



## NGO provides 'Back-to-school' aid to B40 students

Penang Hindu Association distributes RM150 cash vouchers, spectacles, laptops and tablets to 120 recipients.

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## Easing hunger of underprivileged

Berjaya Corp and charity society team up to provide free vegetarian meals through soup kitchen to individuals and families at home as well as on the streets.

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## 'Amend laws to improve welfare of strays'

Advocate wants ban on shooting, poisoning and brutal capture methods as well as humane practices by local authorities for managing homeless animals.

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Some 500 supporters attending a candlelight vigil at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur on Saturday in memory of Kopi, a dog killed in a stray-culling operation in Besut, Terengganu late last year. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

# 150 in NS 3.0 trial

Volunteers aged 18 to 20 sign up for military and statehood training for 45 days as part of efforts to instil patriotism, national unity and character among youths.

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**FUN-FILLED EVENT ...** The Petronas Malaysia Open 2025 at the Axiata Arena in Bukit Jalil, which ended yesterday, offered visitors various interesting activities apart from the main badminton games. — **ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN**

## 'Addendum on Najib's house arrest not concealed'

➤ Matter not discussed during Pardons Board meeting in 2023, says PM

**BUKIT MERTAJAM:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has firmly stated that the government has not concealed any addendum related to a house arrest option for former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

He said the issue surrounding the addendum, which would purportedly allow Najib to serve the remainder of his sentence under house arrest, was not discussed during the Pardons Board meeting in 2023.

"I was part of the Board in 2023 as I was serving as federal territories minister at the time."

"During the meeting, this matter (addendum) was not raised while I was present, nor was it brought up when Dr Zaliha Mustafa (minister in the Prime Minister's Department [Federal Territories]) was there.

"That is the reality - nothing was hidden," he said when officiating at the Muhibbah

Madani programme on Saturday.

Anwar said he needed to respond to the two-week-old accusation that the government had concealed the documents because it involved legal matters that needed to be fully understood.

Anwar clarified that the addendum was sent to the attorney-general and not to him or to any member of the Pardons Board.

"The (then) attorney-general then forwarded the documents to Istana Negara when there was a change of the King, as it is the King who chairs the Pardons Board. That's how it happened, not something that we concealed."

Anwar said he then brought the matter of Najib's house arrest to the attention of His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim.

"In Najib's case, I brought up the matter myself because, although I disagree with the individual, we must give His Majesty the opportunity to consider his appeal.

"I didn't want to mention or discuss this before, as it involves the King."

On Jan 3, Istana Negara issued a statement clarifying that any request for a pardon or reduction in sentence for a convict must be submitted by the convict himself for consideration by the Pardons Board, chaired by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Anwar added that he presented Najib's pardon application for consideration by the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, during a Pardons Board meeting.

"When the 11th agenda was brought up, the King, as chair, asked about this particular case, while the other 10 cases were presented by the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department.

"Since the paper was with me, His Majesty asked me to present it. I presented it, explaining why Najib was imprisoned, his sentence, the public's concerns, international perspectives, prison reports and the new unresolved case.

"We also had to consider his past as prime minister and chief minister, his contributions to the country, his good prison record and overall health, with occasional hospital visits."

As a result of the Pardons Board's meeting on Jan 29, 2024, Najib's prison sentence was reduced from 12 years to six years, and his fine was reduced from RM210 million to RM50 million, *Bernama* reported.

Najib, who has been serving his sentence at Kajang Prison since Aug 23, 2022 after being convicted of embezzling RM42 million from SRC International Sdn Bhd, filed a petition for a royal pardon on Sept 2, 2022.

## Use govt incentives to hire people with disabilities: DPM

**BAGAN DATUK:** Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi has urged employers, including those from abroad, to utilise government incentives under the Career Fund to hire persons with disabilities (PwD).

He said this is because the productivity of this group is on par with that of non-disabled workers.

"Please show concern for PwD employees. This initiative is a commendable effort because they are only physically different, but their productivity is equal to, if not greater than, that of regular employees," he said at the MYFutureJobs Bagan Datuk Career Carnival on Saturday.

The event was also attended by Human Resources Deputy Minister Datuk Seri Abdul Rahman Mohamad and Social Security Organisation (Socso) CEO Datuk Seri Dr Mohammed Azman Aziz Mohammed.

Under Budget 2025, employers who hire PwD and former convicts under the Daya Kerjaya 3.0 initiative will receive incentives of RM600 per month for three months under Socso's supervision.

On technical and vocational education and training (TVET), Ahmad Zahid, who is also National TVET Council chairman, said the number of TVET trainees last year increased to 280,000 compared with 130,000 in 2023.

Abdul Rahman said statistics showed a significant reduction in the country's job mismatch rate, from 40.5% in 2022 to 18.2% in 2023.

"This success reflects the ongoing efforts of the Human Resources Ministry through Socso in ensuring that job offerings align with qualifications and skills of job seekers."

He added that as of Dec 27 last year, there were 43,595 job vacancies offering salaries of RM10,000 and above, and 1.2 million job seekers had secured employment between 2020 and Dec 27, 2024. — *Bernama*

## Total ban of asbestos use being mullied

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government is reviewing a proposal to fully ban asbestos, a material still widely used in the country despite concerns over its harmful health effects, said Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad.

"We will assess how this issue is currently managed under existing legislation and policies. If there are gaps, we may need to improve them," he said after the launch of his book, *Saving the Planet: Climate and Environmental Lessons from Malaysia and Beyond* on Saturday.

In July last year, the Penang Consumers Association submitted a memorandum to the government urging a complete ban on all forms of asbestos, repeating a similar call it made in May 2001, *Bernama* reported.

Asbestos is a toxic substance that can cause lung cancer and its use has been banned in 69 countries, including Finland, Italy, Australia and Japan as of October 2022, according to the International Ban Asbestos Secretariat.

## Anwar on working visit to UAE

**ABU DHABI:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is on a working visit until tomorrow to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to attend the Abu Dhabi Sustainability Week (ADSW).

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Anwar's participation in the ADSW is at the invitation of UAE Vice-President and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is also the Ruler of Dubai.

Anwar will attend the ADSW opening ceremony and the Zayed Sustainability Prize Awards ceremony with other state and government heads from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East.

The ADSW 2025 programme will also feature a plenary session in which he will join a dialogue titled "Asean's Interconnected Future: Linking Energy, Trade and Prosperity".

"He is scheduled to have audiences with the President of UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and his Emirati counterpart Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum to strengthen bilateral relations."

The meeting is also aimed at enhancing cooperation in various fields of mutual interest such as renewable energy, food and energy security, artificial intelligence and data centres. Regional and global issues of importance are also

expected to be discussed.

On the sidelines of the ADSW, Anwar is scheduled to witness the signing of the Malaysia-UAE Comprehensive Economic partnership agreement.

The deal will open up new avenues for trade as well as investment and economic cooperation between both countries.

As Asean chair for 2025, he will also seek to strengthen regional cooperation, particularly in the context of Asean's role in promoting sustainable development and green innovation across Southeast Asia.

Anwar is accompanied by Home Minister

Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambray Abd Kadir.

On Jan 14, Anwar will depart for London to continue his official engagements, furthering Malaysia's global standing and enhancing its strategic relations with key international partners.

From January to November 2024, Malaysia's trade with the UAE was valued at RM39.53 billion.

In 2023, UAE was Malaysia's second-largest trading partner in the Middle East, with total trade valued at RM39.63 billion. — *Bernama*

# Miros calls for stricter inspections of heavy vehicles

➤ Braking system, side slip and tyres are top three issues during checks by Puspakom

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research (Miros) is calling for more regular and rigorous inspections of heavy commercial vehicles to enhance road safety and ensure compliance with safety standards.

This follows the Computerised Vehicle Inspection Centre (Puspakom) revealing on Jan 1 that over 220,000 commercial vehicles failed their annual inspections.

The braking system, side slip and tyres were identified as the top three issues affecting commercial vehicles such as lorries and buses during its inspections.

Miros director-general Assoc Prof Dr Siti Zaharah Ishak said consistent inspections encourage drivers and companies to prioritise safety over negligence, making them more accountable.

"More importantly, it sends a signal to everyone that authorities are consistently monitoring the operation of commercial vehicles and increases public confidence," she said.

Siti Zaharah noted that existing laws already establish minimum requirements for safety and roadworthiness. However, she added that further improvements could be achieved by benchmarking against practices in advanced countries.

"The Transport Ministry recently formulated several initiatives, including a special task force involving various stakeholders, which will develop strategies to enhance safety while enforcement will be strengthened through collaboration with agencies such as the Road Transport Department (RTD) and police.

"The 'High Speed - Weigh in Motion' system will be expanded for



Siti Zaharah said Puspakom inspections will now include critical safety checks such as tyres and brakes to ensure compliance with safety standards. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

load monitoring, and automated awareness safety system cameras will be upgraded to track vehicle speeds more effectively," she said.

Siti Zaharah also noted that Puspakom inspections will now include critical safety checks such as tyres and brakes to ensure compliance with safety standards.

On Dec 29, 2024, seven people were reported dead and 33 others were injured in an incident involving a bus, two lorries and two cars on the North-South Expressway between Ayer Keroh and Simpang Ampat, Malacca.

An investigation revealed that the front right tyre of a trailer lorry detached and landed in the middle lane, causing the bus to lose control and veer into the opposite lane.

The bus then collided with three other vehicles, including a car, a lorry driven by a man with an attendant and an MPV carrying eight people travelling in the opposite direction.

Siti Zaharah said tyre neglect is a major factor in road accidents involving commercial vehicles as tyres support the vehicle's weight and endure constant motion.

She explained that heavy goods vehicles such as buses cover significant distances daily and factors such as high mileage and overloading further strain the tyres.

Recently, RTD acknowledged the existence of "cosmetic agents" who provide services such as tyre rentals to help heavy vehicles pass Puspakom inspections.

"The issue largely stems from a mindset problem among our citizens, whether they truly understand the consequences of their actions.

"Tackling this is challenging because we cannot simply interrogate and accuse someone while they're making so-called 'cosmetic changes,'" she said.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Tipper Lorry Operators Association secretary Tan Boon Hing urged enforcement agencies to strengthen random tyre inspections, especially before and after Puspakom checks, to ensure all vehicles' tyres meet safety requirements.

He also called on the government to establish clear tyre quality standards, usage durations and

replacement guidelines to ensure compliance with basic safety standards.

"As far as I know, our trucks strictly adhere to the laws and regulations, and do not engage in such practices. We take vehicle safety and compliance very seriously.

"Effective measures should be taken to eliminate such violations and fundamentally protect public safety," he said.

Tan also urged authorities to increase the number of vehicle inspection centres, especially given the growing number of commercial vehicles.

"In Kuala Lumpur alone, there are only three inspection centres.

"The number of inspection centres has not increased in tandem with the number of commercial vehicles on the road, causing inspection staff to rush through their tasks, indirectly contributing to more accidents.

"I believe it's more important to strengthen communication and collaboration among operators and related agencies to improve vehicle safety management," he said.

## NS programme kicks off after seven-year hiatus

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The National Service Training Programme (NS) 3.0 officially began yesterday after a seven-year hiatus.

A total of 150 volunteer trainees from across the country checked in at the Territorial Army's 515 Regiment Camp here to participate in NS 3.0.

The trainees arrived at the camp compound at 7.30am, accompanied by family members offering their support.

The registration process ran from 7am to 11am under cloudy skies.

The trainees for the trial, aged 18 to 20, will undergo military and statehood training for 45 days until Feb 25, as part

of efforts to instil patriotism, national unity and character in Malaysian youths, and to equip them with the strength to face life's challenges through physical and mental training.

The re-implementation of the programme is being conducted in stages and is based on the National Service Training Act (Act 628), the National Security Policy, the Defence White Paper and related policies.

After the trial period, the next phase of the programme will be conducted at 13 Territorial Army camps, 20 public universities, 33 polytechnics, 27 teacher training institutes and several public skill or

industrial training institutes that will serve as basic training sites throughout the country.

NS was first introduced in December 2003 as a three-month programme with training modules, including physical, statehood, character building and community service.

It involved 85,000 to 95,000 trainees annually, with an average expenditure of RM600 million a year.

It was stopped for a year in 2015 due to an expenditure rationalisation measure and reintroduced in 2016 as NS 2.0 with only about 20,000 trainees a year before being abolished in

August 2018.

Based on the National Service Training Act 2003 (Act 628), the National Security Policy, the Defence White Paper and other relevant policies, the NS 3.0 concept was formed with a combination of two key components, namely the national service training core component and the national service training outcome component, involving four phases.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin earlier said NS 3.0 emphasises the development of discipline, leadership and an understanding of the nation's history among the trainees. — Bernama

## Digital schools to transform education

**BACHOK:** The implementation of digital schools is expected to revolutionise the country's education system by producing tech-savvy students and protecting them from cyber threats, said Impressive Communication Sdn Bhd CEO Tan Sri Abdul Halim Karim.

He said as a company providing telecommunications and internet equipment, they are committed to improving awareness among young people about the use of digital technology in schools.

"The implementation of digital schools is in alignment with current developments where students are more exposed to the digital world, particularly on social media platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram.

"This change is a positive step and as such the management of the learning system must also be changed to keep up with the times," he told Bernama recently.

He added that the implementation of digital schools could shape students' morals by reducing the risk of involvement in online criminal activities such as cyber fraud.

In addition, it provides opportunities for students, especially those in rural areas, to gain a more in-depth knowledge of digital technology.

"Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Pak Badol is the pioneer digital school and we have contributed over RM16,000 to ensure this project is successfully implemented. We hope this initiative can inspire other schools," he added.

Meanwhile, SK Pak Badol principal Noor Ashiqin Abdullah said the digital school initiative was in line with the National Digital Education Policy launched by Education Minister Fadhliha Sidek last year.

## Govt to launch cyber security campaigns

**SEPANG:** The government will soon launch cyber security campaigns in all primary and secondary schools nationwide, said Communications Minister Fahmi Fadzil.

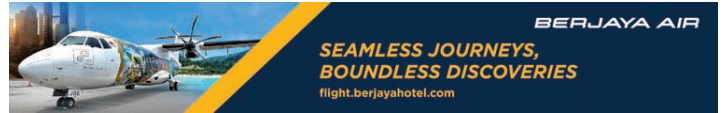
He added that the campaigns aim to raise understanding and awareness among parents, teachers and students about cyber security to help them avoid falling victim to scams and online crime.

"In a few weeks, awareness campaigns will be held in schools to educate parents, teachers and primary school pupils about cyber security.

"We want them to avoid focusing on social media, meaning no social media use at the primary school level," he said at a media conference after officiating the Communications Ministry's *Madani* Adopted Village at Kelinsing *Orang Asli* Village on Saturday.

At the secondary school level, Fahmi said the government would focus on raising awareness about safe internet and social media use. — Bernama





# Initiative to provide free meals to underprivileged

➤ Vegetarian soup kitchen addresses food insecurity and aligns with broader vision of promoting ecological balance: BCorp founder

BY DEEPAKSHMI MANICKAM  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** In Malaysia, many individuals and families in underserved areas struggle to meet their basic nutritional needs, often relying on charitable initiatives to survive.

Berjaya Corporation Berhad (BCorp) founder and advisor Tan Sri Vincent Tan Chee Yioun said the company has collaborated with Kriyalakshmi Mandir Sai Selva Gurukul (KMSSG) Charitable Society to launch an initiative aimed at providing free food to such communities, both at home and on the streets.

The initiative, under the Brahmarpanam Soup Kitchen, seeks to alleviate hunger and improve the well-being of those in need.

Through his company Veggie Nature Sdn Bhd, a division of Berjaya Hills Resort Berhad, Tan is championing the initiative by supplying fresh vegetables from Berjaya Hills.

The collaboration shares BCorp's commitment to supporting meaningful causes and helping those who are less fortunate.

"I am proud that BCorp can play a role in addressing hunger and supporting those in need. We are working to create a stronger and more compassionate community."

Accompanied by his wife Puan Sri Esther Tan, he was speaking during the official inauguration of Brahmarpanam Soup Kitchen in Jalan Ayer Panas Baharu, Setapak on Friday.

He officiated at the opening of the soup kitchen with KMSSG founder GuruMatha Annai Shree



Tan, his wife Esther (third, right) and GuruMatha (third, left) at the opening of the soup kitchen. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Kriyalakshmi Deviyyar. Also present were KMSSG vice-president Arwind Kumar and secretary Peter Lim Tze Cheng.

Tan shared his passion for expanding the initiative, and pointed out the importance of commitment and dedication in charitable efforts.

"We must have more people such as GuruMatha, who dedicates her life to charity and doing good deeds, providing food and training poor kids in education.

"We are ready to support more committed individuals. I know there are many soup kitchens but I do not know how many are vegetarian. Brahmarpanam Soup Kitchen is 100% vegetarian and I would support people who are dedicated to running such soup kitchens."

Tan, a vegetarian himself, highlighted the broader implications of vegetarianism, stressing its role in environmental conservation and addressing climate change.

He emphasised that while many

are willing to contribute to charitable causes, the Brahmarpanam Soup Kitchen's unique commitment to serving vegetarian meals aligns with a broader vision of promoting ecological balance.

He acknowledged that adopting vegetarianism is not necessarily a cost-saving measure as organic produce often comes at a higher price.

However, he said the value lies in its potential to reduce the strain on natural resources, decrease greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate the impacts of global warming.

Tan highlighted the need to address environmental issues, pointing to recent disasters such as floods and wildfires as warnings of a planet in crisis.

He said vegetarianism is a simple yet impactful way to protect the earth for future generations.

By reducing dependence on meat production, which is

resource-intensive and harmful to the environment, individuals could contribute to addressing global warming.

"Everyone has the power to make a difference. Even small changes, such as switching to a vegetarian diet, could have a big impact."

Through Brahmarpanam Soup Kitchen, he hopes to inspire others to understand the link between their food choices and the health of the planet.

KMSSG achieved a remarkable feat by establishing the Brahmarpanam Soup Kitchen in less than five months.

The facility, which is now fully operational, is equipped with cooking utensils, appliances and a steady supply of fresh ingredients, ensuring seamless operations to serve nutritious vegetarian meals to underserved communities.

The rapid setup highlights the dedication and efficiency of KMSSG in addressing the issue of food insecurity.

## Plan to use local handicraft as Asean souvenirs

**SELANGOR:** The Communications Ministry will work to feature handicraft from the *Orang Asli* community in Kampung Kelising here as souvenirs for Asean representatives attending various meetings throughout the year, said its minister Fahmi Fadzil.

He said in addition to showcasing the community's handicrafts to international guests, he hopes the special dishes of the *Orang Asli* community would attract attention.

"Our goal is to promote these locally handmade products. The ministry will strive to acquire some crafts from Kampung Orang Asli Kelising and the surrounding areas.

"With the expected influx of tourists, we hope some would enjoy the local dishes and purchase the hand-crafted items from this village," he told a press conference following the launch of the ministry's Kampung Angkat Madani in Kampung Orang Asli Kelising on Saturday.

Communications Ministry secretary-general Datuk Mohamad Fauzi Md Isa, Bernama CEO Datin Paduka Nur-ul Afida Kamaludin, Bernama News Service deputy editor-in-chief Nasriah Darus and Bernama management services and finance head Sharifah Zaini Syed Zain were also present at the event.

Fahmi was answering a question on whether the craft items from the village would be given as souvenirs at Asean meetings.

He said as the host of about 323 Asean meetings at various levels, Malaysia should take advantage of the opportunity to promote the community's products and local food.

On the National Information Dissemination Centre, which has been established in the village, Fahmi expressed hope that it would be utilised to spread information about Malaysia's Asean chairmanship.

"We hope the centre would provide updates on major Asean events, and share them with the Madani community and local residents."

He also expressed hope that the facility would help villagers access information about government grants, assistance and how to improve their e-commerce entrepreneurship skills.

"There is potential to promote and sell local products, such as the *ubi kacang* dish."

The construction of the centre, which cost RM1.8 million, took five months to complete, beginning in August last year. — Bernama

## Public warned of venomous jellyfish on beach

**MARANG:** The public has been advised to be wary of the presence of hundreds of jellyfish, or Portuguese Man of War, that have washed ashore at Pantai Rhu Muda here.

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Faculty of Science and Marine Environment senior lecturer Assoc Prof Dr Roswati Md Amin said the species, classified under the marine hydrozoan group, is easily identified by its translucent bluish-purple or pink tinge.

The plankton ecophysiology expert said the jellyfish have venomous stinging cells in their tentacles, which serve to capture prey.

She advised the public not to touch the marine creatures, including those that are dead, as they pose serious risks.

"This species is commonly found in the Pacific, Indian and Atlantic oceans. However in November, we found this species on the beach near the university in Kuala Nerus.

"These colonial creatures cannot swim. They move using their float-like polyps, which measure between 2cm and 10cm to navigate or catch food.

"They also move according to ocean currents and wind. Research shows that the strength and direction of wind influence their presence on shorelines. The strong northeast monsoon season winds are among the factors causing them to wash ashore."

She urged authorities to monitor the presence of these marine creatures in beach areas frequented by visitors to ensure the safety of the public, especially children who are easily excited by the discovery of marine creatures.

"I also advise fishermen to be careful because these jellyfish can easily get caught in fishing nets."

Kampung Baru Rhu Muda resident Mohd Kamaruzaman Sulong, 40, said he was in his kitchen when he noticed

the presence of these creatures.

He said his home's proximity to the beach allows him to clearly see hundreds of them floating in the sea.

"This is the first time I have seen these jellyfish at Pantai Rhu Muda. I recognise and know about these jellyfish because I have seen them before while out fishing at sea.

"The waves have been strong and the tide has been high, which could be why this species has washed up." — Bernama



# Govt urged to address animal welfare concerns

► Suggested reforms include amendments to laws, educating public and stricter regulations on breeders

■ BY **KIRTINEE RAMESH**  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Persatuan Haiwan Terbiar Malaysia is calling on the government to address concerns about animal welfare, particularly the treatment of stray animals.

