit, but the Reds' own in-form attacker scored twice and teed up another to complete what looked a perfect turnaround and have Liverpool 3-2 up - Anthony Gordon also netting in between Curtis Jones and Salah's first.

But Caoimhin Kelleher, so impressive recently in goal for the Reds, made an error of his own and allowed Schar to score late on for a three-all draw and a share of the points.

That understandably led to manager Arne Slot acknowledging the positives of the performance while also bemoaning a slow start for his team.

"We were twice one goal down; one minute before the end we're up, so mixed feelings," he said.

Villans end eight-match winless run

BY SUNNY BADWAL

UNAI EMERY felt his Aston Villa side restored confidence by returning to winning ways with a 3-1 victory over Brentford in the Premier League.

Morgan Rogers' fourth goal of the season, an Ollie Watkins penalty and Matty Cash's finish put Villa 3-0 up after 34 minutes.

Mikkel Damsgaard pulled one back for Brentford in the second half but the damage had been done as Villa ended their eight-match winless run in all competitions.

Emery was relieved to end the unwanted streak but quickly turned his attention to the next fixture against Southampton on Saturday

at Amazon Prime Video at full time.

"First half we were not good enough for the quality of Newcastle so maybe in the end 3-3 is what the game deserves."

"They were aggressive and forced too many mistakes from us. We played a few times through them but that second half was so much better, more dominance, more control and created good opportunities."

"We had more intensity, we were much, much better with the ball."

After a week in which Liverpool beat both Real Madrid and Manchester City, a midweek trip to the north east in the pouring rain was no easy next task - and with a Merseyside derby ahead at the weekend, Slot also pointed out the importance of recovery time, as well as his star forward Salah.

"We had two very tough games and one day less to recover than the opponent. If you're a goal down and after the week we had, in an away game, that were're able to change the game completely in the second half then it's a really positive thing to take," he said.

"Every time we need (Salah) he scores an important goal. We hope and expect he can continue this for a long time."

It has been an inconsistent season so far for Newcastle with impressive results like their 1-0 win against Arsenal at St James' Park in early November overshadowed later that month by a home loss to struggling West Ham.

But yesterday's performance showed they have the quality and desire to reignite their challenge for the top four.

"I am really proud. We went toe-to-toe and matched them, it's our best of the season," Magpies boss Eddie Howe said via tribalfootball.com.

"Our game plan was to be ourselves which is difficult against a team like Liverpool, it's a delicate balance."

"Generally I was very pleased with the performance, we were much better attacking and we had really good energy."

"If we can hit this level consistently we are going to win a lot of games." - The Independent/Agencies

(11pm Malaysian time).

"We broke a spell of bad results we were having," the Villa boss said.

"We started the first five or 10 minutes not in control of the game but then progressively we controlled."

"Today we achieved those three points and it has given us confidence again but even like that it's not enough."

"We have to keep going and think about the next match against Southampton on Saturday."

"The message was try to focus on each match, try to forget the table. How we can recover confidence and feel comfortable at home. Today was a fantastic match."

Brentford fell to a sixth away defeat from seven games and have picked up only a solitary point on the road this season.

They have the best home record in the league, with 19 points from seven matches, but they have the joint worst away record.

Bees boss Thomas Frank is confident form will improve on the road.

He said: "On numbers we can't argue we are better at home than away, but on numbers it's a coincidence. I think two of the seven away games have been bad."

"The other games we performed well in big spells. I'm confident at the end of the season we will have some wins away from home." - The Independent

RESULTS & STANDINGS

MALAYSIA SUPER LEAGUE

Perak 1 Kedah Darul Aman 1, Kelantan Darul Naim 1 Terengganu 2, Kuching City 1 Sabah 2, Penang 2 PDRM 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Johor DT	14	13	1	0	53	6	40
Sabah	15	9	2	4	32	21	29
Selangor	14	9	2	3	23	12	29
Terengganu	15	6	6	3	20	16	24
Kuching City	14	4	6	4	19	20	18
Perak	15	5	3	7	21	26	18
PDRM	15	4	6	5	15	21	18
Sri Pahang	13	3	6	4	16	19	15
Kuala Lumpur	13	6	2	5	23	17	14
Penang	15	3	5	7	15	25	14
Kedah	15	4	5	6	15	27	14
Kelantan	15	2	1	1	21	23	77
N. Sembilan	13	1	3	9	13	30	6

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Arsenal 2 (Timber 54, Saliba 73)

Manchester United 0, Aston Villa 3

(Rogers 21, Watkins 28-pen, Cash 34)

Brentford 1 (Damsgaard 54), Everton

4 (Young 10, Mangala 33, Dawson 49-og,

72-og) Wolves 0, Manchester City 3

(Silva 8, De Bruyne 31, Doku 57)

Nottingham Forest 0, Newcastle 3

(Isak 35, Gordon 62, Schar 90) Liverpool

3 (Jones 50, Salah 68, 83), Southamp-

ton 1 (Aribo 11) Chelsea 5 (Disasi 7,

Nkunku 17, Madueke 34, Palmer 76,

Sancho 87).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	14	11	2	1	29	11	35
Chelsea	14	8	4	2	31	15	28
Arsenal	14	8	4	2	28	14	28
Man City	14	8	2	4	25	19	26
Brighton	13	6	5	2	22	17	23
Nottm Forest	14	6	4	4	16	16	22
Aston Villa	14	6	4	4	22	23	22
Tottenham	13	6	2	5	28	14	20
Brentford	14	6	2	6	27	26	20
Newcastle	14	5	5	4	17	17	20
Man Utd	14	5	4	5	17	15	19
Fulham	13	5	4	4	18	18	19
Bournemouth	13	5	3	5	20	19	18
West Ham	14	4	3	7	18	27	15
Everton	14	3	5	6	14	21	14
Leicester	14	3	4	7	19	28	13
Crystal Palace	14	2	6	6	12	18	12
Ipswich	14	1	6	7	13	25	9
Wolves	14	2	3	9	22	36	9
Southampton	14	1	2	11	11	30	5

LA LIGA

Athletic Bilbao 2 (Berenguer 53, Guru-

zeta 80) Real Madrid 1 (Bellingham 78).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	16	12	1	3	48	17	37
Real Madrid	15	10	3	2	31	13	33
Atletico	15	9	5	1	26	8	32
Bilbao	16	8	5	3	24	15	29
Villarreal	14	7	5	2	27	23	26
Mallorca	16	7	3	6	16	18	24
Osasuna	15	6	5	4	20	23	23
Girona	15	6	4	5	22	20	22
Sociedad	15	6	3	6	13	11	21
Real Betis	15	5	5	5	16	18	20
Sevilla	15	5	4	6	14	19	19
Celta Vigo	15	5	3	7	23	27	18
Vallecano	14	4	4	6	14	16	16
Las Palmas	15	4	3	8	20	26	15
Leganes	15	3	6	6	14	20	15
Alaves	15	4	2	9	16	25	14
Getafe	15	2	7	6	10	13	13
Espanyol	14	4	1	9	15	27	13
Valencia	13	2	4	7	13	21	10
Valladolid	15	2	3	10	10	32	9

ITALIAN CUP (Last 16)

Fiorentina 2 Empoli 2 (Empoli win 4-3 on pen).

GERMAN CUP (Last 16)

Karlsruhe 2 Augsburg 2 (Augsburg win 5-4 on pen), RB Leipzig 3 Eintracht Frankfurt 0, Cologne 2 Hertha Berlin 1, Wolfsburg 3 Hoffenheim 0.