Its president Kalaivanan Ravichandran said the association wants reforms to be implemented to improve animal welfare and protection.

According to statistics from the Veterinary Services Department, dogs are the most abused species in Malaysia, with 11,450 reported cases of abuse from 2021 to 2024, followed by cats with 5,715 cases.

Kalaivanan highlighted the need for reforms that not only address abuse but also the broader issue of stray animal management.

One of the most pressing demands was a reform of the Animal Welfare Act 2015.

He emphasised the need for amendments to explicitly ban cruel practices, such as shooting and inhumane capture methods.

He also called for clear legal protections to ensure local authorities adopt humane standards for managing stray animals.

"The legislation does not go far enough to protect animals from these practices."

Another key demand was the

implementation of a nationwide Trap Neuter and Return (TNR) programme.

Kalaivanan said the initiative would help control the stray animal population humanely, reducing overpopulation without resorting to culling.

He also insisted on the establishment of an Independent Animal Welfare Board under the Prime Minister's Office, adding that the reform efforts included transforming local animal pounds into no-kill facilities.

"Our local pounds must become places of rehabilitation, rehoming and responsible TNR efforts, rather than sites where animals are euthanised without reason."

"This shift would prioritise the wellbeing of animals, offering them a better chance at a life outside of cages."

He advocated stricter regulations on breeders, proposing that they be required to microchip and neuter animals to prevent overbreeding.

"Euthanasia should only be permitted in cases in which an animal's condition is untreatable, and this should be verified by a licensed veterinarian."

The association urged the government to educate the public on animal welfare, responsible pet ownership, and the importance of neutering and adopting strays.

Kalaivanan called for stricter penalties for cruelty and neglect, urging that existing laws be more consistently enforced to deter abuse.

He also pressed for dedicated government funding to support NGOs in their work of rescuing and rehabilitating stray animals.

"These NGOs are on the frontlines and need resources to continue their efforts. We will continue to fight for justice for all animals and will not stop until our government listens and acts."

On Oct 6 last year, a stray dog named Kopi gained national attention after a 52-second video was widely spread, showing the dog suffering from severe injuries inflicted by a gunshot and dying in Besut.

A resident reported hearing a loud gunshot before discovering the lifeless dog.

The Besut district council defended its actions, asserting that the shooting followed field procedures for controlling stray dog populations.

However, animal welfare advocates condemned the killing, calling for greater enforcement of existing animal welfare laws.

On Saturday, nearly 500 individuals gathered for the Candlelight Gathering for Justice for Kopi and All Stray Animals in Dataran Merdeka, marking the largest gathering for animal law reform in Malaysia.

The event was organised by the Malaysia Animal Welfare Association in collaboration with Persatuan Haiwan Terbiar Malaysia and the Global Human Rights Federation, with support from a coalition of animal NGOs in Malaysia.

## Police bust livestock smuggling ring

**KOTA BHARU:** The General Operations Force Southeast Brigade crippled a livestock smuggling ring involving cows, buffaloes and goats valued at RM506,000 in a raid at Masjid Mukim Bakong in Pasir Mas on Thursday.

Its commander Datuk Nik Ros Azhan Nik Ab Hamid said the operation, which is part of *Op Taring Wawasan Kelantan*, led to the interception of two suspicious trucks at 3.30am.

"Upon inspection, we found eight cows weighing over 5,200kg, four buffaloes weighing over 3,200kg and 40 goats weighing over 4,000kg, being transported in a truck without valid permits."

He said two men aged 28 and 30 were arrested and are believed to have been transporting the animals to the local market.

The case is being investigated under Section 36(1) of the Animals Act 1953, and the suspects and seized animals were taken to Komtak Taman Bakti for further action. — Bernama

## Technician loses RM400,000 to online job scam

**IPOH:** A technician lost RM444,967 after falling victim to an online job scam.

Acting Perak police chief DCP Zulkaffi Sariaat said on Nov 21 last year, the 42-year-old local man came across an online job advertisement on Facebook and was drawn by the commission offered.

The victim communicated with a male individual via WhatsApp.

Zulkaffi said the victim was instructed to make advance payments for goods.

He said the victim was promised a refund, along with a commission of between 4% and 10% of the payment made.

"The victim made several online transfers to 10 different bank accounts. He realised he had been scammed when the promised commission payment never materialised."

The victim lodged a police report on Friday in Ipoh.

Zulkaffi urged the public to stay vigilant against the increasingly sophisticated and varied online fraud schemes, advising caution when considering job offers that require advance payments or seem too good to be true. — Bernama

## Family of five killed in crash

**KUANTAN:** Five family members perished in a crash involving a car and a multi-purpose vehicle in Jalan Nenasi-Rompin near Kampung Sembayan, Nenasi in Pekan here on Saturday.

Pahang Fire and Rescue Department acting director Wan Ahmad Fadillah Wan Abdul Rahman said it received a call about the incident at 7.15pm and 23 personnel from the Nenasi and Kuala Rompin Fire and Rescue stations were dispatched to the scene.

"The crash occurred when the car, travelling from Rompin to Nenasi, lost control and veered into the opposite lane, colliding with the other vehicle, travelling from Kuantan to Rompin."

"All occupants of the car, namely a couple and their three children, died at the scene."

He said the two individuals in the other vehicle sustained injuries and were taken to the Rompin Hospital while the five bodies were transported to the Pekan Hospital for post-mortem, Bernama reported.

Pekan district police chief Supt Mohd Zaidi Mat Zin identified the deceased as workshop worker Hamzah Zahari, 52, his wife Rahimah Awang Muda, 38, and their children Ainul Mardhiyah, 10, Muhammad Luqman, eight, and Muhammad Lutfi, four.

He identified the two injured as Indera Mahkota Fire and Rescue station officer Wahaid Zakaria, 51, and his wife Salasiah Abdul Latif, 43, who is a teacher at Sekolah Kebangsaan Sungai Karang in Kuantan.

He said the case is being investigated under Section 41(1) of the Road Transport Act 1987.



Wan Ahmad Fadillah said the crash occurred when the car lost control and veered into the opposite lane, colliding with the other vehicle. — **BERNAMAPIC**

## Navy destroys WWII bomb found in Sabah waters

**SEMPORNA:** An object discovered in the waters off Pulau Sibuan on Jan 7 was confirmed to be an unexploded ordnance (UXO) from World War II and destroyed by a Navy mine disposal team on Saturday.

The Second Naval Region Command in Sandakan said it collaborated with the mine disposal team from the Navy Diving and Mine Warfare headquarters in Lumut to conduct the

disposal operation.

"The UXO was destroyed using the blow in place method at the discovery site with the highest safety precautions. No damage to property or the marine environment was reported," it said in a statement.

It also said the UXO measured three feet in length and one foot in width, and is believed to be a World War II aerial bomb from around 1945,

weighing about 250kg.

The Navy's post-blast investigation confirmed the UXO as an aerial bomb, a type of explosive device dropped from an aircraft.

The operation was conducted in collaboration with other security agencies, including the Eastern Sabah Security Command, Joint Task Force 2 and the Semporna district police headquarters. — Bernama

## RTD issues 22,000 notices to commercial vehicles

**BUTTERWORTH:** The Road Transport Department (RTD) issued 22,201 notices to commercial vehicles under a special operation conducted throughout the country against errant commercial vehicles.

Transport Ministry secretary-general Datuk M. Jana Santhiran said the operation was conducted from Dec 25 until Saturday against vehicles that violated regulations under the Road Transport Act 1987 and the Land Public Transport Act 2010.

"Throughout the operation, 88,034 commercial vehicles were inspected, 22,201 notices issued, 9,661 vehicles had action taken against them and 77 vehicles were seized."

"It was detected that almost 7,000 commercial vehicles committed technical offences such as not maintaining their vehicles well, using tyres that did not comply with specifications, improper care of tyres or using worn out tyres" — Bernama



# Back-to-school aid for B40 students

➤ Many subsisting on one meal per day while some parents forced to send children to orphanages: Penang Hindu Association

BY T.C. KHOR

newsdesk@thesunday.com

**GEORGE TOWN:** An NGO held a “Back-to-School” aid distribution event at Klinik Derma Sivasanta on River Road yesterday.

Penang Hindu Association (PHA) president Datuk P. Murugiah said due to the high cost of living, many people are still living in hardcore poverty.

He said in Penang, house rental and basic food costs have risen steadily, placing immense pressure on families earning below the minimum wage of RM1,700 monthly.

“A meal for a family of five can cost up to RM30 daily, which adds up to RM900 per month,” he said, adding that parents are forced to send their children to orphanages as they cannot afford the costs of raising them.

“Even today, there are families who have only one meal per day.”

At the event yesterday, 120 children from B40 families and several orphanages received RM150 vouchers to purchase school uniforms, school bags, shoes, socks and stationery.

The recipients comprised students from

primary and secondary school and colleges.

“These children come from hardcore poor families. We just want to do our best to help them stay in school.”

Murugiah also said children from impoverished families often struggle with feelings of shame and exclusion at school, particularly when they cannot afford essentials like uniforms or books.

“We want to ensure no child feels left out because of their financial situation,” he said, adding that aid was being provided to orphanages such as the Crystal Care Centre in Penang, run by the Reverend Dr David Barnabas and his wife, and the Arutjyoti Vallalar Mandram Orphanage in Sungai Petani, managed by R.V. Krishnan.

Free spectacles were also given to those with vision problems, in addition to 10 laptops and tablets distributed to college students. The initiative was made possible with the support of the Penang City Council and donors.

Murugiah revealed that some of those who previously received aid from PHA were currently assisting the association.

“There are those who have become teachers, doctors, nurses and lawyers, and they are now contributing to help others.

“Now that these children have grown up and become successful, they come back and ask me: ‘What can we do to help?’ I tell them to give back to society.”

Penang City councillor Nicholas J.W. Theng officiated at the event and presented the vouchers to the recipients.

He commended organisations helping the poor and expressed hope that more would come forward to do the same.

In 2023, the Statistics Department defined the national poverty line at RM2,589 per month per household.

However, many families earning far below this amount often struggle with basic needs like food, clothing and education. Those in households with a monthly income of below RM1,198 are defined as being in the hardcore

poverty group.

PHA, which has been operating for 25 years, also holds bimonthly free health check-ups and provides free legal services on Thursday nights at its premises.

For more information, please contact Murugiah at 016-444 9246.



Khoo said the initiative also presents an opportunity for the community to learn about the villages, some of which boast rich and captivating histories. —BERNAMAPIC

## Tourism potential of Chinese New Year decoration competition

**ALOR GAJAH:** A competition focused on decorating Chinese settlements for the Lunar New Year celebrations has the potential to evolve into a major state tourism attraction, while simultaneously promoting creativity and unity among local residents.

Chinese New Village Division Secretariat chairman Khoo Poay Tiong said the competition is expected to attract participants from 613 new villages nationwide, particularly in Malacca.

“Last year, 50 villages participated, and we hope for even greater participation this year, with winners to be announced after the Chinese New Year,” he said after officiating at the Lantern Festival for the Chinese New Year celebrations at Kampung Baru Machap Umboo, which was also attended by state Health, Human Resources and Unity Committee chairman Datuk Ngwe Hee Sem.

Khoo, also Kota Laksamana MP, said the creative displays by villagers this year are expected to surpass last year’s efforts.

“In 2024, the Housing and Local

Government Ministry named Kampung Baru Machap Umboo as the winner and awarded them RM10,000,” he said.

Khoo added that the competition not only adds vibrancy to the Chinese New Year celebrations but also has the potential to become a tourist attraction and at the same time, presents an opportunity for the community to learn about the villages, some of which boast rich and captivating histories.

Advisor to Kampung Baru Machap Umboo Datuk Yap Young Leong said nearly 15,000 lanterns, crafted from recycled materials in a variety of shapes and sizes, have been on display since last week to usher in the Year of the Snake.

“The tradition of decorating the village continues with its signature concept – using recycled items such as cooking oil containers, beverage cans and air conditioner hoses. This year, the decorations have been further enhanced, thanks to the collaborative efforts and creative input from the villagers,” Yap said. —Bernama



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# Floods, strong winds wreak havoc across Indonesia

➤ Continuous heavy rainfall in multiple districts affects over 1,000 families, damages public facilities and crops

**JAKARTA:** A series of severe floods and strong winds have wreaked havoc across Indonesia, with continuous heavy rainfall causing widespread destruction, including submerged houses, damaged public facilities and devastated agricultural areas.

The National Disaster Mitigation Agency issued an update yesterday, confirming the destruction in Java Island, North Maluku and South Kalimantan provinces.

In Central Java, floodwaters have inundated the Pekalongan and Cilacap districts, while tidal flooding impacted the villages of Depok and Blacanan last Friday.

"Over 1,000 families have been affected, with more than 700 houses submerged. Water levels remain at between 15cm and 40cm," agency spokesman Abdul Muhari said.

In Cilacap, overflow from the Cijambe and Cikamuning rivers flooded two villages, displacing about 200 people and causing significant agricultural damage, with 65 hectares

of rice fields submerged.

Meanwhile in East Halmahera, North Maluku, three hours of heavy rainfall on Saturday triggered floods in Minamin and Saolat villages, affecting 23 households.

The floodwaters also submerged essential infrastructure, including health facilities, and washed away a 10-tonne coconut harvest.

Adding to the chaos, strong winds hit Banjar district in South Kalimantan on Saturday afternoon, affecting 25 houses, with five severely damaged.

Local authorities were actively clearing debris and providing aid to those affected, with the Regional Disaster Management Agency coordinating relief efforts. – Bernama



**FRIGID CLEANSE ...** Participants pray as they take an ice-cold dip during a ceremony to purify their souls and to pray for the new year at the Teppozu Inari shrine in Tokyo, Japan. – REUTERS/PIC

## Seoul president will skip first impeachment trial

**SEOUL:** South Korea's suspended President Yoon Suk Yeol will not attend the first hearing of his impeachment trial because of safety concerns, his lawyer said yesterday.

Yoon has been holed up in the presidential residence and protected by an elite guard force since being suspended and impeached last month following a short-lived declaration of martial law that plunged the country into political chaos.

He has refused to meet prosecutors and investigators, and earlier this month, his presidential guard unit thwarted an attempt to arrest him following a tense, hours-long standoff. The Constitutional Court has scheduled five trial dates from tomorrow to Feb 4, which will proceed in his absence if he does not attend.

"Concerns about safety and potential incidents have arisen. Therefore, the president will not be able to attend the trial" lawyer Yoon

Kab-keun said in a statement.

"The president is willing to appear at any time once safety issues are resolved."

The court will decide whether to uphold his impeachment or restore him to office.

Separately, investigators seeking to question Yoon on insurrection charges linked to his ill-fated martial law declaration are preparing another arrest attempt.

Yoon's legal team said his guards remain on "high alert".

Yoon would become the first sitting South Korean president to be arrested if investigators are able to detain him. If convicted, he faces prison or even the death penalty.

A team of Corruption Investigation Office (CIO) investigators and police are planning for the next attempt, which they said could be their last.

The CIO said anyone obstructing their attempt could be detained and police reportedly held a

meeting of top commanders on Friday to plan the renewed effort.

Former presidential guard security chief Park Chong-jun, who resigned on Friday and was automatically replaced by a more hardline Yoon loyalist, said there must be no bloodshed in any second arrest attempt.

The National Office of Investigation, a police unit, sent a note to high-ranking police officials in Seoul requesting they prepare to mobilise 1,000 investigators for the fresh attempt, Yonhap news agency reported.

Protesters for and against Yoon have gathered almost daily in the South Korean capital since the crisis unfolded.

As the crisis goes on, Yoon's ruling party has seen a bump in approval ratings. A new Gallup survey published last Friday showed the People Power Party approval rating had risen to 34% from 24% three weeks ago. – AFP

BRIEFS

### DANGER WARNING AS MOUNT IBU ERUPTS

**JAKARTA:** Mount Ibu in Indonesia's North Maluku province erupted on Saturday, sending an ash plume soaring 4,000m above the summit and prompting authorities to issue warnings to the public. The eruption, which occurred in West Halmahera district at 7.35pm local time, lasted three minutes and five seconds, releasing grey ash that drifted westward and glowing lava ejected up to two kilometres from the crater. Authorities have banned all public activities, including hiking, within a 4km radius of the volcano and a 5.5km sector to the north of the active crater. "In anticipation of potential hazards, residents are urged to wear masks and eye protection, such as glasses," National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesperson Abdul Muhari said in a statement yesterday. – Bernama

### BIDEN TO CALL JAPAN, PHILIPPINE LEADERS

**MANILA:** US President Joe Biden will have a trilateral telephone call with Japan Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba and Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos today, Marcos's spokesman said. The call was supposed to have been held yesterday but was postponed because of the Los Angeles wildfires, presidential spokesman Cesar Chavez said in a statement. The three leaders are expected to discuss progress made on mutual cooperation, economic matters, and recent regional and global developments. The three countries have stepped up security cooperation to blunt China's efforts to control most of the disputed South China Sea. – AFP

## Coast guard ship deployed to 'challenge' China patrols

**MANILA:** The Philippines said yesterday it had deployed a coast guard ship to challenge Chinese patrol boats attempting to "alter the existing status quo" of the disputed South China Sea.

Beijing claims most of the strategic waterway despite a 2016 international tribunal ruling that went against it, and there have been frequent clashes or tense standoffs between Philippine and Chinese vessels.

Brunei, Malaysia, Taiwan and Vietnam also have claims to the waters.

Philippine Coast Guard spokesman Commodore Jay Tarriela said Chinese patrol ships had this year come as close as 111km west of the main Philippine island of Luzon.

"Their goal is to normalise such deployments, and if these actions go unnoticed and unchallenged, it will enable them to alter the existing status quo," he said in a statement.

He said Manila had deployed a coast guard ship to the area to challenge the "unlawful" Chinese patrols.

He said the deployment aimed to ensure Chinese patrols "are not normalised, and that this bullying behaviour does not succeed".

Tarriela said the Chinese coast guard deployed three vessels from its Guangdong and Hainan bases to Philippine waters between Dec 30 last year and Jan 11 this year.

The South China Sea confrontations have sparked concern they could draw the United States, Manila's long-time security ally, into armed conflict with China. – AFP

## Japan foreign minister to attend Trump inauguration

**TOKYO:** Japanese Foreign Minister Takeshi Iwaya said yesterday he planned to attend Donald Trump's inauguration as US president on Jan 20 as Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's government hopes to maintain close ties with its security ally.

"We aim to build a relationship of trust with the Trump administration securely," Iwaya told a talk show on public broadcaster NHK. He said he was seeking a meeting with Senator Marco Rubio, Trump's pick to be secretary of state.

India and Australia also announced that their foreign ministers would attend the swearing-in as Trump returns to the White House.

It will be Iwaya's first visit to the United States since he became foreign minister in October. Japan, a longtime US ally that enjoyed good relations with Trump during his first administration, is keen to get off to a good start in his second.

Ishiba is looking into visiting the United States as early as in the first half of February for his first summit with Trump, Japan's *Yomiuri Shimbun* reported yesterday.

Ishiba unsuccessfully sought a meeting in November, shortly after Trump beat Joe Biden in a presidential comeback, sources told Reuters at the time.

Iwaya said he aimed to meet with other senior officials from the incoming administration to lay the groundwork for Ishiba visit.

Indian Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar will attend the inauguration at the invitation of the Trump team and meet with members of his incoming administration, his ministry said in a statement.

Penny Wong, foreign minister of fellow US Pacific ally Australia, said yesterday she would attend Trump's inauguration, calling it "an important opportunity to discuss how we can advance the benefits of our strong economic and security partnership." - Reuters

## Mayotte on red alert for new storm

**MAMOUZOU:** Residents of the French territory of Mayotte braced yesterday for a storm expected to bring strong winds and flash floods less than a month after the Indian Ocean archipelago was devastated by a deadly cyclone.

Mayotte was placed on red alert from 1900GMT on Saturday (3am Monday Malaysia time) in anticipation of the passage of *Dikeledi*, a storm forecast to skirt about 100km south of the territory.

It hit the northern coast of Madagascar as a cyclone on Saturday evening and weakened into a severe tropical storm, but is expected to regain intensity as it moves towards Mayotte.

It could be reclassified as a cyclone by tomorrow morning, according to French weather service Météo-France.

Authorities called for "extreme vigilance" following the devastation wrought by Cyclone *Chido* in mid-December.

"Significant rain and wind deterioration is confirmed for the morning" in Mayotte, Météo-France said.

"Very heavy rains could generate flash floods," it warned, adding that "floods and landslides are expected in the coming hours".

It could also bring wind gusts of up to 90kph to the French territory, as well as "dangerous sea conditions".

Residents were advised to seek shelter and stock up on food and water.

"Nothing is being left to chance," Manuel Valls, France's new overseas territories minister said.

Cyclone *Chido* - the most devastating storm to hit France's poorest department in 90 years - caused colossal damage last month, killing at least 39 people and injuring more than 5,600.

More than 4,000 personnel have been mobilised in Mayotte, including members of police and the military, said the Interior Ministry.

The prefect has requested that mayors reopen accommodation centres such as schools and gyms that sheltered around 15,000 people in December. - AFP



A firefighting helicopter drops water as the Palisades fire grows near the Mandeville Canyon neighborhood and Encino, California. - AFP/IC

# Aerial assault aims to stem spread of Palisades fire

➤ Six simultaneous blazes have ripped across Los Angeles County neighbourhoods, killing at least 16 and destroying 12,000 structures

**LOS ANGELES:** Aircraft dropped water and fire retardant on steep hills to stem the eastward spread of the Palisades wildfire in Los Angeles on Saturday as on-the-ground firefighting intensified amid warnings of wind gusts of up to 110kph that could make matters worse.

Over the past 24 hours, the Palisades fire spread over an additional 400ha, consuming more homes, officials reported.

Six simultaneous blazes that have ripped across Los Angeles County neighbourhoods since Tuesday have killed at least 16 people as of late Saturday, the *Washington Post* and other media reported, citing the Los Angeles County medical examiner's office.

The blazes have damaged or destroyed 12,000 structures, fire officials said. At least 13 people are estimated to be missing.