Sense of accountability

Former Harimau Malaya manager says Hamidin made right move not to defend post

THE decision by Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) president Tan Sri Hamidin Mohd Amin not to defend his position at next year's election is the right move, according to former national team manager Datuk Kamarul Ariffin Mohd Shahar.

He said it reflects Hamidin's sense of accountability in the wake of recent issues and controversies surrounding the national team and his leadership.

"Knowing him, I believe he is taking full responsibility by not defending the position, especially since all sorts of rumours have emerged lately.

"Given all the speculation, the national team's struggle when they should have qualified for the Asian Cup by now and the sudden departure of Kim Pan Gon, which disrupted the team's progress, I think his decision is timely.

"It gives opportunities for new faces to step forward and contest," said Kamarul, who managed the Harimau Malaya squad during the 2023 Asian Cup, when contacted by *Bernama* yesterday.

Yesterday, Hamidin, who has held the top position in FAM since July 2018, announced he would not defend his presidency at the 2025-29 term FAM Election Congress, scheduled for Feb 15.

He said the decision was made to give way to new leadership capable of bringing FAM to greater heights.

Meanwhile, FAM deputy president Datuk Mohd Yusoff Mahadi said Hamidin's departure would be a big loss, as he has contributed to the growth of Malaysian football, including introducing reforms.

"We will feel the loss of someone who has

brought change to our football. Over his approximately six years in FAM, he has positioned the association in a better place than before.

"Whoever steps forward to replace him must take on this responsibility. In my opinion, this is a high-stakes role that will determine FAM's future. Affiliates need to carefully consider and choose the right person to ensure continuity," he said.

Hamidin's appointment as the FAM chief to replace Johor Regent Tunku Mahkota Ismail was announced at the 54th FAM Congress.

Hamidin then retained the post unopposed for the 2021-25 term at the 57th FAM Congress.

He is a member of the FIFA Council for the 2023-27 term and serves on the Executive Committee of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC), where he has been appointed as the chairman of the AFC Finance Committee. - Bernama



Turtles edge Kelantan to stay fourth

Terengganu's Ismaheel Akinade (centre) vies for the ball with Kelantan's Michal Jerabek (right) on Wednesday. - BERNAMAPIC

TERENGGANU FC (TFC) edged Kelantan Darul Naim FC 2-1 at the Selayang Municipal Council Stadium today to remain fourth in the Super League standings.

The Turtles broke the deadlock in the 11th minute when skipper Muhammad Safawi Rasedi's freekick hit the Kelantan wall and Muhammad Alif Zakaria latched onto the rebound to let fly a screamer past Kelantan goalkeeper Mohammad Fikri Che Soh.

TFC's goal in the 58th minute was ruled out after a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) check for offside.

Terengganu did not have to wait long for the second goal as Muhammad Safawi got his name on the scoresheet when he put the finishing touch to a cross from Nurillo Tukhtasinov in the 65th minute.

Today Ali Abdalrahim Kharoub pulled one back for Kelantan in the dying minutes (90+5) from the penalty spot.

Penang FC finally ended their fourth consecutive defeat when they managed to defeat the seventh-placed team in the league, PDRM FC 2-0 at the City Stadium.

Penang head coach Wan Rohaimi Wan Ismail has asked his squad to use last night's 2-0 victory against PDRM to mark their resurgence in the 2024/25 Super League.

He said the Panthers had endured a difficult run in their last nine matches, including the Malaysia Cup,

which resulted in seven losses and two draws.

Thus, the three points from this match were incredibly significant, especially as it marked his first win since taking charge of Penang FC on Nov 14.

However, he cautioned that there is no room for complacency, as there is still much work to be done, particularly in the attacking department.

"The players became too emotional after PDRM FC were reduced to 10 men in the first half. I noticed they panicked while attempting to score, leading to frequent losses of possession in the front line.

"We identified and addressed this issue during the halftime break and saw some improvement in the second half. I hope this first win can serve as momentum for upcoming matches, as we still have nine Super League games and two Malaysia Challenge Cup matches remaining," he said during the post-match press conference at City Stadium on Wednesday.