The death toll is expected to mount when firefighters are able to conduct house-to-house searches.

Cal Fire official Todd Hopkins said the Palisades fire had spread into the Mandeville Canyon neighborhood and threatened to jump into Brentwood, an upscale neighborhood where celebrities live and play, and the San Fernando

Evacuation orders throughout the Los Angeles area now cover 153,000 residents, putting 57,000 structures at risk. Another 166,000 residents have been warned that they may have to evacuate, said Los Angeles County Sheriff Robert Luna.

But significant progress was reported in bringing electrical power back to Los Angeles neighborhoods. Southern California Edison CEO Steven Powell said there are now about 50,000 customers without power, "down from over half a million just a couple days ago".

As state and local officials grappled with the worst cluster of fires in Los Angeles history, President Joe Biden spoke by phone with some of them to get an update on their

efforts. He was also briefed by senior aides on federal resources that were being dispatched.

Luna said the sheriff's office has dispatched 40 search and rescue team workers to work jointly with other agencies, including the use of cadaver dogs to search for remains of victims and help reunite separated families.

The fierce Santa Ana winds that fanned the infernos eased on Friday night. But the Palisades fire on the city's western edge was heading in a new direction as winds came off the Pacific Ocean. The fire has razed whole neighborhoods, leaving the smoldering ruins of what had been people's homes and possessions.

Before the latest flare-up, firefighters had reported progress in subduing the Palisades fire and the Eaton fire in the foothills east of the metropolis after it burned out of control for days.

Seven neighbouring states, the federal government and Canada and Mexico have rushed aid and firefighters to California, bolstering aerial teams dropping water and fire retardant on the flaming hills and crews on the ground attacking fire lines with hand tools and hoses.

Officials have declared a public health emergency due to the toxic smoke. - Reuters

## 'Brutal' tram collision in Strasbourg injures dozens

**STRASBOURG:** Two trams collided in a tunnel in a rare accident in the eastern French city of Strasbourg on Saturday, injuring dozens of people, authorities said.

The collision occurred near Strasbourg's main train station, one of the busiest in France outside Paris.

Transport Minister Philippe Tabarot said "probably around 36" people were injured in the accident, while firefighters put that figure at around 50.

A video posted by a witness on social media showed a chaotic scene with the two trams significantly damaged in a tunnel near the station.

One of the trams appeared to have derailed

as a result of the impact, whose cause has yet to be established.

"The public prosecutor's office opened an investigation," the prefecture said.

A large security perimeter was set up in front of the station, where ambulances took up position, according to an AFP journalist at the scene.

Paramedics and firefighters loaded injured people secured on stretchers into ambulances. Other victims received first aid under the station's glass roof.

Strasbourg was the first major French city to re-introduce trams in 1994, after the service closed in 1960.

Since the return of the vehicles, there have

been no major accidents.

Strasbourg's mayor Jeanne Barseghian and other officials rushed to the station.

"There were a number of people on the trams," Barseghian said, adding that there were no fatalities or people in "absolute urgency".

Some of the injured were in a state of shock as a result of the "head-on" impact which was "relatively violent", the mayor added.

The Strasbourg transport company board of directors chairman Patrick Maciejewski said here had been demonstrations in central Strasbourg, which had disrupted tram traffic.

The Bas-Rhin Fire and Rescue Service director Rene Cellier said about 50 people had suffered non-fatal injuries. - AFP



# Syria, Lebanon pledge lasting ties based on mutual respect

➤ Leaders eager to solve long-pending issues after years of tension

**DAMASCUS:** Syria's new ruler and Lebanon's prime minister pledged on Saturday to build lasting ties during the first visit by a Lebanese head of government to Damascus since the civil war started in 2011.

Prime Minister Najib Mikati's trip came after Islamist-led group seized Damascus last month, bringing an end to the rule of Bashar al-Assad.

Previous Lebanese governments refrained from visits to Syria amid tensions at home over militant group Hezbollah's support for Assad during the conflict.

Syria's new leader Ahmed al-Sharaa said he hoped to turn over a new leaf in relations, days after crisis-hit Lebanon finally

elected a president this week following two years of deadlock.

"There will be long-term strategic relations between us and Lebanon. We and Lebanon have great shared interests," said Sharaa.

It was time to "give the Syrian and Lebanese people a chance to build a positive relationship," he said, adding he hoped Joseph Aoun's presidency would usher in an era of stability in Lebanon.

Sharaa said the new Syria would "stay at equal distance from all" in Lebanon, and "try to solve problems through negotiations and dialogue".

Mikati said ties should be based on "mutual respect, equality and national sovereignty".

The new authorities in Syria also said Sharaa had phoned Aoun to congratulate him on Saturday.

Syria was the dominant power in Lebanon for three decades under the Assad family, with president Hafez al-Assad intervening in its 1975-1990 civil war and his son Bashar al-Assad only withdrawing Syria's troops in 2005 following mass protests triggered by the assassination of Lebanese ex-prime minister Rafic Hariri.

After mending ties with Damascus, his son Saad Hariri was the last Lebanese premier to visit the Syrian capital in 2010 before the civil war.

Taking office on Thursday, Aoun swore he would seize the "historic opportunity to start serious dialogue with the Syrian state".

With Hezbollah weakened after two months of full-scale war with Israel late last year, and Assad now gone, Syrian and Lebanese leaders

seem eager to work to solve long-pending issues.

Among them is the presence of some two million Syrian refugees Lebanon says have sought shelter there since Syria's war started.

Their return to Syria had become "an urgent matter in the interest of both countries," Mikati said.

Lebanese authorities have long complained that hosting so many Syrians has become a burden for the tiny Mediterranean country which since 2019, has been wracked by its economic crisis.

Mikati also said it was a priority "to draw up the land and sea borders between Lebanon and Syria", calling for creation of a joint committee to discuss the matter.

Lebanon has hoped to draw the maritime border so it can begin offshore gas extraction after reaching a similar agreement with Israel in 2022. — AFP

## Seoul confirms capture of two N. Korean soldiers

**SEOUL:** South Korea's National Intelligence Service yesterday backed up Ukraine's account of having captured two wounded North Korean soldiers this week in Russia, after Kyiv said they were being questioned.

Ukraine, the United States and South Korea have accused nuclear-armed North Korea of sending more than 10,000 soldiers to help bolster Russian forces.

Seoul's National Intelligence Service (NIS) said in a statement it has "confirmed that the Ukrainian military captured two North Korean soldiers on Jan 9 in the Kursk battlefield in Russia".

On Saturday, Ukrainian intelligence (SBU) released a video showing the two men in hospital bunks, one with bandaged hands and the other with a bandaged jaw.

A doctor at the detention centre said the first man also had a broken leg.

The SBU said the men had told interrogators they were experienced army soldiers, and one said he was sent to Russia for training, not fighting.

But Kyiv did not present direct evidence that the captured men were North Korean and AFP was unable to independently verify their nationalities.

South Korea's confirmation added weight to Kyiv's account.

The NIS similarly said one of the captured soldiers revealed during his interrogation that he received military training from Russian forces after arriving there in November.

"He initially believed he was being sent for training, realising upon arrival in Russia that he had been deployed," the NIS said.

The soldier said North Korean forces had experienced "significant losses during battle".

Seoul's intelligence agency said one of the men "went without food or water for four to five days before being captured".

Neither Russia nor North Korea has reacted to the intelligence accounts. — AFP



Palestinians gather to receive food being distributed by charitable organisations in Gaza City on Saturday. — AFP/IC

## Netanyahu sends officials to Qatar for Gaza talks

**JERUSALEM:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu sent a delegation of senior officials to Qatar for negotiations on a hostage release and Gaza ceasefire deal, his office said on Saturday.

Netanyahu held a meeting in Jerusalem with US president-elect Donald Trump's Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, a representative of current US President Joe Biden, and senior Israeli officials, the prime minister's office said in a statement.

Following the meeting, Netanyahu instructed the heads of the Mossad spy agency and Shin Bet security agency as

well as General Nitza Alon and foreign policy adviser Ophir Falk "to depart for Doha in order to continue advancing a deal to release our hostages", the statement said.

The United States has for more than a year been mediating talks alongside Qatar and Egypt for an end to the war in Gaza alongside the release of hostages.

The announcement was welcomed by the Hostages and Missing Families Forum, a campaign group for those held in Gaza, which called it "a historic opportunity to secure the release of all our loved ones".

"Leave no stone unturned and

return with an agreement that ensures the return of all hostages, down to the last one," it said in a statement.

Indirect negotiations between Israel and the Islamist militant group Hamas resumed last weekend in Qatar.

The discussions are focused on the immediate freeing of hostages taken by the Islamist group during its Oct 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

Biden, who will leave office on Jan 20, said on Thursday there had been "real progress" in the talks.

Trump, who will replace Biden, promised "hell to pay" if the hostages were not released by his inauguration.

The war in Gaza was sparked by Hamas's attack, which resulted in the deaths of 1,208 people on the Israeli side, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official Israeli figures.

During the attack, Palestinian fighters took 251 people hostage, of whom 94 remain in the Gaza Strip, including 34 the Israeli military has declared dead.

Israel's retaliatory military offensive in Gaza has killed 46,537 people, the majority civilians, according to figures from the Health Ministry in the Hamas-run territory considered reliable by the United Nations. — AFP

### BRIEFS

#### 6 KILLED, 8 HURT IN RESTAURANT BLAST

**PRAGUE:** Six people died when a propane-butane cylinder exploded in a restaurant in the northwest Czech city of Most, setting the building on fire, emergency services said yesterday. Eight people were injured in the explosion that occurred late on Saturday evening, and 30 people were evacuated from the restaurant and surrounding buildings, the Czech fire rescue service said on X social media platform. "According to initial information from witnesses, a heater overturned, causing a fire," the fire brigade said, adding that it had rescued one seriously injured restaurant guest who had been trapped in a bathroom. — Reuters

#### POPULIST PRESIDENT SET FOR RE-ELECTION

**ZAGREB:** Croatians voted yesterday in a presidential runoff with the incumbent Zoran Milanovic appearing set to win a second term, in what would be a blow to the scandal-hit governing party. Milanovic enters the contest with surging momentum as he faces off with Dragan Primorac, supported by the HDZ party that governs Croatia. The outspoken incumbent, backed by the left-wing opposition, won more than 49% of the vote two weeks ago during the contest's first round, narrowly missing an outright victory. — AFP



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**M**ORE than a week has slipped by since 2025 began and “reset” appears to be a widespread buzzword. In the past, everyone seemed fixated on New Year resolutions but interest in that tradition seems to have faded.

Perhaps people believe that swapping old phrases for trendier ones can motivate them to hold on to their objectives.

Whether this is effective or not remains to be seen but it carries a sense of freshness for those curious enough to give it a go.

Personally, this year resonates with me because I was born in the Year of the Snake. I have now completed four full cycles, and yes, you got my age right!

Compared to others, like the septuagenarians, octogenarians or even nonagenarians, I may have additional years under my belt, but then again, who knows.

No matter how seasoned a person becomes, life continues to teach lessons in unexpected ways. Each twist and turn can offer valuable insights, and sometimes we may think we have done it all only to realise we are still learning every day.

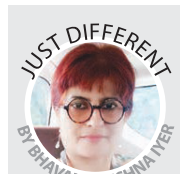
Despite feeling that I have tried numerous paths, I acknowledge I am not fully there in life yet. The other day, I watched a TEDx video featuring a Malaysian man who had resigned from a lucrative career at 53 to journey across the planet by various means. He ventured by yacht, motorcycle and caravan, tracing routes to some of the planet’s most remote corners.

Undoubtedly, his financial status allowed him to pursue this fearless dream of perpetual travel.

Privilege played a central part in letting him witness far-flung destinations, giving him experiences many can only imagine.

However, such opportunities are not available to everyone. Lack of funds, time or circumstances may prevent grand expeditions. Still, the delights of life need not be determined by extravagant lifestyles. In fact, a mindset shift can be transformative, and thankfully many things in life

# Best things in life have no price tags



*“By giving yourself space to listen, you may discover neglected hopes, hidden anxieties or fresh sparks of inspiration. This practice requires no fancy backdrop or heavy investment; it only needs your willingness to tune in and be present.”*

come without a price tag.

Watching dawn break over a tranquil river may seem too simple to be exhilarating, yet there is serenity in witnessing nature’s daily gift. That quiet beauty can be a reminder of our connectedness to the world, if we choose to notice it.

For this reason, it can be worthwhile to commit to small acts of mindfulness. Pause for a few minutes each day, allowing your internal monologue to surface. That gentle whisper inside is too often buried by constant commotions and long to-do lists.

By giving yourself space to listen, you may discover neglected hopes, hidden anxieties or fresh sparks of inspiration. This practice requires no fancy backdrop or heavy investment; it only needs your willingness to tune in and be present.

Before going further, I should acknowledge a concern that crops up when I suggest that peace can be found by simply quietening the mind. I can almost hear the loud commotion out there accusing me of failing to recognise that some people do not know how to relax internally.

For anyone in that situation, meditation could be a promising choice. Unfortunately, the term has been misunderstood for years, with many tying it to specific religions or purely spiritual exercises.

In reality, at the heart of it all, meditation can be practised by anyone willing to train their attention to step back from mental chaos. Tuning into the present moment can illuminate aspects of ourselves that remain concealed beneath our busy schedules.

Ambitious goals like seeing the entire globe or shifting into a drastically different line of work may seem impossible for those dealing with ordinary budgets. Yet, there are

imaginative substitutes for experiences that look beyond financial restraints.

Visiting a new neighbourhood park, stepping into an independent art gallery or borrowing a musical instrument to try something different are all worthwhile undertakings that can invigorate the mind. Even sharing an honest conversation with a companion may bring the renewal we crave.

What truly matters is our commitment to carve out a sense of self-awareness amid routine obligations.

From my own rollercoaster journey, I cannot claim to have found a flawless strategy. Nevertheless, slowing down to savour everyday wonders has anchored me in moments of joy and reflection.

While I admire individuals who roam freely across continents, I equally celebrate those who relish domestic comforts and appreciate their own backyard.

Both perspectives can generate meaning. We do not need an ocean voyage to notice life’s gentle rhythms. Sometimes, admiring morning dew on leaves or catching the last rays of evening light is enough to create tranquillity and, paradoxically, feel energised.

On another matter, what the world really needs is compassion, love and empathy, which are unfortunately running thin.

Happy New Year.

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## LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

### Forging safe communities

**SAFETY** must be instilled and cherished as a personal value and practised not only within the workplace but also in every aspect of our lives – on the roads, at home, in schools, during sports and recreation and within the community.

It should not be too challenging for safety professionals to convince employers that a company stands to lose just as much whether a worker is injured and incapacitated on or off the job.

A company that truly values the safety of its employees will emphasise the importance of taking precautions and avoiding risks in all aspects of their lives.

To effectively reinforce safety as a shared value, lifestyle and attitude, it is essential to involve and engage the entire community. This can be achieved through outreach educational programmes jointly organised by various government agencies and professional bodies and non-government organisations.

The educational programmes should target not only the working population but also the elderly, homemakers, hawkers, shopkeepers and, most importantly, young children.

A well-informed and educated community will foster a culture where its members will value and practise safety as a way of life.

In communities with a strong safety culture, members hold high expectations for safety standards and have little to no tolerance for anything that poses a hazard to the community or individuals.

They remain vigilant and responsive to any perceived threats to safety and well-being, promptly notifying authorities to address the issue before an accident occurs.

Therefore, safety professionals play a crucial role in building and sustaining safe communities. The impact of such efforts can be measured by a significant reduction in all types of personal injuries and property damage incidents within the population.

**Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye**  
Chairman  
Alliance for a Safe Community

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# Hidden risks in UN's AI governance plan

## COMMENT

By Dr Rais Hussin

**T**HE United Nations' Governing AI for Humanity: Final Report outlines a visionary framework for the governance of artificial intelligence (AI), promising ethical deployment, equitable development and global cooperation.

However, a deeper analysis reveals critical risks associated with the plan, particularly regarding its potential to perpetuate geopolitical divides and marginalise certain nations.

As the UN aspires to create a unified governance model, it risks becoming a tool for reinforcing existing power structures, excluding advanced AI players like China, Russia and nations in the Islamic world that face consistent Western scrutiny.

Despite their significant advancements in AI, China and Russia are unlikely to play a major role in the UN's governance framework due to their strained relations with the West.

China and Russian AI capabilities, especially in military applications and cybersecurity, have drawn global attention, positioning them as formidable players in the AI race.

However, its perceived geopolitical threats, stemming from conflicts, such as the war in Ukraine, have effectively sidelined Russia from many international initiatives, including AI governance discussions.

The UN report's emphasis on inclusive governance contradicts the reality of excluding major AI stakeholders based on political considerations.

By sidelining China and Russia, the global AI framework risks creating a fragmented landscape where key players operate outside established norms. This isolation could exacerbate tensions, as China and Russia and similarly excluded nations may develop parallel AI systems with limited interoperability and minimal alignment with international standards.

Islamic nations, particularly those viewed critically by the West, face similar risks of exclusion under the proposed governance model.

Countries such as Iran and others in the Middle East have invested heavily in AI research, focusing on fields like healthcare, agriculture and education. Despite these contributions, Western narratives often frame these nations as security threats, leading to their marginalisation

in global technology dialogues.

The potential branding of certain AI systems as "rogue" or "terrorist" technologies further underscores this risk. Concepts like "Terrorist AI", highlighted as a growing concern, could be weaponised to target AI development in countries deemed adversarial by Western powers. This framing not only stifles innovation in these regions but also risks perpetuating harmful stereotypes that associate Islamic nations with instability and extremism.

For example, AI-driven border surveillance technologies developed by Western nations are often hailed as innovations whereas similar technologies deployed in Islamic nations may be scrutinised for potential misuse. This double standard highlights the dangers of a governance model influenced by geopolitical biases rather than a genuine commitment to equitable development.

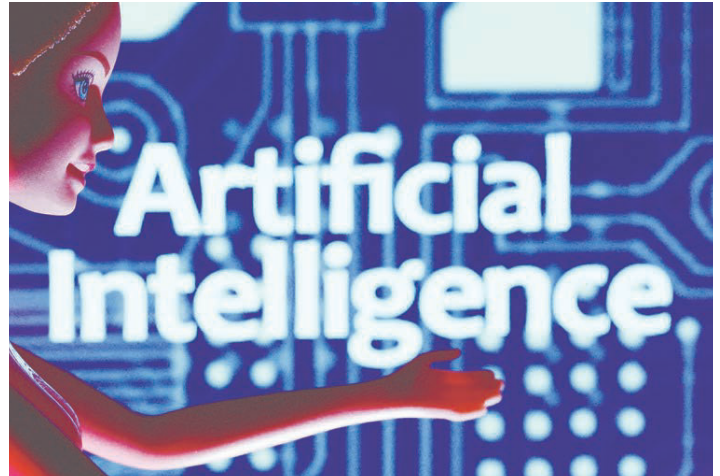
Excluding major players has broader implications for global AI governance. A truly effective framework requires the participation of all nations.

Fragmentation not only hinders the interoperability of AI systems but also increases the likelihood of an "AI arms race" where countries operate outside established norms to gain strategic advantages.

The UN report emphasises the importance of fostering a "common understanding" and "shared benefits" yet overlooks the critical need to address the geopolitical realities that perpetuate exclusion, rendering these goals difficult to achieve.

Marginalised nations may resort to developing their own AI ecosystems, potentially in collaboration with other excluded countries, creating parallel frameworks that challenge the legitimacy of the UN's efforts – much like China has established its own tech giants, which now rival the largest American corporations. This divergence could result in a fractured AI landscape, with competing standards and limited cooperation on critical issues such as safety, ethics and accountability.

Beyond geopolitical exclusion, the UN's governance model risks imposing Western-centric values on diverse cultural and ethical contexts. The emphasis on "transparent" and "trustworthy" AI systems, while seemingly neutral, often reflects Western ideals that may not align with the priorities of excluded nations. This approach risks marginalising alternative perspectives on AI ethics, perpetuating a form of "AI colonialism" where the rules are dictated by a few dominant players.



Excluding major players has broader implications for global AI governance. A truly effective framework requires the participation of all nations. – REUTERSPIC

For nations excluded from the governance framework, the lack of representation in defining AI norms exacerbates existing inequalities.

Islamic nations, for example, have unique ethical frameworks rooted in Islamic jurisprudence, which could offer valuable insights into the responsible deployment of AI. Exclusion from global dialogues prevents these perspectives from shaping the future of AI, reinforcing the dominance of Western narratives.

To avoid these pitfalls, the UN must adopt a genuinely inclusive approach that transcends geopolitical biases.

This requires acknowledging the contributions of all nations, including those perceived as adversaries or threats, and ensuring that their voices are represented in governance discussions.

Specific steps could include:

➤ **Decentralised governance:** Instead of a centralised model, regional governance frameworks could allow nations to shape AI norms based on their unique contexts and priorities. These regional frameworks could then interface with a global structure to ensure interoperability and cooperation.

➤ **Neutral arbitration:** Establishing independent bodies to mediate geopolitical tensions and ensuring fair representation in governance discussions to prevent the exclusion of nations like China, Russia or those in the Islamic world.

➤ **Respect for cultural diversity:** The governance model must account for diverse ethical frameworks, ensuring that AI norms are not dictated solely by Western values but reflect the multiplicity of global perspectives.

While the UN's Governing AI for Humanity report offers a vision of equitable and ethical AI governance, its implementation risks entrenching existing geopolitical divides.

The branding of certain technologies as "rogue" or "terrorist" will further perpetuate harmful narratives that stifle innovation and exacerbate global tensions.

For the governance framework to succeed, it must move beyond the binaries of "good AI" versus "bad AI" and embrace a genuinely inclusive approach.

*Dr Rais Hussin is the founder of Emir Research, a think-tank focused on strategic policy recommendations based on rigorous research. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com*

# Is EPF's savings framework enough to secure future?

## COMMENT

By Tan Wei Siang

**T**HE Employees Provident Fund (EPF) last year unveiled its Belanjawanku 2024/2025 Guide and Retirement Income Adequacy (RIA) Framework, setting clear savings benchmarks to help Malaysians plan for a financially secure retirement.

On paper, this is an impressive effort, but when we peel back the layers, questions arise: Is it enough? Or are we simply plastering a band-aid over deeper systemic issues?

### Decent living

Belanjawanku estimates that a single elderly person needs RM2,690 per month for a "reasonable standard of living" in retirement. It may sound achievable until you consider that inflation is a silent predator. While RM2,690 may provide comfort today, what about 10 or 20 years from now? Will that amount still cover your monthly groceries when prices inevitably rise?

The EPF's three-tier savings framework – basic (RM390,000), adequate (RM650,000) and enhanced (RM1.3 million) – is undeniably

ambitious. However, here is the catch: these targets assume consistent savings and a stable career.

How many Malaysians can tick both boxes? Career disruptions, stagnant wages and caregiving responsibilities – all these realities can shatter the illusion of consistent savings.

If EPF savings are meant to be the backbone of retirement security, what happens when that backbone breaks under economic pressures?

### Rising healthcare burden

Here is the uncomfortable truth: healthcare is expensive, and it is only going to get worse. While the EPF savings benchmarks are commendable, they overlook a critical question: What about unexpected medical expenses? A single hospital bill or critical illness can wipe out years of savings.

This issue is not just financial; it is structural. Malaysia's public healthcare system is stretched thin, and private healthcare remains out of reach for many.

Should Malaysians rely solely on insurance or should the government introduce policies that protect retirees from healthcare-driven poverty?

Are the EPF savings benchmarks masking

an even larger crisis – the inadequacy of our healthcare safety net?

### Savings goals in a stagnant wage economy

Let us be honest – asking Malaysians to save RM650,000 for an "adequate" retirement is a lofty goal. But here is the paradox: wage growth in Malaysia has been sluggish while the cost of living continues to rise. For many, saving even 20% of their monthly income feels like a distant dream.

The EPF rightly promotes financial discipline through voluntary contributions, automated savings and emergency funds. However, can individual willpower alone overcome systemic challenges? What about wage stagnation, job insecurity or rising inequality? Without addressing these root issues, we may be setting people up for failure.

If the economic system is not evolving to support higher savings, how realistic are these benchmarks for the average Malaysian?

### Call for deeper change

The EPF's new framework is a step forward but it cannot exist in a vacuum. To ensure a secure retirement for Malaysians, we need more than savings targets; we need systemic solutions:

➤ **Fight inflation with policy:** Malaysians need

investments that genuinely outpace inflation, not just token advice to diversify portfolios.

➤ **Fix healthcare crisis:** A dedicated retirement healthcare fund – with government backing – could buffer Malaysians from medical shocks.

➤ **Boost wages and job security:** Address the root causes of low savings by tackling wage stagnation, unemployment and the gig economy's instability.

### Bottom line

The EPF's Belanjawanku Guide and RIA Framework offers structure, but it also brings to light a larger issue we must address: Are Malaysians fighting an uphill battle against forces beyond their control?

If we want retirement to be more than just a pipe dream, we must advocate for policies that bridge the gap between financial ambition and economic reality. Are savings frameworks enough or is it time for a complete rethink of what it truly means to retire with dignity?

*Tan Wei Siang is an alumnus of Digital Parliament Malaysia (PO50-Jelutong) and Youth Parliament (P122-Setuteh), former secretary of MPKK Taman Free School and alumnus of the Penang Youth Assembly. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com*

BY AMIE SHAZRIE  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prudential BSN Takaful (PruBSN) a family takaful operator, is advancing healthcare accessibility and sustainability through innovative products and strategic partnerships.

PruBSN CEO Wan Saifulrizal Wan Ismail said as the nation faces rising medical costs and evolving healthcare demands, the group is stepping up efforts to make syariah-compliant financial protection inclusive, affordable and impactful.

"To address affordability, PruBSN provides flexible solutions that allow customers to customise their coverage. Products like *AnugerahMax* start at RM50 per month and offer 18 rider options, while the *Medik Asas* plan ensures basic hospital coverage with discounted contributions for claim-free years.

"By introducing co-payment options and adjustable benefits, PruBSN empowers customers from diverse income groups to secure essential healthcare without financial strain," he told *SunBiz*.

Wan Saifulrizal said PruBSN's partnership with the Malaysian government has brought initiatives such as *Skim Insurans Kesejahteraan Rakyat* (SIKR) to the forefront.

"This syariah-compliant takaful scheme provides complimentary coverage to over 300,000 beneficiaries from low-income households registered under the *eKasih* database. Additionally, products like *BSN Takaful Sakinah* cater to the B40 group, ensuring that cost is no barrier to essential protection."

Wan Saifulrizal disclosed that the company's

# PruBSN prioritises accessible, sustainable medical coverage

► Family takaful firm to make syariah-compliant financial protection inclusive, affordable and impactful via innovative products and partnerships



PruBSN aims to empower communities while meeting Malaysia's growing healthcare needs."

PruBSN, he added, is expanding its digital offerings to meet the evolving healthcare needs of Malaysians.

"By leveraging advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence, PruBSN plans to develop more personalised solutions that cater to individual health risks and preferences. This will help PruBSN enhance its offerings, making Takaful protection more tailored and responsive to customer needs.

"The company's focus will be on improving customer engagement, with an emphasis on seamless, real-time communication across multiple channels, ensuring that customers receive timely support and information on their healthcare coverage."

Through customer-centricity, innovative products and strategic partnerships, PruBSN remains a leader in providing accessible, sustainable takaful solutions for Malaysians of all backgrounds, said Wan Saifulrizal.

*Microtakaful Jariah* programme has benefited more than 182,000 breadwinners in the B40 segment, paying claims worth RM5 million since its launch. Such initiatives underscore PruBSN's commitment to financial inclusion and community resilience, he said.

Furthermore, he said, through digital innovations such as PruBSN Mobility and the Employees Provident Fund-linked *i-Lindung*, PruBSN simplifies access to takaful protection.

"These platforms enable real-time policy management and secure coverage using EPF savings, reflecting the company's dedication to bridging the gap in financial literacy and accessibility. PruBSN's award-winning 'NextGen Underwriting' system further enhances efficiency, reducing policy processing times and improving customer experiences," he added.

Wan Saifulrizal said sustainability is the group's core focus as PruBSN integrates sustainability into its operations through community-driven initiatives and environmental, social and governance-focused products.

"The *Takafulink Dana ESG Global Fund*, one of Malaysia's first syariah-compliant ESG funds, highlights its efforts to align financial protection with environmental responsibility.

"Programmes like 'Mobility is Life' and 'Vision for Education' extend support beyond financial coverage, fostering community well-being," he said.

Looking ahead, Wan Saifulrizal said PruBSN plans to enhance its digital offerings and expand hybrid distribution channels, allowing greater personalisation of Takaful solutions. "By aligning with national sustainability goals,

## Maybank introduces first-in-market security feature 'Money Lock'

**PETALING JAYA:** Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) has launched a first-in-market counterfraud security feature on the MAE App called Money Lock, which allows customers to lock funds in the savings or current accounts of their choice from being digitally accessed, keeping the funds safe from online scammers.

With the added layer of security, customers can enjoy the benefits of online banking without compromising their financial peace of mind.

With Money Lock, customers have the flexibility to decide on the level of fund security in their accounts. They can opt to lock their preferred amount, from as little as RM10 and up to the total available balance in their accounts. Customers can also increase any locked amount directly from their MAE App, with no fee imposed and no limit on the number of times Money Lock can be activated.

Maybank Group CEO of community financial services Syed Ahmad Taufik Albar said the introduction of Money Lock in Malaysia builds on the success of Maybank Singapore's implementation of the same feature, and is a testament to Maybank Group's commitment to increased banking safety and protection for its customers in the region.

"With Money Lock, Maybank is the first bank in Malaysia to enable customers to digitally lock funds in the existing savings and current accounts of their choice. Enhancing online banking security, Money Lock empowers customers with confidence, enabling them to conduct online banking transactions securely and without worry. Customers will also continue to earn the same interest or profit rate on the locked funds, as part of their account balance," he added.

To activate Money Lock, customers can follow three simple steps. First, launch the MAE App, navigate to the 'Accounts' tab, and select the savings or current account to use Money Lock. Next, click on the Money Lock icon, choose the preferred account and amount to

be locked, and review the summary page. Then, approve the activation via Secure2u to complete the process.

To unlock their funds or decrease the amount of locked funds, customers only need to visit any Maybank ATM or branch nationwide for a quick verification process. This step is taken to ensure that locked funds remain secure from unauthorised access. Upon successful verification, the funds will be instantly unlocked or decreased, depending on customers' request.

For customers' safety, locked funds are kept protected against any online banking and ATM activity. The locked funds cannot be used for transactions such as online transfers, ATM withdrawals, debit card usage, bill/credit card/loan payments, fixed deposit placement, standing instructions, and more, thus adding another layer of protection for customers.

For an uninterrupted banking experience while using Money Lock, customers are urged to perform careful financial planning, consider upcoming financial commitments and ensure sufficient funds are available for essential transactions before enabling the feature.

To mitigate fraud risk and safeguard its customers, Maybank has implemented various measures, including replacing SMS OTP with Secure2u to prevent SMS TAC fraud, restricting online banking access to a single device per customer to block unauthorised access, and enforcing a cooling-off period for transfer and payment limit increases as well as Secure2u activation on a first-time or new device. Secure2u activation is now limited to Maybank ATMs, offering customers greater control over their accounts.

Additionally, Maybank has introduced Malware Shielding, a preventive security feature within the MAE App capable of detecting malware on customers' devices, and provides a 24/7 fraud and customer support hotline for those who suspect they have been scammed.



From left: AmBank head of commercial banking, business banking, Yeow Swee Yun; PTT Synergy Group executive chairman Datuk Abdul Rahim Jaafar; Political Secretary of Finance Ministry Muhammad Kamil; Human Resources Minister Steven Sim Chee Keong; Teo and Yap.

## PTT Synergy's ProTT gets RM498m financing from AmBank to build automated warehouse

**PETALING JAYA:** AmBank Group has granted RM498.6 million financing facility to Projek Tetap Teguh Sdn Bhd (ProTT), a subsidiary of PTT Synergy Group Bhd to finance land cost, construction and equipment costs of an automated storage and retrieval system (ASRS) warehouse in Valdor, Penang.

The group specialises in developing built-to-suit automated industrial warehouses consisting of a variety of computer-controlled systems to automatically place and retrieve loads from defined storage locations. The warehouse is also equipped with comprehensive Internet of Things and artificial intelligence technology which will be leased to a multinational corporation semiconductor maker based in Penang. It is targeted to be completed by the first half of 2026, marking it as the group's second project to date. Upon completion, the ASRS warehouse will have the capacity of 47,320 palletise positions.

AmBank Group managing director, business banking, Christopher Yap said, "We are honoured to support ProTT as they continue to expand their footprint in an increasingly competitive market. This development further demonstrates their

capability to deliver customized end-to-end industrial solutions to customers, which reaffirms their commitment to drive their ESG and sustainability agenda.

"This also demonstrates AmBank's commitment in fostering technological advancements in Malaysia's manufacturing landscape and supporting businesses in their journey towards achieving operational excellence sustainably."

PTT Synergy Group managing director Teo Swee Phin commented, "This groundbreaking ceremony marks more than just the beginning of a new facility. It reflects PTT's unwavering commitment to innovation, sustainability, and excellence. The project serves as a cornerstone of our vision to propel Malaysia's industrial and logistics sector into the future. We are positive that the project will become a benchmark for industrial property development in Malaysia, which would further solidify our leadership in smart logistics solutions."

The partnership reinforces AmBank's strategic role in supporting its clients with innovative financial solutions while driving Malaysia's industrial and economic development forward.





# Mida catalyses Malaysia's economic resilience, growth

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's investment landscape in 2024 has once again showcased its resilience and adaptability, with the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida) at the forefront of driving economic growth through strategic investments, human capital development, digital and green economy initiatives.

Mida's role in catalysing Malaysia's economic development is underscored by its success in attracting investments worth RM254.7 billion in the first nine months of 2024, a 10.7% year-on-year (y-o-y) increase. These investments span the services, manufacturing, and primary sectors, resulting in 4,753 new projects and generating 159,347 jobs, reflecting y-o-y growth of 75.9% in job creation.

Domestic investments contributed RM148 billion (58.1%), reflecting strong confidence in the government's clear policies and the resilience of local businesses. Meanwhile, foreign investments accounted for RM106.7 billion (41.9%), with key contributors including Germany, China and the United States.

Mida CEO Datuk Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim Sikh Abdul Majid said: "These investment figures reflect Malaysia's strengthening position as a premier investment destination. Our success in attracting both domestic and foreign investments underscores the effectiveness of our strategic initiatives in fostering an innovation-driven economy," he told *Bernama*.

In alignment with Malaysia's National Investment Aspirations, Mida has been at the forefront of driving the growth of the digital economy.



## Success in attracting investments underscores effectiveness of its strategic initiatives in fostering innovation-driven economy

From January to September 2024, the Digital Investment Office, a strategic collaborative platform between Mida and Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), approved RM64.8 billion worth of digital investments, focusing on advancing technology adoption such as artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, and automation to propel Malaysia's digital transformation.

"Malaysia is well positioned to leverage 5G Advanced, AI, and cloud computing to accelerate economic growth.

These advancements, underpinned by the MyDIGITAL Blueprint and National 4IR Policy, are fostering a vibrant digital ecosystem and establishing Malaysia as a regional innovation hub," noted Sikh Shamsul.

One of the standout sectors in 2024 has been the rapid growth of data centres, which attracted US\$10.7 billion (RM46.9 billion) in investment commitments from the major data centre and cloud players.

These facilities are indispensable pillars of modern infrastructure, enabling seamless interconnectivity across industries and regions.

Malaysia's robust infrastructure, competitive energy costs, sustainability initiatives, rapid digitalisation adoption and strategic location have cemented its position as a regional hub for global technology giants and cloud service providers.

The growth of data centres and cloud activities not only drives a more digitally inclusive society, ensuring every user can benefit from the digital economy, but also develops the local supply chains, increased demand for renewable energy and technology solutions as well as upskilling of talent to meet industry needs.

"Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation is committed to streamlining the development process for data centres and proactively addressing challenges to ensure Malaysia remains attractive to investors. A key initiative in this effort is the Data Centre Investment Coordination Task Force, which assumes a pivotal role in facilitating and expediting data centre-related matters," the Mida CEO said. Sikh Shamsul also stated that the Malaysian government's guidelines for the sustainable development of data centres provide a comprehensive framework to ensure these facilities operate efficiently, sustainably, and in an environmentally friendly manner.

"This initiative aligns Malaysia's ambitions with its long-term goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050," he added.

"To drive progress across all sectors, we are focused on developing a highly skilled and adaptable workforce," said Sikh Shamsul.

Meanwhile, Mida is actively working to diversify Malaysia's economic base by focusing on new growth areas such as renewable energy, e-mobility, biofuels, and rare-earth elements.

# Sime Motors sees 'highly promising' prospects for its EV segment in 2025

BY HAYATUN RAZAK  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prospects for Sime Motors' electric vehicle (EV) segment for 2025 appear highly promising on strong momentum from previous years, said Sime Motors managing director of Southeast Asia Jeffrey Gan.

He said consumer acceptance of EVs in Malaysia is on a strong upward trajectory with a reported 64% growth in EV sales from 2023 to 2024.

"We foresee 2025 will be a very exciting year for the EV landscape. And definitely it will be much more positive compared to 2024. This positions Sime Motors to capitalise on increasing demand," he told reporters at the announcement of the partnership with Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia to enhance the accessibility and adoption of EVs on Friday.

Gan said Sime Motors will be offering more products that will cater to the EV needs by the market.

"We have BYD. BYD is full EV at the moment. 30% of our volume for BMW, we are looking at electric vehicles. And a lot of our brands that we carry are very much into electrification," he said.

Gan also stressed the company's commitment to after-sales services as EV adoption grows.

"All our technicians are EV-trained. We develop their skills to ensure our customers are not left on their own. It's not just about selling cars - it's about the entire journey of owning an EV."

With a view towards driving the nation's sustainability aspirations, Sime Motors and Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia have partnered to support the transition to more environmentally conscious transport.

To kick off the collaboration, Sime Motors launched AutoArena, the nation's first-ever automotive event held at the National Stadium in Kuala Lumpur Sports City. It marks the first of many automotive showcases to be jointly hosted by Sime Motors and Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia.

The three-day event showcases Sime Motors' diverse automotive portfolio, including BMW, MINI, Motorrad, BYD, Ford, Hyundai, Jaguar, Land Rover, Volvo, and a selection of premium pre-owned vehicles from Auto Selection.

As part of the partnership, Sime Motors will provide Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia with two EVs for 24 months to support stadium operations. Additionally, an EV charging station will be installed at the stadium, offering convenient access to EV charging infrastructure for the surrounding community.

Gan said the partnership not only supports Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia's operational needs with sustainable vehicles but also enhances accessibility for the broader community through EV charging infrastructure. "This initiative aligns with the government's aim of increasing EV adoption by 2030 and fosters greater awareness and understanding of the benefits of EV ownership for Malaysians," he added.

Perbadanan Stadium Malaysia CEO Iliyas Jamil noted that the Bukit Jalil National Stadium serves as a key destination for both international and local events, welcoming over one million visitors annually. "Our appeal and accessibility make us the ideal venue to demonstrate the convenience and practicality of EVs, empowering more Malaysians to embrace sustainable lifestyles," he said.

# B Corp certification enhances Danone Malaysia's social and environmental credentials

BY AIMIE SHAZRIE  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Danone Malaysia has taken a pioneering step in the country's fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) sector by becoming the first food company to achieve B Corp certification, a designation awarded to companies that meet high standards of social and environmental performance.

Danone Malaysia and Singapore country manager Koh Kok Meng (*pic*) said this milestone reinforces its commitment to social and environmental responsibility, distinguishing it as a leader in a competitive market increasingly driven by sustainability-conscious consumers.

"The certification, a hallmark of rigorous social and environmental standards, reinforces Danone Malaysia's position as a purpose-driven business. B Corp is a trustmark. It verifies us as a responsible business with a positive impact, which is crucial in a market that places importance on transparency," he told *SunBiz*.

He noted that through initiatives such as reducing carbon dioxide emissions across its supply chain and tackling iron deficiency anemia among Malaysian children, Danone has aligned



its operational strategies with its broader vision of sustainability.

"The company's Dugro Iron Active formula, fortified with iron and Vitamin C, and the *Dugro Generasi Kuat Zat Besi* roadshows are central to its mission of improving child health through nutrition. The certification has not only strengthened external trust but also fostered internal pride and collaboration," he said.

Koh disclosed that Danone Malaysia's employees were engaged throughout the certification process via transparent communication, training, and stakeholder inclusion. "This collective effort has driven innovation and built a company culture that prioritises sustainability and social impact."

As part of its long-term strategy, Koh said, Danone plans to leverage its B Corp status to expand market share and drive growth in Malaysia.

"The company's global 'One Planet, One Health' vision integrates sustainability into every aspect of its operations, from product innovation to supply chain optimisation. Danone aims to cater to the growing demand for socially responsible products, ensuring they meet the

highest standards of quality and impact," he said.

Koh mentioned that the recent partnership with Malaysia's Ministry of Women, Family, and Community Development exemplified Danone's commitment to addressing health challenges.

"By combining public and private resources, the Dugro Iron Strong Generation movement raises awareness about anemia while providing non-invasive screenings and nutritional consultations for children. This initiative not only aligns with Malaysia's Health White Paper on preventive care but also establishes a precedent for future public-private collaborations."

Looking ahead, Koh said Danone Malaysia is set to champion the B Corp movement in Southeast Asia, with plans to expand sustainable product offerings, improve operational transparency and address critical health issues.

"Danone's ambitious goal of becoming the largest B Corp-certified FMCG company by 2025 highlights its unwavering commitment to combining business performance with positive social and environmental impact," he remarked.

By achieving B Corp certification, Koh said, Danone Malaysia has solidified its role as a changemaker in the FMCG industry, setting a benchmark for others to follow in the journey toward a more sustainable and responsible future.



# Highlights of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone

ON JAN 6, the prime ministers of Singapore and Malaysia signed a historical agreement creating the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), capitalising on the strengths of both economies for the benefit of the two countries.



TAX MATTERS  
BY S.M. THANNEERMALAI

It will provide an avenue for Singaporean companies to bring in capital, business expertise and technology, and for Malaysian companies to provide people, land and infrastructure.

The SEZ is expected to promote investments in 16 economic sectors, including manufacturing, logistics, food security, tourism, energy, digital economy, green economy, financial services, business services, education and health. Specific areas such as aerospace, electrical and electronics, chemical, medical devices and

pharmaceuticals have been added as key sectors for high-value growth.

There will be freer movement of people who are involved in the SEZ with passport-free clearance through the use of Quick Response codes. The movement of goods between SEZ and Singapore is expected to be simplified. Details on the customs and immigration procedures should be available in due course.

### Incentives available

Effective Jan 1, investors in the SEZ undertaking new investments in qualifying manufacture and services activities – such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing supply chain, medical devices, aerospace manufacturing, and global services hub – will be able to enjoy a special tax rate of

5% up to 15 years. Additional tailor-made incentives will be available to businesses operating in certain flagship areas in the SEZ. Eligible knowledge workers working in the SEZ will be able to enjoy a flat 15% tax rate on their personal income for 10 years.

In addition to the above, tax perks such as special incentives for businesses relocating to Malaysia, green technology incentives, global service hub incentives, pioneer status and investment tax allowance, and other incentives such as grants for capital investment, research and development, and workforce training will be available.

### Interaction with other incentives

It would appear at the moment that the existing incentives available to the Johor region such as the Iskandar incentives, Forest City Special Financial Zone incentives, family office incen-

tives and Pulau 1 which is a customs tax-free area, are likely to be mutually exclusive from the incentives accorded to the investors under the JS-SEZ.