The win lifted Penang FC one spot to 10th place, with 14 points from 15 matches.

In other matches, Perak FC blew their chance for a second straight home win at the Manjung Municipal Council Stadium after being held 1-1 by Kedah Darul Aman FC while Sabah FC recorded a 2-1 victory over host Kuching City FC in a fierce action that took place at the Sarawak State Stadium. - Bernama

BRIEFS

SRG, Vamos revive hopes of making M6 knockout stage

THE champions of the 14th Season of the Mobile Legends Bang Bang (MLBB) Malaysia (MPL) Professional League, the Selangor Red Giants (SRG) revived their chances to advance to the knockout rounds of the MLBB M6 World Championship after picking up an important victory in the fourth match of the Swiss stage against China's Keep Best Gaming (KBG) at IOI City Mall Putrajaya on Wednesday. In the best-of-3 (BO3) format match, Michael Angelo Bocado's (Arcadia) men showed a brilliant performance when they won the first match with a score of 11 kills in four in over 14 minutes to take a 1-0 lead. They continued to maintain the momentum in the second game to confirm a 2-0 unanimous decision victory. Meanwhile, another Malaysian team, Team Vamos managed to avoid early elimination after defeating Türkiye's S2G, 2-0. The two Malaysian teams now only need one more win respectively to secure a place in the knockout stage tomorrow.

Malaysia settle for fourth

THE national junior men's hockey squad's dream of ending the 2024 Junior Asia Cup campaign in Muscat, Oman by winning a podium place was dashed after losing 1-2 to Japan in the third-fourth playoff match at the Oman Al Marat Hockey Stadium on Wednesday. Malaysia's best achievement in the Junior Asia Cup was emerging champions in the 2012 edition in Malaka, while in the last edition in Salalah, Oman, the Young Tigers finished fourth. The Young Tigers had already confirmed their ticket to the 2025 Youth World Cup earlier after successfully finishing the Group B stage as runner-up after losing 1-4 to Pakistan.

Sports culture in Perlis to undergo rebranding exercise

THE Perlis Games will be given a new branding and own identity with the philosophy of sports culture in the way of the Perlis people in an effort to ensure that every participation in all sports is participated by the state's natives.

Perlis Youth and Sports, Science, Technology and Innovation Committee chairman Mohd Ridzuan Hashim said he, the Perlis State Sports Council (MSNPs) and the State Sports Association would work seriously to ensure that success can be achieved together.

"In addition to the success of the medal collection in the Games, we also hope that the management of the State Sports Association will improve. As we understand it, an association is an organisation established with the aim of gathering and uniting individuals to enliven and develop sports in the state.

"Therefore, I hope that the administrators of the association will try to ensure that their association moves in tandem with the state government in the management of sports in the state of Perlis," he said.

Mohd Ridzuan said the state government wants to ensure that all sports competed by the state is represented by only athletes from Perlis because the funds are provided by the state government.

"Particular focus is given on the level of coaching expertise; athlete welfare; comfort of training centers and tournament organization. All of these are given priority to the people of Perlis to participate as key players to ensure the successful implementation of this plan," he said. - Bernama



theSun Sports

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SCAN ME



Set-piece masters

Arsenal score two goals from corners to sink Man United

Arsenal's Jurrien Timber scores the opening goal during the English Premier League match against Manchester United at the Emirates Stadium yesterday. - AFP/IC

BY JAMIE BRAIDWOOD

NOT FOR the first time, there is panic in the Manchester United defence. Bukayo Saka is walking towards the corner and Nicolas Jover is positioned on the touchline.

Rasmus Hojlund is clinging onto William Saliba as if he reaching for a log while tumbling down a rapidly moving river.