### Issues to think about

Although the proposed special corporate tax rate is 5%, in the event the investors are subject to the Global Minimum Tax then the effective corporate tax rate will be uplifted to 15%. This is only applicable to multinational enterprises with a turnover in excess of €750 million (RM3.4 billion).

Companies investing into SEZ should factor in the double tax agreement in calculating the tax impact of the investment and money flows from the investment.

Other normal tax issues such as withholding tax, transfer pricing, customs duty, sales tax and service tax remain unchanged unless any announcements are made in the future.

We also understand that in the near future there will be guidelines issued to clarify the criteria for claiming the incentives and the procedures to be followed.

Perhaps the guidelines may help existing investors operating in the SEZ to determine whether they will be allowed to opt for the new incentives provided under the JS-SEZ regime without any clawback or will they be excluded from enjoying the new incentives.

Investors would also be interested to find out whether they can transact and maintain bank accounts in foreign currencies, especially in the Singapore dollar.

Will this be permitted?

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

# M'sian industrial production sustains positive momentum

➤ Increase of 3.6% year-on-year in November, driven by output growth in manufacturing sector: Department of Statistics

**PETALING JAYA:** The Industrial Production Index (IPI) increased by 3.6% year-on-year in November 2024, driven by sustained output growth in the manufacturing sector, said Department of Statistics, Malaysia.

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said, "The IPI's growth further increased by 3.6% in November 2024 after registering 2% in the previous month, sustaining a positive momentum for eleven consecutive months. The expansion was supported by the manufacturing sector, which expanded by 4.6% (October 2024: 3.3%) coupled with the rise of 3.9% in electricity output (October 2024: 1.9%)."

However, he added, the mining sector production remained on a downward trend, albeit with a smaller negative growth of 0.8% in November 2024 (October 2024: -2.8%).

Month-on-month, the IPI grew 0.5% from 1.7% in October 2024, he said.

The output of export-oriented industries which account for two-thirds of the manufacturing sector, expanded by 5.6% in November compared to 3.3% in the previous month. The expansion was supported mainly by the manufacture of computer, electronics & optical products which soared by 8.8%; followed by the manufacture of coke & refined petroleum products at 2.8%; and the manufacture of plastic products which increased by 8.7%. The year-on-year expansion mirrored the country's export performance,

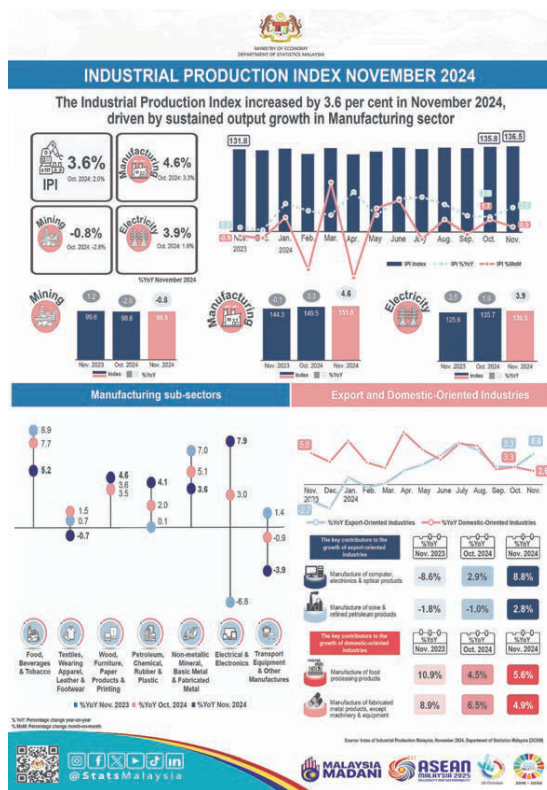
which surged by 10.3% in November 2024. On a month-on-month comparison, export-oriented industries rebounded by 0.1% after recording a negative 1.4% growth in October 2024.

Nevertheless, domestic-oriented industries continued to grow modestly at 2.6% after registering growth of 3.3% in October 2024. The increase in these industries was primarily led by manufacture of food processing products (5.6%); the manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery & equipment (4.9%); and the manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products (2.9%).

In comparison to the preceding month, domestic-oriented industries turned around by 3% against the negative growth of 0.9% recorded in October 2024.

Mohd Uzir said, "The production of mining sector in November 2024 edged down by 0.8% influenced by a decline in the crude oil & condensate index which dropped by 3.8% (October 2024: -7.5%) while the natural gas index increased by 1.2% (October 2024: 0.4%). As compared to the previous month, the mining index grew at a marginal 0.2% as compared to the growth of 14.7% recorded in October 2024. Meanwhile, the generation of electricity expanded by 3.9% year-on-year in November 2024 after registering an increase of 1.9% in the preceding month. In comparison with October 2024, the electricity index went down by 3.9% as against the positive 3.6% in October 2024."

On a global scale, the IPI for



several countries increased, including China, Singapore and Vietnam, while South Korea continued to increase with a marginal growth in November 2024. Conversely, the United States, Japan and Thailand experienced a decline during the month.

For the first eleven months of the year (January-November 2024), the IPI improved to 3.7% (January-November 2023: 0.8%), with all sectors posting increases, namely the mining index (0.7%); manufacturing index (4.2%); and electricity index (5.8%).

# Faster access, monthly activation for EPF's Simpanan Shariah

**PETALING JAYA:** The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) has introduced two key features to Simpanan Shariah that will provide faster access and flexibility for members effective April 1, 2025.

The enhancements enable immediate registration to Simpanan Shariah for new members and monthly effective date for all members opting in.

The EPF will roll out these enhancements based on the transition period from Dec 25, 2024 to March 31, 2025 to ensure that the initiative runs smoothly. During this time, the effective date of Simpanan Shariah for members opting in is as follows:

The transition schedule is as follows:

Before Dec 25, 2024 – effective date will be Jan 1, 2025.

Between Dec 25, 2024 and March 24, 2025 – effective date will be April 1, 2025.

Between March 25 and March 31, 2025 – effective date will be May 1, 2025.

From April 1, 2025 onwards – effective date will be the first of the month following their opt-in date, subject to a seven-day grace period.

For example, members who opt in on April 15, 2025, the effective date will be May 1, 2025. If members opt in on April 25, 2025, the effective date will be June 1, 2025, instead of May 1, 2025, taking into account the seven-day grace period.

Previously, changes to Simpanan Shariah took effect only on Jan 1 of the following year. Under this enhancement, the effective date will now be the first day of the following month, subject to a seven-day grace period, allowing members to transition to syariah compliance more quickly.



# Manufacturing sector sales in November rise to RM161.9b

Higher by 0.3% from previous month and 4.5% year-on-year

**PETALING JAYA:** Manufacturing sector sales amounted to RM161.9 billion in November 2024, expanding by 4.5% year-on-year.

According to Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin, "The expansion in the manufacturing sector for November 2024 was driven by a double-digit increase of 12.3% in the food, beverages & tobacco sub-sector (October 2024: 11.2%); and enhanced by a 7.1% rise in the electrical & electronics products subsector (October 2024: 3.2%). On a month-on-month basis, the sales value increased by 0.3% from RM161.4 billion registered in October 2024."

The sales value of export-oriented industries, which accounted for 71.5% of total manufacturing sales, rose by 5.6%, up from the 3% in October 2024. The steady growth was largely attributed to the strong performance in the manufacture of vegetable & animal oils & fats (15%); manufacture of rubber products (10.5%); as well as manufacture of computer, electronics and optical products industries (7.6%).

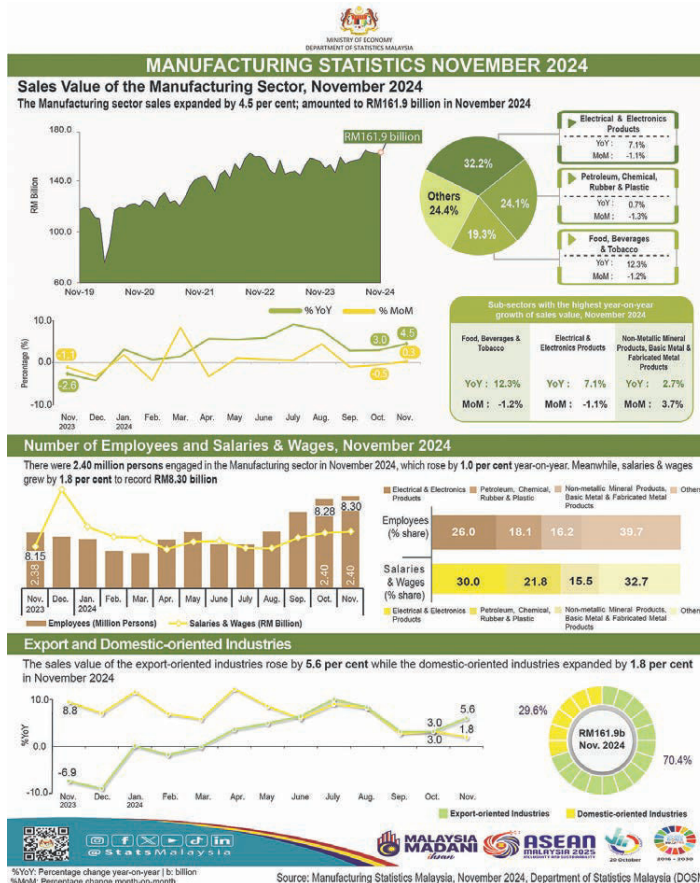
In a month-on-month comparison, export-oriented industries dropped by 1.2% in November 2024.

Meanwhile, domestic-oriented industries increased by 1.8% (October 2024: 3%).

Manufacture of processed food industry recorded a 8.7% increase compared to 8.1% in the preceding month. However, manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery & equipment, registered moderate growth of 4.1% compared to 6.1% in October 2024. In comparison to the previous month, the sales value of domestic-oriented industries continued to expand, recording a 4.1% rise in November 2024.

Mohd Uzir said, "There were 2.4 million employees involved in the manufacturing sector in November 2024, marking a 1% increase compared to a 0.9% growth in October 2024. The increase was observed largely in the food, beverages & tobacco (2.1%); non-metallic mineral products, basic metal & fabricated metal products (1.3%); and wood, furniture, paper products & printing (1%) sub-sectors."

In comparison to the preceding month, the number of employees in this sector augmented



slightly by 0.1% in November 2024 (October 2024: 0.4%).

"In November 2024, salaries & wages in the manufacturing sector rose to RM8.3 billion (October 2024: RM8.28 billion). Compared to the previous month, salaries & wages increased by 0.2%. For the same period, the average monthly salaries & wages per employee rose by

0.8% year-on-year to RM3,455. Simultaneously, the sales value per employee rose by 3.4%, registered RM67,414," said Mohd Uzir.

Throughout the first 11 months of last year (January-November 2024), the sales value of the manufacturing sector amounted to RM1.728 trillion, an increase of 4.5% compared to the same period in 2023.

## Sime Darby Property acquires two logistics warehouses in Bandar Bukit Raja

**PETALING JAYA:** Sime Darby Property Bhd has acquired two modern double-storey logistics warehouses in Bandar Bukit Raja, Selangor, for RM232 million.

The assets were previously owned by Sime Darby Property MIT Development Sdn Bhd, a 50:50 joint venture between Sime Darby Property and a Japanese joint venture comprising MBK Real Estate Asia Pte Ltd and a subsidiary of Mitsubishi Estate Co Ltd.

In a statement, Sime Darby Property said the acquisition consolidates its ownership of the strategically located and high-quality assets.

Group managing director and CEO Datuk Seri Azmir Merican said, "This acquisition aligns with our SHIFT25 strategy, which aims to transform Sime Darby Property into a diversified real estate company.

"By gaining full ownership of these modern logistics assets, we strengthen our industrial property portfolio, drive sustainable income growth, and solidify our position in the fast-growing industrial and logistics sectors, positioning the group to capture new growth opportunities and achieve greater financial stability in an evolving market landscape."

The warehouses, with a combined net lettable area of about 700,000 sq ft, are located in the rapidly growing Bandar Bukit Raja Industrial Zone in Klang, offering convenient connectivity and proximity to major transport routes and key business hubs.

The two warehouses are designed to cater to a wide range of logistics and warehousing needs, featuring modern specifications such as high ceiling heights, efficient layouts, and multiple loading docks.

The strategic location and modern infrastructure of these warehouses meet the growing demand for high-quality industrial spaces, driven by the expansion of e-commerce, increasing supply chain complexities, and businesses seeking facilities that support their operational efficiency.

## Issues over Malaysian stocks main contributor to turnover

### WARRANTS WATCH

**LAST** week, overall warrants turnover came in at RM556.8 million, representing a 77% week-on-week (w-o-w) increase in compared to the prior holiday-shortened trading week.

Contrary to the usual trading week, the main contributor to turnover last week came from trading of warrants over Malaysian single stocks, which came in at 50.9% of turnover, at RM283.4 million. Turnover for trading of warrants over the Hang Seng Index (HSI) futures amounted to RM243.4 million, which was 43.7% of turnover.

The HSI closed the week 3.2% lower, extending its decline to a second consecutive week. Chinese economic data released during the week included inflation data for December, whereby the consumer

price index edged up 0.1% year-on-year (y-o-y), while the producer price index dropped 2.3% y-o-y, sliding for the 27th straight month. In terms of HSI warrants, call warrants placed for four out of the top five HSI warrants traded by value. The top traded warrant was put warrant HSI-PWB1, followed by call warrants HSI-CWAZ and HSI-CYY.

Globally, sentiment was weighed down by stronger-than-expected US services sector growth data which raised concerns about interest rate cut expectations amid persistent inflationary pressures. Trading in warrants over the S&P 500 index futures saw noticeable w-o-w growth, at over triple the turnover compared to the previous week.

In the local scene, investor sentiment was weighed by global sentiment as technology and data centre stocks saw a sell down on

### Top SIMEPROP warrants by volume traded

Warrant name	Volume (mil)	Issuer	Exercise price	Expiry date
SIMEPROP-C41	25.4	Macquarie	RM1.88	30 Jun 2025
SIMEPROP-C36	19.1	Kenanga	RM1.88	9 Jun 2025
SIMEPROP-C32	14.0	Maybank	RM1.50	28 Feb 2025
SIMEPROP-HA	7.6	Maybank	RM1.35	25 Jun 2025
SIMEPROP-C38	5.8	Macquarie	RM1.98	28 Mar 2025

Thursday following news that the Biden administration announced plans to add restrictions on the export of artificial intelligence chips from the likes of Nvidia. Shares of YTL Power, NationGate Holdings (NatGate) and Gamuda Bhd, among others, felt the brunt of the sell-down as these names have strong links to the global chip and data centre theme.

Warrants over YTL Power saw a

total turnover of RM28.7 million, where the top traded warrant was YTLPOWER-C64 as it recorded RM11.9 million in value traded. Warrants over NatGate also saw traction among investors, with NATGATE-CC seeing RM7.6 million in value traded. Further, a wide variety of Gamuda warrants saw trading activity last week, such as GAMUDA-C2R, GAMUDA-C2T and GAMUDA-C2Q, among others. Other

than that, warrants over Sime Darby Property also drew investors' interest, as the share price rallied towards the end of the year but closed 5.8% down w-o-w. Last week, SIMEPROP-C41 was the top traded warrant over this name with 25.4 million units traded.

To view the full list of structured warrants available on Bursa Malaysia, visit [malaysiawarrants.com.my](http://malaysiawarrants.com.my).

Provided for Malaysian residents' information only. This commentary has not been reviewed by the Securities Commission Malaysia. It is not an offer or recommendation to trade and is not research material.

Past performance is not indicative of future performance. You should make your own assessment and seek professional advice.

The warrants will not be offered to any US persons.

# London 'natural home' for Chinese finance: Reeves

UK treasurer starts Beijing visit amid bond market turmoil back in her country

**BEIJING:** British treasurer Rachel Reeves said on Saturday that London was a "natural home" for Chinese finance as she began a visit to Beijing in the shadow of bond market turmoil back home.

Reeves, whose formal title is chancellor of the exchequer, is the most senior British government official to visit China since then-prime minister Theresa May held talks with President Xi Jinping seven years ago.

The trip comes as the yield on British government bonds reached a 17-year high last week, further complicating the ruling Labour Party's sputtering efforts to revitalise growth.

The increase makes it more costly for the government to finance current operations and repay debt, raising risks it will have to make spending cuts or hike taxes.

Speaking at the reopening of long-suspended finance talks between the two countries, Reeves said London was a "natural home for China's financial services firms and your clients raising capital, and a launchpad for Chinese firms seeking to build a global footprint".

"Across capital markets, we have opportunities to deepen connections between the UK and China," she said as she met her Chinese counterpart He Lifeng at Beijing's opulent Diaoyutai State Guesthouse.

"However, as we continue to strengthen our financial relationship, it is crucial that we work together even closer on regulatory cooperation," Reeves said.

In his welcome remarks, He said Beijing hoped the forum would help to develop the internationalisation of the Chinese yuan, deepen links between the two countries' capital markets and strengthen cooperation in green finance and other areas.

Reeves faced pressure from the parliamentary opposition to stay home and address the financial crisis, but a spokesperson for Prime Minister Keir Starmer said last week she had not planned to cancel her "long-standing" trip.

Earlier on Saturday, the chancellor acknowledged "moves in global financial markets over the last few days," but said the fiscal rules she set out in her October budget were "non-negotiable".

"Growth is the number one mission of this



He (right) speaking beside Reeves during a press conference after the 11th China-UK Economic and Financial Dialogue in Beijing. – AFPIC

government, to make our country better off," she said at British bicycle-maker Brompton's Beijing showroom.

"That's why I'm in China, to unlock tangible benefits for British businesses exporting and trading around the world."

Reeves and He on Saturday presided over the re-opening of the delayed China-UK financial services talks.

China's Foreign Ministry said on Friday the two sides would "open discussions on macroeconomic policy and economic globalisation, trade and investment, industrial

cooperation, financial market development and cooperation on financial regulation".

"China and the UK strengthening economic and financial cooperation accords with the two countries' interests... and will add certainty and inject new momentum into the development of the global economy," ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said at a regular news briefing.

The governor of the Bank of England and the chief executive of the UK's Financial Conduct Authority are also taking part in the visit. – AFP

## Indonesia curbs exports of used cooking oil and palm residue

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia has clamped down on exports of used cooking oil (UCO) and palm oil residue to ensure supply to domestic cooking oil and biodiesel industries, the government said in a new regulation.

The step by the world's top producer and exporter of palm oil aims to help attain a new mandate starting from this year, of mixing 40% of palm oil-based fuel with diesel fuel, called B40, up from 35% previously, it said.

Authorities in Indonesia have been looking into ways to curb UCO exports, but the extent of the tightening was not immediately clear.

Last month, an official alleged some cooking oil sold under a government programme called *Minyakita* had been mislabelled as UCO and shipped overseas for biodiesel feedstock.

The regulation, which takes effect immediately, requires all exporters of palm oil residue and UCO, including palm oil mill effluent, to acquire an export allocation from the government.

Such allocations will be set at a meeting of officials of ministries such as trade and that which coordinates food affairs.

Palm oil mill effluent can be used to produce biogas, fertiliser, and fuel.

Indonesia's exports of UCO and palm oil residue from January to November 2024 stood at 3.95 million metric tonnes, down 13.75% from the corresponding 2023 period.

However, government officials have repeatedly said there were signs of scarcity of the *Minyakita* product, citing retailers' sale of such items at about a tenth higher than the government's maximum retail price.

Indonesia mandates all palm oil exporters to sell some of their crude palm oil domestically at a capped price to be made into *Minyakita* cooking oil, which is then sold at a regulated, affordable price. – Reuters

## China inflation hits nine-month low in December

**BEIJING:** China narrowly avoided slipping into deflation in December with prices rising at their slowest pace in nine months, official figures showed, as Beijing struggles to kickstart consumer activity in the world's number two economy.

The tepid reading comes after the government unveiled a range of measures at the end of last year aimed at boosting consumption as well as providing support for the troubled property sector, including interest rate cuts.

However, data showed that has not yet filtered through, with the consumer price index (CPI), a key measure of inflation, easing to 0.1% last month, from 0.2% in November, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The reading is the lowest since March.

A survey of economists had forecast 0.1%.

For the whole of 2024, prices were up 0.2%, the same as the previous year.

Sluggish spending – combined with persistent woes in the property sector and local government financing strains – has cast doubt on the feasibility of official growth targets.

China emerged from a four-month period of deflation in February, a month after suffering the sharpest fall in prices for 14 years.

While deflation suggests the cost of goods is falling, it poses a threat to the broader economy as consumers tend to postpone purchases under such conditions, hoping for further reductions.

A lack of demand can then force companies to cut production, freeze hiring or lay off workers, while potentially also having to discount existing stocks – dampening profitability even as costs remain the same. – AFP

## Hyundai Motor to invest record 24t won in South Korea

**SEOUL:** South Korea's Hyundai Motor Group said it plans to make a record 24.3 trillion won (RM74.7 billion) investment in the country, boosting EV and AI development, as it navigates geopolitical challenges and uncertainties.

The world's third-largest carmaker has been confronted with tough competition abroad, as US President-elect Donald Trump's second term is expected to bring higher tariffs.

Domestically, it is struggling with sluggish demand, which has been exacerbated by ongoing political turmoil stemming from the brief martial law decree issued by impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol last month.

The 24.3 trillion won investment plan represents a more than 19% increase from last year's 20.4 trillion won, the group said.

The decision to "carry out the largest investment in South Korea this year stems from the belief that continuous and stable investment is essential to overcome crises and secure future growth drivers in an increasingly uncertain environment", the statement added.

The planned investment encompasses 11.5 trillion won allocated for research and development in next-generation products, as well as hydrogen-powered technologies and electrification, Hyundai said.

The firm said it will also invest 12 trillion won in general investments aimed at expanding electric vehicle (EV) production and developing new models.

The investment plan is "expected to contribute to the revitalisation of the (South

Korean) economy and the advancement of related industries", it said.

Around 800 billion won will be spent on strategic investments, including for autonomous driving and artificial intelligence, the statement added.

To support this effort, Hyundai intends to establish a facility at its domestic production site in the city of Ulsan, dedicated to its innovative "hypercasting" manufacturing process for EVs.

Hyundai, along with other major carmakers, is following Tesla's "Gigacasting" technology, which involves producing significant vehicle sections as large, single components, thus streamlining production and reducing costs. – AFP



# US jobs report fuels Treasury yield surge

► Some investors fear inflation rebound, see risk of Fed hike

**NEW YORK:** A recent surge in US Treasury yields may gain even more momentum after a strong jobs report reinforced expectations that interest rates will stay high for longer and raised the spectre of benchmark 10-year yields hitting 5% – a level that some fear could rattle broader markets.

Last Friday's jobs report revealed that employers added 256,000 jobs in December, well above economists' forecasts, while the unemployment rate dropped, bolstering market expectations that the Federal Reserve will maintain elevated interest rates to curb economic overheating.

That news dashed investors' hopes for some respite from a sharp rise in Treasury yields that has wobbled stocks since the beginning of the year.

The data also re-ignited concerns about inflation, which remains stubbornly above the Fed's 2% target.

"The report was obviously negative for inflation," said Felipe Villarreal, portfolio manager at TwentyFour Asset Management.

"This is definitely not an economy that is decelerating."

Traders are now expecting the central bank will wait until at least June to reduce its policy rate.

Before the jobs data, they were betting the Fed would cut rates as early as May with about a 50% chance of a second cut before year end.

Both J.P. Morgan and Goldman Sachs pushed their Fed rate cut forecast to June, having earlier projected a cut in March.

Concerns over a rebound in inflation have also begun to raise the prospect that the Fed's next move could be a hike – a scenario that would have been unthinkable a few months ago when investors expected interest rates would have declined to about 2.8% by the end of this year.

They are now at 4.25%-4.5%.

"Our base case has the Fed on an extended hold. But we think the risks for the next move are skewed toward a hike," analysts at BofA Securities said in a note last Friday.



The Federal Reserve building in Washington. – REUTERS/PIC

Longer-dated US Treasury yields, which move inversely to prices, jumped to their highest levels since November 2023, with the 10-year hitting a high of 4.79%.

Yields have gained 20 basis points since the beginning of the year amid a global government bonds selloff that has hit UK government bonds particularly hard, pushing 30-year gilt yields to their highest since 1998.

Many in the bond market fear further weakness lies ahead, as fiscal and trade policies under the upcoming Donald Trump administration could lead to more Treasury issuance and a rebound in inflation.

A BMO Capital Markets client survey before the jobs report showed 69% of respondents expect

10-year yields will test 5% at some point this year.

The yield curve comparing two-year with 10-year yields has steepened in recent weeks because 10-year yields have been rising while shorter-dated ones have remained flat, a so-called "bear steepening" dynamic, bad for long-term bond prices, indicating the market expects interest rates to remain high due to ongoing resilience in the economy.

But that could change should inflation rise again, warned Jack McIntyre, a portfolio manager at Brandywine Global.

"Look for Treasury market to shift to a bear flattening of its recent bear steepening trajectory."

Bear flattening occurs when short-term interest rates rise faster than

long-term interest rates, which can happen when investors anticipate central banks will increase interest rates.

Outside of bonds, rising US Treasury yields could dampen investor interest in stocks and other high-risk assets by tightening financial conditions and increasing borrowing costs for businesses and individuals.

Higher yields can also improve the attractiveness of bonds against

equities, "with 5% still seen as a trigger point for asset allocation shifts," said BNY in a recent note.

"The 10-year yield will remain above 4% this year and as a result it could be quite challenging for the stock market," said Sam Stovall, chief investment strategist of CFRA Research, after the jobs data.

"We started the year on the wrong foot." – Reuters

## AT&T will offer bill credits for outages to 'make it right' with customers

**NEW YORK:** US telecom giant AT&T said it would offer bill credits for network outages as part of a new initiative to attract customers, after the industry experienced several significant disruptions in 2024.

In February last year, AT&T faced a nationwide wireless service disruption that lasted more than 12 hours, blocking over 92 million calls and preventing over 25,000 attempts to contact the 911 emergency call line.

In response, the company credited customers with a full day of service.

Customers of rival telecom companies, such as T-Mobile and Verizon, also faced service disruptions, sparking widespread frustration and raising concerns about the reliability of critical communication infrastructure.

Under AT&T's latest initiative, AT&T Guarantee, fiber users who experience outages of 20 minutes or more, and wireless customers who face disruptions of 60 minutes or more of a covered outage, will automatically receive a bill credit equivalent to a full day of service.

"Four years ago, we were losing share in the industry for a significant period of time," Jenifer Robertson, executive vice-president and GM, AT&T Mass Markets & Mobility, told Reuters.

"We knew we had lost our customers' trust," Robertson said, adding that AT&T responded with strategies such as pricing, product improvements and promotional offers to return the company to growth.

The initiative is AT&T's guarantee to "make it right" for customers should the company fail to deliver on its promise of dependable connectivity, according to an AT&T statement.

For three years in a row, until 2023, AT&T had topped the customer satisfaction rankings for business wireless service among large enterprises, according to a survey by consulting firm J.D. Power.

"Since 2019, we've invested more than US\$140 billion in our network and almost a billion dollars in customer care and operations," Robertson said. – Reuters

## Panama Canal CEO says Trump's plans would 'lead to chaos'

**WASHINGTON:** Granting Donald Trump's demand for US ships passing through the Panama Canal to get preferential treatment would "lead to chaos", the head of the authority running the waterway said.

"Rules are rules and there are no exceptions," Panama Canal Authority administrator Ricardo Vasquez Morales told the *Wall Street Journal*.

"We cannot discriminate for the Chinese, or the Americans, or anyone else," he said in an interview with the US financial daily.

"This will violate the neutrality treaty, international law and it will lead to chaos."

The United States built, owned and

operated the Central American canal until US president Jimmy Carter struck a deal in the 1970s to gradually hand over control of the vital waterway to the Panamanian authorities.

US President-elect Trump has taken to speaking out against the deal, refusing last week to rule out using military action to take it.

The Republican has also threatened to seize Greenland, and to use "economic force" against neighbouring Canada.

One of Trump's fiercest criticisms of the Panama Canal is that it is effectively controlled by China – an accusation Vasquez Morales said was "unfounded".

"China has no involvement whatsoever in our operations," he told the *Wall Street Journal*.

While a Chinese company operates two ports on either end of the canal, the canal itself is run by the Panama Canal Authority.

Vasquez Morales insisted that the Panama Canal Authority does not charge US ships higher rates than anyone else.

The only exception to its rules, he added, was that US Navy vessels get priority treatment as part of the agreement struck in the 1970s, allowing them to swiftly travel between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans. – AFP



## Volkswagen deliveries fall, China a drag

**BERLIN:** Volkswagen vehicle deliveries fell 1.4% year-on-year in 2024, the German carmaker said, dragged down by fierce competition in China.

The VW brand, part of the larger Volkswagen group which includes Audi and Lamborghini among others, sold some 4.8 million vehicles worldwide last year, it said in a statement.

Deliveries rose around 20% in North and South America but shrank 1.7% in Europe, the brand's second-largest market by volume.

In China, VW's most important market, sales plunged by 8.3%.

"2024 was a tough year worldwide, with a weak economy, political challenges and tough competition – particularly in China," VW executive Martin Sander said in a statement.

In December, Volkswagen reached an agreement with unions to cut 35,000 jobs across Volkswagen's German locations by 2030.

The drastic cuts should save around €4 billion (RM18 billion) a year in the medium term and avoid plant closures in Germany, which Volkswagen had previously warned might be required.

Other European carmakers are also struggling in the face of Chinese competition.

BMW warned investors in November that its performance for the year would fall short of expectations, citing weak demand in China.

Stellantis, whose brands include Jeep, Peugeot, Alfa Romeo, Chrysler and Fiat, likewise said in September that Chinese competition would also hit its performance.

Chinese carmakers such as BYD and Xiamoi are able to supply electric cars at prices that European competitors struggle to match.

The Volkswagen group publishes its full financial results for 2024 on March 11. – AFP

## Lufthansa to add 10,000 jobs in 2025

**BERLIN:** Lufthansa plans to add 10,000 jobs in 2025, the German airline group said in a statement, as global air traffic continues to recover following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The company said it would seek 800 pilots and 2,000 flight attendants, with technical experts, ground operations staff and administrative posts making up the additional hires.

The group cut over 30,000 jobs during the pandemic and has since been hiring to rebuild capacity.

About 1,200 people would be hired at its namesake Lufthansa Airlines, said the group, which also operates the Austrian Airlines, Swiss, Eurowings and Brussels Airlines.

The new hires are nonetheless fewer than last year as the company's business unit continues to implement an efficiency programme launched last July.

Across the group, 13,000 employees were hired last year, board member Michael Niggemann said.

Aerospace is one of the few sectors in Germany likely to step up hiring this year, according to a study by the German Economic Institute, a think-tank.

The Lufthansa group, which also owns the maintenance and repair firm Lufthansa Technik, employs more than 100,000 people in over 90 countries. – AFP



View of Oxford city centre, including buildings of the University of Oxford, in Britain. – REUTERSPIC

# British universities join retreat from Musk's X

► Institutions cite concerns about misinformation, content that promotes violence and declining engagement

**LONDON:** Universities and other higher education establishments have joined a retreat among British institutions from Elon Musk's X social media platform, citing its role in spreading misinformation that fuelled race riots last year.

A Reuters survey showed several universities have scaled back usage of X to the bare minimum or quit completely, following scores of academics who have left the platform.

The role of X, formerly Twitter, came under the spotlight in Britain last year during violent racial disturbances.

Musk – a close aide to US President-elect Donald Trump – has since called for Prime Minister Keir Starmer to be jailed and for anti-Muslim activist Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, who co-founded the far-right English Defence League and is known as Tommy Robinson, to be released from prison.

Reuters surveyed X accounts of over 150 universities, their colleges and art conservatoires and contacted those that had made little or no posts in recent months.

They cited concerns over misinformation, content that promotes violence and declining engagement.

"London Business School continually reviews its communications channels and decides which to use based on levels of effective audience engagement," LBS told Reuters.

It last posted to its 182,000 followers on X in September. It is one of the top-ranked business schools in the world.

Reuters was first to report in October that several British police forces had quit X or cut their usage.

The university survey points to a broader withdrawal among public institutions, even though many universities still post regularly to X.

At least seven of the University of Cambridge's 31 colleges have stopped posting to X.

"We know this platform is becoming increasingly toxic, so we will continue to assess our presence on X and monitor emerging alternatives," said Homerton College, the

university's largest in terms of student numbers. The University of Cambridge told Reuters it continued to use X alongside other channels.

At Oxford, Merton College – the university's top-ranked college academically – has deleted its X account. It did not respond to a request for comment.

Harris Manchester – another Oxford college – last posted on Nov 15 and asked followers to find it on other platforms.

The University of East Anglia said its audience engagement on X had plunged by 80%.

X did not respond to a request for comment. Falmouth University last posted to X in September, while Plymouth Marjon University said it will no longer use it. London Metropolitan University cited falling engagement for no longer actively posting.

Buckinghamshire New University said X was "no longer a place where we want to encourage conversations with our university".

Some top arts conservatoires have also stepped away.

The Royal Northern College of Music said it was "consciously channelling its energy elsewhere", while London's performing arts conservatoire Trinity Lab deleted its X account.

The Royal Central School of Speech and Drama has not posted since August. – Reuters

## Tesco posts record Christmas sales amid retail fears

**LONDON:** Britain's biggest retailer Tesco reported record sales for the key Christmas season but shares in the supermarket and wider retail sector slid on concerns for the UK economy.

In the 19 weeks to Jan 4, comprising Tesco's third quarter and Christmas trading period, UK sales jumped 4.6% to £17.9 billion (RM99 billion) compared with a year earlier.

"We delivered our biggest ever Christmas," chief executive Ken Murphy said in a statement.

"Our strong performance reflects the investments we have made, positioning Tesco as

the UK's cheapest full-line grocer for over two years," he added.

Matt Britzman, analyst at stockbrokers Hargreaves Lansdown, noted that "the year ahead won't be all smooth sailing for the retail giants, as the sector gears up to battle imminent tax hikes".

The British Retail Consortium last Thursday warned that retailers could raise prices by an average of 4.2% in the second half of the year owing to the UK government's tax-raising budget in late 2024.

"There is little hope of prices going anywhere but up," said BRC chief executive Helen Dickinson.

Clothing-to-food retailer Marks and Spencer also posted strong results for the Christmas period.

M&S chief executive Stuart Machin said that "the external environment remains challenging, with cost and economic headwinds to navigate".

The British pound has tumbled against the dollar last week on fears for the UK economy as inflation remains higher than hoped. – AFP



# MARKET ROUND-UP: JANUARY 10

## Bursa Trade Statistic

10 JAN 2025

### Participation

Retail (19.43%) Net (in RM mil.)	Institution (47.31%) Net (in RM mil.)	Foreign (33.26%) Net (in RM mil.)
<b>+50.87</b>	<b>+15.09</b>	<b>-65.96</b>
Bought (in RM mil.) 496.32	Bought (in RM mil.) 1154.46	Bought (in RM mil.) 773.30
Sold (in RM mil.) 445.45	Sold (in RM mil.) 1139.37	Sold (in RM mil.) 839.26

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

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

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

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

**DISCLAIMER:** The data and reports are provided as a service to investors. Sun Media Corporation Sdn Bhd shall not be liable or responsible for any consequences resulting from usage of the information.

## Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,302.70 +8.10
FBMKLCI	1,602.41 +1.60
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	533.76 -2.38
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	170.66 +0.04
CONSTRUCTION	317.09 -1.14
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,924.50 +70.76
ENERGY	833.30 -2.02
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	534.13 +2.20
HEALTH CARE	2,259.52 +32.98
TRANSPORTATION	1,049.10 +7.16
PROPERTY	1,121.37 -7.69
PLANTATION	7,510.62 -22.70
FBMSHA	12,250.70 -10.10
FBMACE	5,353.47 +43.64
TECHNOLOGY	62.58 -0.28

TURNOVER: 2.516 bil VALUE: RM2,424 bil

## Bursa expected to trade narrowly, post modest gain

BURSA Malaysia is expected to trend modestly higher this week, driven by bargain-hunting and optimism surrounding domestic developments.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan anticipates trading will remain within a narrow range as investors weigh optimism about local opportunities against caution over global uncertainties. Speaking to Bernama, Mohd Sedek highlighted Malaysia's strong economic fundamentals as a cornerstone for investor confidence. "These robust fundamentals provide stability and attract sustained investment, even amidst external challenges," he said.

On the global front, Mohd Sedek noted that the US December 2024 non-farm payroll report, released on Friday, showed stronger-than-expected growth, surpassing median analyst forecasts.

While the data underscores a healthy labour market, it also triggered market volatility, as investors had hoped for weaker figures to bolster the likelihood of a Federal Reserve interest rate cut.

Domestically, Mohd Sedek pointed to the formalisation of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) Agreement, signed by Malaysian and Singaporean leaders, as a pivotal development. Projects such as Forest City, the Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex, and Desaru, along with the six key zones under Iskandar Malaysia, position the JS-SEZ as an industrial hub with the potential to grow to twice the size of Shenzhen.

"We view this agreement as a structural positive for Malaysia, supporting the ongoing investment upcycle and bolstering long-term market sentiment," he said.

Last week, on a Friday-to-Friday basis, the FBM KLCI declined 27.05 points to 1,602.41 from 1,629.46 in the prior week.

## Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWB1	0.135	+0.010	+8.00	959,395
VELOCITY	0.085	+0.015	+21.43	941,226
NATGATE	2.450	-0.170	-6.49	685,158
SET	0.385	-0.035	-8.33	623,921
MYEG	0.965	+0.045	+4.89	498,789
HSI-CWAY	0.085	-0.020	-19.05	495,706
TOPGLOV	1.230	+0.030	+2.50	322,730
YTL	2.490	+0.030	+1.22	306,260
YTLPOWER	4.250	+0.050	+1.19	280,110
YTL-C98	0.055	-	-	272,773
HSI-CYY	0.040	-0.020	-33.33	261,552
VANZO	0.195	+0.005	+2.63	244,167
JCY	0.530	+0.020	+3.92	238,017
MAHSING	1.700	-0.110	-6.08	234,687
SNS	0.625	-0.010	-1.57	233,120
NATGATE-CD	0.070	-0.030	-30.00	226,305
GAMUDA	5.000	+0.010	+0.20	225,786
NATGATE-CC	0.080	-0.020	-20.00	210,339
GPACKET	0.040	+0.010	+33.33	207,375
HSI-CY9	0.110	-0.035	-24.14	198,291



## Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWBJ	0.920	+0.270	50
UTDPLT	31.500	+0.240	6,033
GCB	4.120	+0.210	67,639
AJI	15.200	+0.200	123
ALLIANZ	20.800	+0.200	133
BKAWAN	20.180	+0.160	64
VSTEC5	3.950	+0.150	8,651
HSI-PWBT	0.750	+0.140	500
KFIMA	2.540	+0.140	10,863
AYER	7.200	+0.100	100
CLOUDPT	1.010	+0.100	153,636
HLBANK	20.340	+0.100	9,563
WPRTS	4.450	+0.100	27,980
LYSAGHT	2.750	+0.090	5
ARKA	1.700	+0.080	20
GCB-CB	0.390	+0.080	18,187
HARTA	3.610	+0.080	33,415
HSI-PWB6	0.230	+0.080	50
BURSA	8.700	+0.070	10,581
CIMB	8.180	+0.070	131,511

## Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
KGROUP	0.010	+100.00	13,566
VELOCITY-WB	0.040	+100.00	206
ZENTECH	0.010	+100.00	14,415
HSI-PWB6	0.230	+53.33	50
DIGISTA-WD	0.015	+50.00	3,291
JAKS-WC	0.015	+50.00	30,064
SCBUILD	0.015	+50.00	200
SNTORIA	0.015	+50.00	903
YTL-C91	0.015	+50.00	61,860
GCB-C9	0.080	+45.45	7,962
HSI-PWBJ	0.920	+41.54	50
EDGENTA-CR	0.020	+33.33	14,530
FBMKLCI-HA2	0.020	+33.33	500
FFB-C9	0.020	+33.33	3,197
GPACKET	0.040	+33.33	207,375
MTRONIC	0.020	+33.33	93,238
RHONEMA-WA	0.080	+33.33	84,294
TAWIN	0.020	+33.33	143,403
HSI-PWDH	0.115	+27.78	444
GCB-C11	0.095	+26.67	50,228

## World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	41,938.45	-696.75	-1.63
S&P 500 (US)	5,827.04	-91.21	-1.54
NASDAQ (US)	19,161.63	-317.25	-1.63
NYSE (US)	18,963.01	-277.73	-1.44
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	4,977.26	-40.65	-0.81
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,248.49	-71.20	-0.86
DAX (GER)	20,214.79	-102.31	-0.50
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	39,190.40	-414.69	-1.05
TOPIX (JPN)	2,714.12	-21.80	-0.80
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	19,064.29	-176.60	-0.92
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,732.48	-47.40	-1.25
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	177.87	-1.57	-0.87
SH SE COM (CHN)	3,168.52	-42.87	-1.33
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,515.78	-6.12	-0.24
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	77,378.91	-241.30	-0.31
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,294.07	-35.10	-0.42
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,543.65	-34.19	-0.40
FBM KLCI	1,602.41	1.60	0.10
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,801.56	-61.04	-1.58
WTI (US\$/BBL.)	76.57	2.65	3.59
BRENT (US\$/BBL.)	79.76	2.84	3.69
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	2,715.00	24.20	0.90
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	31.31	0.30	0.96
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	965.80	3.78	0.39
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	430.40	-0.55	-0.13
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,091.50	13	0.14
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	470.50	14.50	3.18
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	530.75	-3.25	-0.61
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	45.58	2.82	6.59
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	10,570.00	-357	-3.27
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	190.80	2.30	1.22

Closing, Jan 10

## Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
MPI	23.960	-0.700	4,652
PETDAG	19.100	-0.600	2,369
HLIND	12.900	-0.300	3,169
KLK	21.100	-0.260	5,112
MBMR	6.150	-0.210	2,249
NPC	2.700	-0.200	360
PPB	12.200	-0.200	2,142
WARISAN	1.320	-0.180	1,133
NATGATE	2.450	-0.170	685,158
VITROX	3.950	-0.150	27,241
D&O	2.080	-0.110	30,037
MAHSING	1.700	-0.110	234,687
CHINAETF-MYR	4.420	-0.100	535
UWC	2.870	-0.100	14,652
MAHSING-C62	0.200	-0.095	500
DAYANG	1.990	-0.090	96,473
SUNCON	4.820	-0.080	20,417
KEINHIN	1.430	-0.070	791
ABMB	4.930	-0.060	13,033
CARLSBG	20.400	-0.060	165

## Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
AXIATA-C10	0.005	-66.67	2,470
HSI-CWAN	0.005	-50.00	2,006
HSI-CYX	0.015	-50.00	66,466
MBSB-C72	0.005	-50.00	4,789
PERMAJU-PA	0.005	-50.00	2,400
YTLPOWER-C59	0.005	-50.00	27,273
PETDAG-C11	0.025	-44.44	15,332
SINEPROP-C35	0.040	-42.86	4,400
ANEKA-WA	0.010	-33.33	7,531
FBMKLCI-CQS	0.010	-33.33	2,500
GENTINGC3H	0.020	-33.33	54,273
HONGSENG	0.010	-33.33	15,756
HSI-CYY	0.040	-33.33	261,552
IJM-C89	0.020	-33.33	100
LCTITAN-CS	0.010	-33.33	500
LKL-WA	0.010	-33.33	2,198
MAHSING-C68	0.010	-33.33	1,600
MPI-CB	0.010	-33.33	6,700
NATGATE-CA	0.080	-33.33	22,977
NEXGRAM-WD	0.010	-33.33	14,310

# 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

**DISCLAIMER:** The information is extracted from stockbrokers' commentaries and research reports and do not represent the views or opinions of Sun Media Corporation Sdn Bhd. It is not a solicitation, recommendation or an offer to buy or sell the equities featured. Sun Media Corporation shall not be liable or responsible for any consequences resulting from usage of the information.