The Emirates senses the opportunity and understands what is happening: there is a queue of towering Arsenal players stationed at the back post and the United defenders are wearing expressions of grave concern.

Suddenly, in a box of moving shadows, danger lay around every corner, every decoy a potential target.

Seconds later, Ruben Amorim was in the dugout rubbing his face, as what should have been a cohesive, organised block unravelled into strands.

"The set pieces changed the game," Amorim admitted.

On a night where Arsenal initially didn't look like scoring from open play, Mikel Arteta's side won due to two goals from corners to move within seven points of Liverpool.

In all of this, United became the latest victims of Arsenal's not-so-secret weapon. Since the start of last season, no team in Europe has scored more goals from corners than their 22.

"Set-piece again, ole, ole, ole," was the song ringing around the Emirates.

The tally may have increased further. "We could've scored more and I'm very pleased with that," said Arteta, as the visitors imploded against the dead-ball, in a crisis of in-game management and on-pitch leadership.

The wicked deliveries from Declan Rice and Saka, hit with such precision, pace and consistency, gives Arsenal a clear edge over their opponents.

Amorim and United were aware of Arsenal's record from corners but were powerless to stop it.

The Portuguese agreed that Arsenal's corners were the best he had faced as a coach. "Every team have had problems with that," he said.

The threat was clear long before Jurrien Timber's opening goal. But after the breakthrough, every corner became a moment,

PREMIER LEAGUE PREVIEWS & PREDICTIONS

All matches at 10pm/11pm Malaysian time unless stated.

TOMORROW
 Everton vs Liverpool (8.30pm)
 Aston Villa vs Southampton
 Brentford vs Newcastle
 Crystal Palace vs Man City

SUNDAY
 Man United vs Forest (1.30am)
 Fulham vs Arsenal
 Ipswich vs Bournemouth
 Leicester vs Brighton

MONDAY (12.30am)
 Tottenham vs Chelsea

TUESDAY (4am)
 West Ham vs Wolves

as the Arsenal fans rose to cheer every run-up while United crumbled. It fed into a sense of inevitability.

Even the delay as Rice or Saka walk to the corner flag gives Arsenal time to slow down and orchestrate their chosen routine, as the set-piece coach Jover emerges on the sideline and the excitement grows.

Arteta spoke of the "connection" and "belief" in the stadium that makes defending corners even "more difficult for the opposition".

There was satisfaction, too, that they had managed to be so effective without their most imposing target in

rainy night at the Emirates.

"We have to improve, like in every area," Amorim said.

United appeared shaky and vulnerable to the inswinging deliveries, which was in complete contrast to how they were structured defensively in open play.

The corners kept coming, too, reaching 13 by fulltime. It was a measure of Arsenal's dominance by the end, as Amorim highlighted a reason for why Arsenal were able to generate so many set-piece opportunities.

"You see every occasion when (Gabriel) Martinelli and (Bukayo) Saka have one-on-ones, a lot of times they go outside and they cross, and they know that if the cross goes well, they can score, and if it is a corner they can score, too, so we have to be better on that," he suggested.

It was noticeable that this was one of several statements regarding Arsenal's record from corners that Arteta did not completely agree with post-match. The Spaniard does not want other elements of his team to be overlooked.

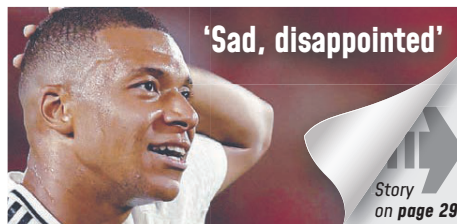
"We want to be very dangerous and very effective from every angle and every phase of play," he said.

"Last year we scored the most goals in the history of this football club, not because of only set-pieces but because of a lot of things that we have. We want to create individual and magic moments, too." - The Independent



Two way tussle

Story on page 28



'Sad, disappointed'

Story on page 29



Magpies deny runaway Reds

Story on page 30