## December palm oil exports slip 9.97% month-on-month: MPOB

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's palm oil exports in December 2024 fell 9.97% to 1.34 million tonnes from 1.49 million tonnes in the preceding month, according to the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB).

In its December 2024 industry performance report, MPOB said crude palm oil (CPO) production for the month slid by 8.30%, or 134,508 tonnes, to 1.49 million tonnes from 1.62 million tonnes in November.

Palm kernel output decreased by 6.84% month-on-month to 336,618 million tonnes in December from 361,340 tonnes in the previous month.

The production of crude palm kernel oil declined by 10.98% to 156,927 tonnes from 176,292 tonnes in November, while palm kernel cake declined by 12.31% to 172,830 tonnes from 197,095 tonnes.

In terms of inventory, the agency reported that CPO stocks dipped by 1.45% to 894,321 tonnes against 907,494 tonnes in November.

Processed palm oil stockpiles were lower by 12.25% to 814,426 tonnes from 928,147 tonnes in the preceding month, while total palm oil stocks fell 6.91% to 1.71 million tonnes from 1.84 million tonnes in November.

MPOB noted a significant drop in palm kernel oil exports by 11.65% to 95,918 tonnes in December from 108,568 tonnes in November. Palm kernel cake exports slipped by 8.90% to 177,553 tonnes in December from 194,901 tonnes in the previous month.

Additionally, oleochemical exports in December were marginally lower at 223,447 tonnes, down 0.38%, from 224,290 tonnes in November.

However, biodiesel exports rose sharply by 29.69% to 15,231 tonnes from November's 11,744 tonnes. — Bernama

## Ringgit likely to face cautious trading this week

THE ringgit is expected to trade at around RM4.50 to the US dollar this week, with investors being cautious ahead of the US inflation report as well as a series of speeches by Federal Reserve officials scheduled during the period.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the focus would be on the US inflation rate, with the Producer Price Index to be released tomorrow and the Consumer Price Index on Wednesday.

"Along the way, there will be series of speeches by Fed officials at public events that will add more colour as to how the Fed would navigate its policy lever this year.

"Judging from the prevailing data points and commentaries from Fed officials, it appears that the Fed Funds Rate would be maintained at 4.50-4.75% when the Federal Open Market Committee members reconvene on Jan 28-29," he told Bernama.

During this week, global economic prospects – through data such as positive US job openings and ISM Index for the non-manufacturing sector – continued to provide support for the greenback, which impacted the ringgit's performance.

Last week, on a Friday-to-Friday basis, the ringgit appreciated against the US dollar to 4.4945/5000 from 4.4975/5030 the week before. The local note gained versus the British pound to 5.5296/5364 from 5.5800/5869 at the end of the previous week and increased vis-a-vis the Japanese yen to 2.8461/8497 from 2.8606/8643.

However, it fell against the euro to 4.6298/6355 from 4.6288/6345 previously.

The ringgit rose against the Thai baht to 12.9824/13.0043 from 13.0540/0753 at the previous Friday's close and appreciated versus the Indonesian rupiah to 277.5/278.0 from 277.6/278.1.

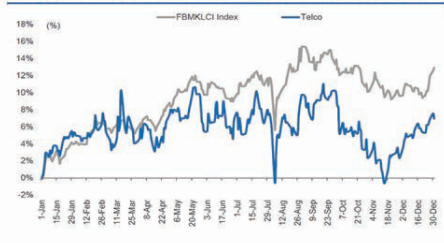
## Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.5600	4.4260	4.4160
1 Australian Dollar	2.8430	2.7300	2.7140
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3320	3.2350	3.2270
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1630	3.0780	3.0660
1 Euro	4.7040	4.5520	4.5320
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5640	2.4690	2.4530
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3320	3.2350	3.2270
1 Sterling Pound	5.6170	5.4410	5.4210
1 Swiss Franc	5.0360	4.8220	4.8070
100 UAE Dirham	125.6200	119.1200	118.9200
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.8000	3.5680	3.3680
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.6200	59.9900	N/A
100 Danish Krone	64.6300	59.4800	59.2800
100 Hongkong Dollar	59.2400	56.2900	56.0900
100 Indian Rupee	5.4000	5.0700	4.8700
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0291	0.0264	0.0214
100 Japanese Yen	2.8870	2.7950	2.7850
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.9000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	41.0800	37.8000	37.6000
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6600	1.5600	1.3600
100 Philippine Peso	7.9300	7.4800	7.2800
100 Qatar Riyal	126.4900	120.0800	119.8800
100 Saudi Riyal	122.8300	116.6000	116.4000
100 South Africa Rand	24.9700	22.5500	22.3500
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5900	1.4600	1.2600
100 Swedish Krona	42.1500	38.4000	38.2000
100 Thai Baht	13.7700	12.2200	11.8200

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

## Telecommunications Neutral

Malaysian telcos' share price performance in 2024



Source: Company data, RHB

FOR 2025, we see nominal mobile service revenue (MSR) growth as usage/spending propensity may be cramped by the secondary effects of further subsidy rationalisation.

Coupled with 5G monetisation challenges, mobile ARPU's may continue to reel under pressure. We see the sustained competition in the FBB segment as MNOs continue to peddle FBB-mobile packages to drive customer retention.

In our view, enterprise-solutions will continue to drive 5G demand as retail use cases remain scarce. We see good progress made by the MNOs on commercialising 5G solutions across a number of verticals.

The selection of U Mobile (UM) as the second 5G network access provider has caught the market by surprise.

Clarity is sought on: i) MNOs commitment to Digital Nasional Berhad (DNB) now that it no longer holds exclusive 5G access, ii) the continuity of long-term lease agreements with telcos, and iii) 5G-related capex. Our base case view is for UM to enter into network collaborations to defray 5G capex, which could range from MYR3-4bn, by our estimates. The sharing of network infrastructure would expedite site deployments, allowing population coverage targets to be met more swiftly.

The burgeoning demand for DCs should continue to benefit fixed integrated telcos. We note the completion of TM's new cable landing station in Morib would allow it to better serve the connectivity needs of new DCs sprouting up in the south of the Klang Valley.

TM's JV with Singtel (51:49) to develop a 64MW artificial intelligence-DC is on track for completion by 4Q26. We previously estimated the AI-DC could potentially contribute MYR80-85m to TM's earnings (based on its stake). — RHB Research, Jan 10

## Dialog Group Bhd Target price: RM3.11



Source: Bloomberg

WE are positive on the final investment decision (FID) for the field development and abandonment plan under the Baram Junior Cluster (BJC) Small Field Asset Production Sharing Contract (SFA PSC), as it will further boost Dialog's domestic upstream assets.

The capex for this field development and abandonment plan is estimated at US\$235m. Following the approval, Dialog will embark on a 2-year development phase, of which first gas is expected in end-CY26. Recall that Dialog has a 70% participating interest, including the operatorship of the BJC contract, while Petroleum Sarawak Exploration and Production will hold the remaining 30%.

BJC is one of the six discovered resource opportunities featured in the Malaysia Bid Round 2022. These projects are mostly in shallow waters and located close to existing production infrastructure, which could lower its capex.

On its balance sheet, as Dialog has net cash of MYR455m as of 2QFY25, we believe the company should be able to shoulder the equity outlay of US\$66m, if the project goes with 60% debt funding. Pending further details such as reserves and production profile, we may not be able to accurately assess the potential earnings impact.

However, we have been guided that the project IRR is estimated to be in the low mid-teens. Based on our back-of-envelope calculation, the average annual profit is MYR40m (about 6% of FY27E earnings), assuming a project IRR of 12%, 60% debt financing, and Dialog's own 70% stake. At 7% WACC, we value this project at MYR0.03 per share.

BUY with RM3.11 TP. — RHB Research, Jan 10

## Building Materials Overweight



Source: Kenanga Research, Bloomberg

ALUMINIUM prices have fluctuated between US\$2,400/MT and US\$2,600/MT over the past two months, despite expectations of firmness driven by unexpectedly strong consumption in China earlier in the year. Strong consumption in China during the year's initial months provided an early boost, while demand outside China has been supported by the expansion of renewable energy projects and increased electric vehicle (EV) production. Nevertheless, concerns linger regarding the sustainability of Chinese demand as it relies heavily on the recovery of the infrastructure and property sectors, both of which remain uncertain. On the supply side, environmental pressures have led to the shutdown of coal-powered smelters, while Western sanctions on Russian aluminium producers are adding to supply constraints. These factors are likely to influence market dynamics in the near term.

We project a higher average aluminium price of US\$2,450/MT in CY25 vs. US\$2,420/MT in CY24, while we expect SiMn prices to remain firm at above US\$950/MT for CY25 vs. US\$980/MT in CY24 as ore price remains firmer. Conversely, we expect prices of FeSi of US\$1,350/MT in CY25 against US\$1,280/MT for CY24.

China's steel demand is expected to grow modestly in 2025 after four years of stagnation or decline driven by a stabilising property market, additional stimulus supporting other sectors, and improving consumer sentiment. While exports provided significant support in 2024 (+19% YoY), steelmakers may face pressure in 2025 and beyond due to rising anti-dumping investigations with a more pronounced impact likely in 2026. The industry's poor profitability has already led to production cuts and is paving the way for consolidation as many steelmakers face the risk of bankruptcy. If capacity limits are enforced, utilisation rates could improve, potentially boosting Chinese steel prices in 2025. — Kenanga Research, Jan 10





# the Sun **LYFE**

MONDAY | JAN 13, 2025

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# Streaming wars

**Battle for eyeballs rages on - P22**

## WEEKLY FOCUS

### MONDAY

Technology and social media

### TUESDAY

Travel and leisure

### WEDNESDAY

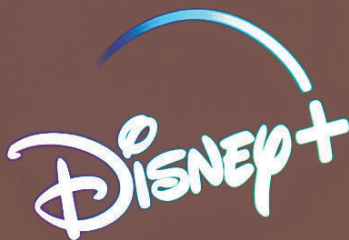
Fashion and beauty

### THURSDAY

Home and living

### FRIDAY

Food and beverage



## INSIDE

**p23** Oppo's new AI-powered smartphone

**p24** What users want from OpenAI in 2025

**p25** Top celebrity items auctioned last year

**p26** Singaporean singer releases track, perfume

BY YASMIN ZULRAEZ



**T**HE rise of video-on-demand services in Malaysia has revolutionised how viewers consume entertainment. From global powerhouses such as Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar to regional favourites such as Viu, Malaysians are spoilt for choice in 2025.

Each platform brings unique strengths to the table, catering to diverse preferences. Here is an in-depth look at what these platforms offer, how they stand out and where they overlap.

**Netflix: All-around crowd-pleaser**

Netflix remains the undisputed king of streaming services globally and in Malaysia – its appeal lies in its versatility. With its extensive library of movies, TV series, documentaries and anime, Netflix caters to audiences of all ages and tastes.

➔ **Flexible plans**

From the affordable RM18.90 Mobile plan (480p) to the high-definition Premium plan at RM62.90 (4K HDR), Netflix ensures accessibility across budgets.

➔ **Ad-free experience**

Unlike some competitors, Netflix plans to guarantee uninterrupted viewing.

➔ **Netflix originals**

Hits such as *Stranger Things* and *Wednesday* continue to dominate pop culture, setting Netflix apart as a hub for exclusive content.

➔ **Kids' mode**

Parents can rest assured with pin-protected profiles tailored for family-friendly programming.

**Challenges:** While Netflix offers diverse content, its pricing at higher tiers may be steep for some viewers compared to local competitors such as Viu or Disney+ Hotstar.

**Disney+ Hotstar: Fusion of global and regional content**

Disney+ Hotstar strikes a balance between international blockbusters and regional programming, making it a favourite among fans of Disney, Pixar and Marvel as well as lovers of Asian dramas.

➔ **Broad content portfolio**

With titles such as *Ahsoka*, *The Little Mermaid* and Asian hits such as *Moving* and *The Worst of Evil*, Disney+ Hotstar appeals to diverse audiences.

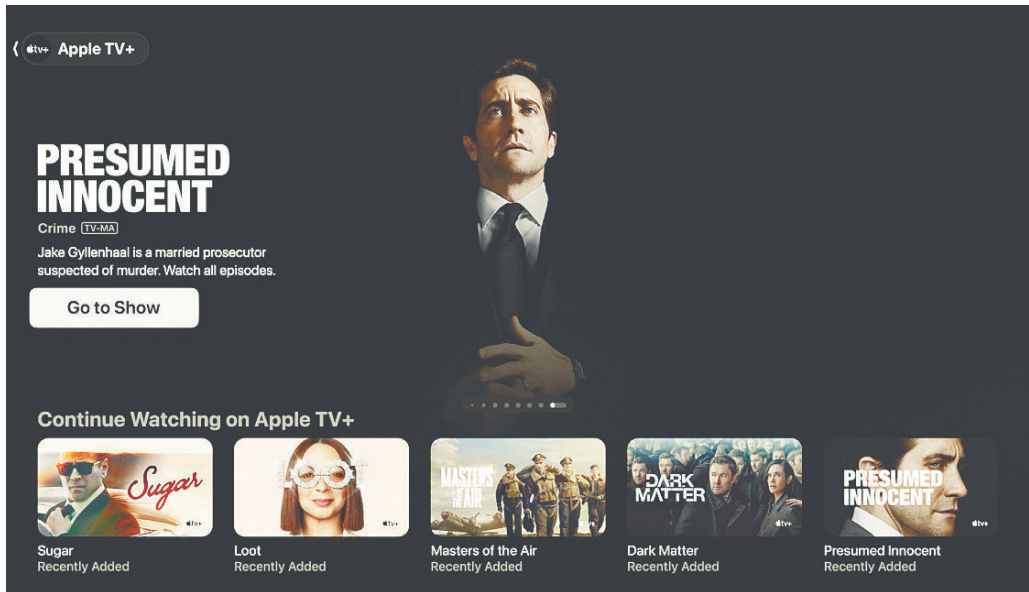
➔ **Affordable pricing**

The Basic plan at RM24.90 per month offers full HD quality, while the Premium plan (RM39.90 per month) boasts 4K Ultra HD and Dolby Atmos.

➔ **Sports and live events**

Disney+ Hotstar remains one of the few platforms in Malaysia to integrate live sports streaming, making it a compelling choice for sports enthusiasts.

**Challenges:** Limited simultaneous streaming on the Basic plan and frequent device login restrictions can



With a smaller library, Apple TV+ stresses quality over quantity.

# Streaming options in 2025

## ➔ Breakdown of what is on offer this year

frustrate users with large households.

**Prime Video: Versatility and add-on channels**

Amazon's Prime Video carves out its niche with an impressive selection of Hollywood content, Amazon Originals and integration with third-party add-on channels such as MGM and Crunchyroll.

➔ **Affordable subscription**

At RM25 per month, Prime Video offers a competitive price point, allowing users to stream on three devices simultaneously.

➔ **Add-on flexibility**

The platform's versatility is enhanced by the ability to purchase or rent movies and subscribe to additional channels.

➔ **Unique offerings**

Prime Video Originals such as *The Boys* and *Good Omens* stand out for their unconventional storytelling.

**Challenges:** The service lacks the robust regional content that platforms like Disney+ Hotstar and Viu offer,

limiting its appeal to local audiences.

**Apple TV+: Exclusive originals for a premium audience**

Apple TV+ focuses exclusively on Apple Originals, offering a curated selection of high-quality, ad-free programming.

➔ **Apple ecosystem integration**  
Compatible with Apple devices, the service offers a premium user experience.

➔ **Affordable bundles**

Priced at RM29.90 per month, Apple TV+ also comes free for three months with new Apple devices or as part of the Apple One bundle (from RM34.90 per month).

➔ **Critically acclaimed content**  
Award-winning shows such as *Ted Lasso* and *Severance* attract discerning viewers.

**Challenges:** With a smaller library compared with Netflix and Disney+ Hotstar, Apple TV+ appeals to a niche audience rather than the masses.

**Viu: Regional powerhouse**

Viu's strength lies in its focus on Asian dramas, making it the go-to platform for fans of Korean, Japanese and Chinese series.

➔ **Dual model**

A free, ad-supported tier and premium subscription (starting at RM35 for three months) cater to diverse budgets.

➔ **Localised content**

Viu has successfully built a loyal audience in Southeast Asia with Malay subtitles and regional dramas.

➔ **Exclusive Viu Originals**

Series such as *Black* and *The Bridge* elevate Viu's reputation for original content.

**Challenges:** While affordable, Viu does not offer as many international blockbusters as platforms such as Netflix or Prime Video.

**Max: Home of blockbuster franchises**

HBO Max, rebranded as Max in 2024 in Malaysia, targets fans of premium franchises such as *Harry Potter*, the DC Universe and *Game of Thrones*.

➔ **High-quality streaming**

The Ultimate plan (RM52.90 per



Viu focuses primarily on Asian content.



Prime Video offers Hollywood blockbusters and Amazon Originals at an affordable price.

month) offers 4K UHD and Dolby Atmos, ideal for cinephiles.

➔ **Exclusive content**

With a library featuring HBO Originals, Warner Bros hits and Discovery documentaries, Max delivers a rich catalogue.

➔ **Family-friendly profiles**  
Parental controls and kid-friendly content cater to families.

**Challenges:** The Standard plan (RM34.90 per month) limits streaming to two devices and offers fewer downloads, making it less competitive for larger households.

**Key takeaways**

The Malaysian streaming market in 2025 is as competitive as ever, with platforms vying for dominance through distinct offerings:

- ➔ **Best for blockbusters:** Max, with its iconic franchises and cinematic quality, is unmatched in this category.
- ➔ **Best for regional content:** Viu excels

in delivering localised dramas and original Asian programming.

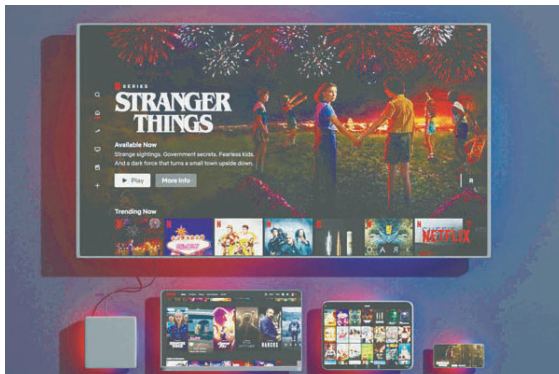
➔ **Best all-Around platform:** Netflix maintains its edge with a mix of global content, exclusive originals and flexible pricing.

➔ **Best for Disney fans:** Disney+ Hotstar combines beloved Disney content with regional and live sports offerings.

➔ **Best value for money:** Prime Video offers affordable pricing with additional purchase and rental options.

➔ **Best for premium viewers:** Apple TV+ appeals to niche audiences with exclusive, critically acclaimed programming.

There is no one-size-fits-all option, but you should choose based on your preferences, budget and streaming needs. Competition ensures each platform continues innovating, offering better content and features for consumers to evaluate.



Netflix's key strength is its extensive and diverse catalogue.



# Oppo unveils AI-powered Reno13

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

➤ New smartphones equipped with advanced underwater photography capabilities

**O**ppo Malaysia has unveiled its latest lineup of artificial intelligence (AI)-powered smartphones, the Oppo Reno13 Series, featuring the Reno13 Pro 5G, Reno13 5G and Reno13 F 5G. Packed with flagship-level AI features such as AI Livephoto, AI Editor and underwater photography enabled by IP69-rated water and dust resistance, the Reno13 Series is a blend of powerful hardware and intuitive software within a sleek, durable design.

Tailored for everyone from creators to everyday users alike, it could set a new benchmark for smartphones by offering uncompromised performance and advanced AI capabilities.

## Geared for underwater photography

With an IP69 water and dust resistance rating across all models, the Reno13 Series offers exceptional protection against these elements. Not only are the phones shielded against splashes of water up to 80°C, they can also remain submerged in water up to 2 metres deep for 30 minutes, unlocking all-new ways for users to explore and create content from their surroundings.

The phones support underwater photo and video recording without the need for external waterproof casings or accessories.

All models feature a dedicated Underwater Mode with independent colour tuning for distortion-free, lifelike shots and physical button control for effortless underwater use. Additionally, an advanced one-tap drainage mechanism expels water from the device within seconds to maintain optimal performance.

With this in mind, users can explore underwater photography with unprecedented ease and reliability.

## AI-elevated photography

Oppo takes mobile photography to new heights on the Reno13 Series with a collection of powerful AI features designed to help users capture every lively moment in vibrant detail.

AI Livephoto redefines dynamic photography with ultra-clear, high-definition images combined with an incomparably smooth and stable shooting experience. Using electronic image stabilisation and dynamic frame expansion technology, the feature minimises frame drops while enhancing image sharpness to create a smooth and reliable live photo experience. A full suite of AI-enabled post-editing and



The Oppo Reno13 Pro is available in Graphite Grey and Plume Purple colours.



The phones can remain submerged in water up to 2 metres deep for 30 minutes.

creative enhancements tools, including make-up effects and filters, together with Pro XDR technology provides further personalisation freedom.

Another new feature on the Reno13 Series is AI Motion, which leverages advanced generative AI technology to transform still images into vibrant three-second videos with near-2K quality. By adding lively micro-motion effects or time-lapse animations to still photos such as starry skies or bustling streets, AI Motion can rejuvenate any photo

into a dynamic Livephoto without any professional editing skills needed.

Alongside these features, the Reno13 Series' AI Editor introduces a suite of tools that transform ordinary shots into professional-grade images.

➤ AI Clarity Enhancer sharpens distant scenery to make even far-off objects like landscapes or architectural details appear crystal clear.

➤ AI Unblur brings clarity to previously blurry photos, ensuring every moment is captured with lifelike precision.

➤ AI Reflection Remover eliminates glass reflections, allowing users to capture scenery through windows with minimal interference.

The core of the series' photography are its cameras, with the Reno13 Pro 5G boasting a 50MP main camera (Sony IMX890), a 50MP telephoto camera with 3.5× optical zoom, an 8MP ultra-wide camera and a 50MP selfie camera.

On the Reno13 Pro 5G and Reno13 5G, both the front and rear cameras support 4K recording, capturing video that is four times as clear as standard 1080p video.

## Enhanced AI for productivity and efficiency

Alongside AI-driven enhancements in photo and video, Oppo's latest series also taps into the power of AI to boost efficiency in everyday life and work. The series offers innovative AI features such as Documents - a standalone app for professionals to summarise, edit text or even extract charts for editing directly on the document with the help of AI.

Meanwhile, the AI Assistant for Notes offers AI-driven tools for formatting, editing, content expansion and style variations. These capabilities are complemented by the upgraded AI Toolbox 2.0, which is included via the sidebar to offer real-time spell checks,

translations, text rewriting and suggestions in multiple languages based on intelligent understanding of the user's current task.

## Ultimate experience, superior performance

Built on a cutting-edge 4nm process, the custom MediaTek Dimensity 8350 platform features an eight-core CPU configuration with a main frequency of up to 3.35GHz, offering a 20% boost in performance while reducing peak power consumption by 30%.

The Reno13 series also introduces AI LinkBoost 2.0, Oppo's latest connectivity solution, featuring 11 strategically placed antennas in a 360° configuration to enhance signal reception. The intelligent system dynamically adjusts network priority to keep users connected even in busy and crowded environments.

Compared with the previous generation, video sharing speed in stadiums is now 25% faster and video buffering in busy shopping malls has increased by 24%. Powered by Oppo's custom SignalBoost X1 chip, AI LinkBoost 2.0 also enhances wall penetration and eliminates dead zones.

On top of this, the updated AI LinkBoost includes a Wi-Fi Positioning feature that guides users on how to place their phone in the optimal position to secure a strong connection even in difficult spots.

For battery and charging, the Reno13 Pro 5G and Reno13 5G are equipped with 5,800mAh and 5,600mAh batteries respectively. Both high endurance batteries are designed to offer extended lifespans without compromising performance by maintaining at least 80% of their original capacity after five years of use.

Oppo has fitted the Reno13 F 5G with the highest energy density 5,800mAh battery ever on a Reno phone alongside 45W SuperVooC™ Flash Charge to provide rapid power-ups and hours of additional battery life with just minutes of charging.

## Market availability

The Oppo Reno13 Series has been available since last Saturday. The Reno13 Pro (12GB + 512GB) costs RM2,999, while the Reno13 is going for RM2,599 (12GB + 512GB) and RM2,299 (12GB + 256GB).

For the Oppo Reno13 F, the smartphones are priced at RM1,799 (12GB + 512GB), RM1,499 (12GB + 256GB) and RM1,399 (8GB + 256GB, only on Oppo e-comm channels).

The new phone series comes loaded with a full AI suite that elevates photography and videography.



# Acer's next-gen gadgets

➤ Empowering productivity, sustainability, gaming excellence with AI integration

**A**CER made waves with an innovative lineup spanning laptops, artificial intelligence (AI)-powered PCs, handheld gaming devices and sustainable computing solutions. The announcements include the Swift Go, Aspire Vero, Predator Helios, Nitro V and Nitro Blaze product lines, alongside peripherals such as the Acer Connect M6E 5G Mobile Wi-Fi and Nitro Mobile Gaming Controller. With a strong focus on AI, sustainability and performance, Acer continues to redefine possibilities across the tech ecosystem.

## Lightweight power meets sustainability

The Swift Go series and Aspire Vero 16 laptops show Acer merging performance with eco-consciousness while delivering connectivity solutions for mobile users.

## Swift Go laptops

The Swift Go 14 and 16 models combine ultra-thin designs with Intel Core Ultra 200H processors and Intel Arc graphics. Equipped with vibrant 3K OLED or 2K IPS touch displays, these devices deliver vivid visuals, certified by Vesa DisplayHDR TrueBlack 500 and Eyesafe 2.0 standards. Features like Wi-Fi 7 connectivity, 32GB of LPDDR5X memory and onboard AI tools for

productivity, creativity and conferencing, make these devices ideal for mobile professionals.

## Aspire Vero 16

A Consumer Electronics Show 2025 Innovation Award honouree, the Aspire Vero 16 showcases a carbon-neutral design with a chassis of over 70% post-consumer recycled plastic and bio-based oyster shell material. It features Intel Core Ultra processors and easy-to-repair designs to extend product lifespans. The 16-inch laptop also supports high-resolution displays, robust connectivity options and durability certified by MIL-STD-810H standards.

## Acer Connect M6E and Acer Wave D7

Mobile users will appreciate the Acer Connect M6E 5G Mobile Wi-Fi, providing high-speed internet access in over 135 countries with up to 28 hours of battery life and support for up to 20 devices. The Acer Wave D7 Wi-Fi 7 dongle enhances connectivity further, delivering speeds of up to 2,880Mbps with tri-band technology and multi-link optimisation for smooth online experiences.

## Expanding AI capabilities with Copilot+ PCs

Acer introduced its Copilot+ PC ecosystem, powered by advanced processors with integrated neural



The latest Aspire S all-in-one desktops feature new, sleek minimalist designs.

processing units.

## Swift Go AI and Aspire AI laptops

The Swift Go AI laptops leverage AMD Ryzen AI 300 processors, offering up to 50 AI Tops for accelerated AI workloads and enhanced battery life. These devices feature OLED displays with up to 3K resolution and an anodised aluminium chassis for sleek portability. Meanwhile, the Aspire 14 AI balances simplicity and power, with Intel Core Ultra processors, sustainable materials and up to 22 hours of video playback.

## Aspire S AI and Aspire C AI AIO desktops

The Aspire S AI and Aspire C AI desktops bring minimalist designs to modern homes, powered by Intel Core Ultra and AMD Ryzen AI processors. These devices offer immersive visuals with Full HD and QHD displays, advanced wireless connectivity and eco-friendly construction.

## Revo Box AI Mini PC

Acer also launched the compact Revo Box AI, measuring just 0.75 litres but packed with Intel Core Ultra processors, up to 32GB of memory and 1TB of storage. This portable solution delivers massive performance for demanding tasks and features flexible connectivity options such as Wi-Fi 6E and dual 2.5G Ethernet ports.

## Gaming meets AI power

Acer redefined gaming laptops with the Predator Helios 16 AI, Helios 18 AI and Helios Neo 16S AI models, featuring cutting-edge NVIDIA GeForce RTX 50 Series GPUs and Intel Core Ultra 9 processors.

## Flagship Helios AI models

The Helios 16 AI and Helios 18 AI cater to hardcore gamers with up to 64GB memory, 6TB storage and advanced cooling technologies such as 6th Gen AeroBlade fans. Their stunning OLED and Mini LED displays support NVIDIA DLSS 4 and ray tracing for immersive visuals.

## Helios Neo 16S AI

The Helios Neo 16S AI offers a more compact form factor without sacrificing power. With AMD Ryzen processors and NVIDIA RTX 5070 Ti



Aspire C Series delivers AI capabilities that boost productivity and efficiency.



Revo Box AI provides all the basics in a compact, yet powerful 0.75-litre design.

GPUs, this model balances gaming and creative applications.

Acer also unveiled the Predator XB323QX gaming monitor, featuring a 5K display, NVIDIA G-Sync Pulsar technology and up to a 288Hz refresh rate for unparalleled clarity and smoothness.

## Accessible gaming innovations

Expanding its gaming portfolio, Acer introduced the Nitro Blaze handheld devices and Nitro V laptops, designed for gamers seeking affordability and performance.

## Nitro Blaze handhelds

The Nitro Blaze 8 and Blaze 11 are powered by AMD Ryzen 7 processors, with WQXGA touch displays offering up to 144Hz refresh rates. These devices feature AMD Radeon graphics, up to 2TB storage and Acer's Game Space app for easy access to gaming libraries. The

accompanying Nitro Mobile Gaming Controller enhances mobile gaming with its foldable design and fast-charging capabilities.

## Nitro V AI gaming laptops

The Nitro V series offers screen sizes tailored to various preferences in 14-inch, 15-inch, 16-inch and 17-inch models. These laptops include the Nitro V 15, featuring AMD Ryzen 7 8845HS or Intel Core 7 240H processors, 180Hz refresh rates and 3ms response times. The Nitro V 15 also supports up to 32GB memory and 2TB storage, ensuring smooth gameplay and multitasking. The AI-powered lineup features NVIDIA RTX 4050 GPUs, delivering lifelike visuals with ray tracing and NVIDIA DLSS 3.5.

The new Acer devices will begin rolling out globally quarterly this year, with prices and configurations varying by region.



Nitro V laptops offer exceptional responsiveness and stutter-free visuals.



Nitro Blaze is made for gaming on the go.





# Top celebrities, entertainment auctions in 2024

▶ John Lennon's *Help!* acoustic guitar fetches US\$2.9m

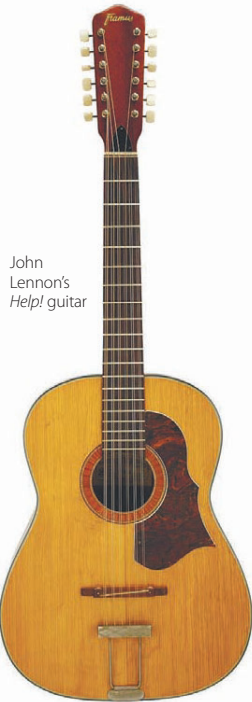
**I**N 2024, US-based private auction house Julien's Auctions dominated and set new world records in the industry led by the high-profile sales of John Lennon's long-lost *Help!* Hootenanny guitar for a mammoth US\$2.9 million (RM13 million), LeBron James's *Sports Illustrated* "The Chosen One" basketball jersey (US\$1.3 million), George Harrison's early Beatles-era Futurama guitar (US\$1.27 million) and *Star Trek*'s holy trinity of William Shatner's Captain James T. Kirk's phaser (US\$910,000), communicator (US\$780,000) and yellow tunic (US\$455,000).

These are among the highlights of 2024:

### John Lennon's Long-Lost *Help!* Guitar is top of the pops

Julien's top selling item of the year was John Lennon's long-lost Framus 12-string *Help!* Hootenanny acoustic guitar sold for a record US\$2.9 million at Hard Rock Cafe New York.

The extraordinary guitar was found in an attic in the UK after being unseen for over 50 years. Considered the most important Beatles guitar ever to come to market, the guitar enters the pantheon of Julien's world record sales of Beatles memorabilia, including a previous John Lennon acoustic guitar (US\$2.4 million), Ringo Starr's Ludwig drum kit (US\$2.2 million), The Ludwig Beatles Ed Sullivan Show drumhead (US\$2.1 million) and The Beatles *White Album*, owned by Ringo Starr, that sold for US\$790,000.



John Lennon's *Help!* guitar

### King James, Bruce Lee hold court in Hong Kong

The legacy of LeBron James and "Legends in Motion" sale featuring Bruce Lee, BTS, Michael Jackson and more lit up Hong Kong in Julien's spectacular first auction held in the cosmopolitan arts city on Sept 28, 2024.

Kicking off with a museum style public exhibition at Pacific Place that drew a record number of 43,000 visitors and a premier viewing at Lamborghini showroom, the all-star auction items brought in US\$3 million and a new world record for the NBA icon's *Sports Illustrated* "The Chosen One" jersey (US\$1.3 million).

This auction marked the third Julien's exhibition in town after Icons: Playboy, Hugh Hefner and Marilyn Monroe at Fringe Club in January and Princess Diana at the so-called Silicon Valley of Culture - K11 Musea in April last year, underscoring Julien's commitment to their presence and expansion in the dynamic Asia market.

### Princess Diana Elegance and Royal Collection

Princess Diana's Elegance and Royal Collection on June 27, 2024 was the most significant auction of her garments and accessories in 25 years. The exhibition toured Hong Kong, New York, Ireland and Los Angeles, attracting huge crowds and culminating in a record-breaking sale of US\$5.5 million, enhancing Julien's reputation as the top auction house for Princess Diana items.

The exhibition in Hong Kong showcased her 1987 Victor Edelstein evening dress, sold for US\$910,000, 1986 Murray Arbeid Midnight Blue Tulle Diamante Star, sold for US\$780,000 and the 1989 Hong Kong Royal Tour Catherine Walker



LeBron James's 'The Chosen One' Jersey



The *Friends* couch



Olivia Newton-John's *Grease* jacket



Princess Diana's 1987 Victor Edelstein evening dress



Sarah Jessica Parker's tutu from *Sex & the City*



Grace Kelly's Givenchy dress

### Friends 30th anniversary auction

Warner Bros Television and Julien's Auctions partnered to celebrate 30 years of *Friends* in a headline-making white glove auction on Sept 23, 2024 that created a fan frenzy of nostalgia and bidding over the coveted collection of iconic costumes, props and memorabilia from the smash television sitcom. Fans pivoted for screen worn sweaters, shirts and coats worn by Rachel, Ross, Monica, Joey, Phoebe and Chandler as well as for the iconic Central Perk studio-made couch that fetched an impressive US\$29,250.

### Unstoppable fashion and luxury

Following the record sale of Princess Diana's 1985 Jacques Azagury dress in Dec 2023, Julien's showcased iconic celebrity fashion on Jan 18, 2024, including Sarah Jessica Parker's Carrie Bradshaw tutu, which sold for US\$52,000 and Grace Kelly's 1961 Givenchy dress when visiting Washington DC sold for US\$325,000. The year ended with a white glove sale of Bob Mackie's dazzling collection on Dec 11, 2024.

### New world record for *Star Trek* memorabilia

Julien's Auctions set a world record for *Star Trek* memorabilia during the

"Bid, Long & Prosper" sale on Nov 9, 2024 by offering 200 original props and costumes, totaling US\$3.6 million including William Shatner's long-lost phaser (US\$910,000) and communicator (US\$780,000) as well as Shatner's Captain Kirk yellow tunic (US\$455,000) and the USS Enterprise helm (US\$260,000).

### Olivia Newton-John's *Grease* jacket

The Property from the Estate of Olivia Newton-John on Dec 13,



George Harrison's Futurama guitar

2024, celebrated the artist's life and legacy with a white glove sale and benefited The Olivia Newton-John Foundation Fund, with the iconic black leather motorcycle jacket

from the 1978 film *Grease* selling for US\$476,250, together with over 1,000 famous entertainment items in Julien's "A Week of Hollywood Legends", reinforcing the auction house' partnership with TCM and as a destination for Hollywood memorabilia and preserving movie magic.

### World record for Beatle George Harrison's guitar

George Harrison and Julien's made Beatles history once again in the world record US\$1.27 million sale of his early Beatles-era Futurama guitar, the highest selling instrument played by Harrison. The iconic guitar was used in over 324 Beatles performances.

# Shazza returns with new single *Perfume*

➤ Singaporean star also unveils fragrance with track

**S**INGAPOREAN singer-songwriter Shazza made a splashy return with the release of her latest single *Perfume* last Friday.

Shazza, whose real name is Shareefa Aminah, wrote her first song at just 11 years old and has not looked back since. Born and raised in Singapore, the 23-year-old grew up with music playing a big role in her life, influenced by artistes such as Norah Jones and the Black Eyed Peas.

*Perfume* is an upbeat yet heartfelt track and the first single from Shazza's upcoming second album. The single was unveiled at a pre-launch event in Singapore, which also saw the debut of her new fragrance. The singer conceptualised the scent *Perfume*: by Shazza to reflect her personal journey of growth and self-discovery while working on her album.

*Perfume* explores the emotional struggle of leaving a toxic relationship. The track's raw honesty stands out as Shazza draws

from her own experiences, reflecting on the conflict between choosing necessary change and staying in familiar, stagnant circumstances.

Shazza's career has seen a steady rise since her debut album *Chapter One* in 2023, followed by her sold-out headline show at the Esplanade Recital Studio. In 2024, her popularity soared after receiving an on-stage mention from Coldplay's Chris Martin during the group's Singapore concert.

The singer famously collaborated with TikTok sensation Crash Adams and performed at Singapore's 59th National Day Parade. She also partnered with special needs organisation MIJ Hub on a philanthropic project.

Entering 2025 with renewed energy, Shazza is confident about her artistic vision and is excited to share more of her music.

"I feel a lot more confident about building and executing my artistic vision and I'm far more excited than I have been in a long while about sharing my art. It feels wonderful and I'm looking forward to bearing more of my heart and soul to my audience in earnest," she said.



Shazza's latest song *Perfume* is available on all streaming platforms.



OpenAI CEO Altman asks users what they want to see from the company in 2025. – PEXELSPIC

## OpenAI users keen for more automated bots in 2025

**ALTHOUGH** OpenAI is constantly improving its many artificial intelligence (AI) tools, such as ChatGPT, Dall-E and Sora, users are still eager for more updates and features. Indeed, they are keen to get their hands on increasingly powerful content-generation tools.

The end of 2024 brought a great deal of news from OpenAI, from the rollout of ChatGPT's search engine to its integration into WhatsApp and the official launch of the video-generation tool Sora.

Despite this, OpenAI CEO Sam Altman asked his followers on X what new features or improvements they would like OpenAI to bring to these tools in 2025.

According to Altman, the top priority is the development of a new form of artificial general intelligence (AGI) capable of

"surpassing" anything a human can achieve. There are even whispers that the next model deployed in ChatGPT could come close to this concept.

Users are also keen to see more intelligent agents, automated bots that can perform tasks like a real personal assistant, such as, for example, rescheduling missed appointments or placing orders according to the user's needs.

People are also hoping for an update to GPT 4o, a deeper search function and an even more powerful version of Sora – no surprise there. Without going into detail, Altman noted that many incoming updates received little mention – if at all. Time to place your bets on what the company has in store for 2025! – ETX Studio

## Artificial intelligence coming to TV

**THE** first artificial intelligence (AI)-powered televisions from South Korea were showcased at the Consumer Electronics Show (CES), which took place in Las Vegas last week. This integration of AI opens up new possibilities and uses.

Samsung and LG are causing a stir with the unveiling of their first AI-enhanced TV sets. This small revolution for the sector promises to considerably enrich the user experience and even offer new uses.

Samsung is integrating its in-house Vision AI technology into its new Neo QLED 8K series while LG is equipping its new Oled models with Microsoft's Copilot intelligent assistant, accessible with a simple click from the remote control.

For TV viewers, new conveniences are on the horizon. Firstly, AI enables content viewing to be optimised thanks to upscaling, which involves adapting a video to a higher definition without loss of quality, and the automatic adjustment of

HDR levels. Sound also can be automatically adapted to suit the environment and the content being viewed.

But AI goes much further: over time, it learns the user's preferences and recommends suitable content. In some cases, AI can even automatically translate what is said on-screen into another language, or even find the recipe for a dish featured on a show currently being watched.

The idea is to create intelligent interactions – to have easy access to contextualised information directly on screen. In addition to recipes, this can include filming locations or, more simply, the names of the actors you are watching. These same TVs can, of course, interact with other connected devices, making the TV the true technological hub of the home.

The fact that the biggest TV vendors are embracing this technology is a sign that we may soon be using TVs like never before, for an ever richer user experience. – ETX Studio



As major television manufacturers embrace AI technology, viewers can look forward to a transformative experience in their homes. – LGPIC





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# Classified

## 302 Jobs

**theSun WE ARE HIRING!**  
 Malaysian Paper

### HR & ADMIN POSITIONS : ( Executive / Senior / Assistant Manager )

**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.
- For Senior / Assistant Manager with supervisor skills.
- Handle Recruitment matters.
- Experience in payroll system will be advantages.
- Handle General Admin and other HR works.

**Requirement:**

- Diploma / Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management or related field.
- Executive : 1+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field
- Senior : 3+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field
- Asst Manager : 5+ years of experience in HR & Admin or a related field
- Fresh graduates are encouraged 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](mailto:thesun.hr2@gmail.com)  
 ( Closing Date: 31st January 2025 )

## 302 Jobs

**theSun WE ARE HIRING!**  
 Malaysian Paper

### 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, & 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 encouraged 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.

**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.
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### 322 Notices

**FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358698-H)**  
 NOTIS SELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNUTK DILELONG SEPERTI SEMUA ADA TEMPAI & TARIPH LELONG: Northern Region (Ahor Satar, Butterworth & Ipoh) 16-01-2025  
 (No. Pendaftaran: 113066)  
 TARIKH MELIHAT: SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Ahor Satar) 09:00pagi - 4:00petang  
 PERTANYAAN (Tel): Butterworth 04-3567972, Alor Satar 04-787 7972, Ipoh 05-5293971  
**FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN :** a) Mr. Chew Wook Kok  
 b) Mr. Steven Lim Peng Seng (02097),  
 c) Ph Hinza Binti Abu Samah (00919)  
 Alamat : 352, Pematang Tak, Jaya Maklum Sg Dua 13800 Butterworth.  
 Lot 138-A, Batu 5, Jalan Lenggur 05460 Alor Satar  
 #F51365, Jalan Jelapang, Kiri Perumahan Tm Meru 30020 Ipoh

SLA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : <http://www.focalpark.com.my>

Item	Reg No	Janis & Model	Tahun
AM1	G1M1380	CHEVROLET CAPTIVA (A)	2010
AM2	WUW1411	CHEVROLET CRUZE I 1.8i	2010
AM3	AMM7986	HONDA HRV 1.8	2016
AM4	AKJ5714	HYUNDAI SONATA 2.0	2013
AM5	WBS4688	KIA CERATO (A) 1.6	2015
AM6	AJS5577	KIA RIO HB (A) 1.4	2015
AM7	BPK2706	NISSAN ALMERA (A) 1.5	2017
AM8	JIQ3170	NISSAN NANARA	2021
AM9	WOM5068	PROTON EXORA 1.6	2012
AM10	AKG2124	PROTON EXORA 1.6	2015
AM11	PKR1707825	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2017
AM12	PPB1795	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2019
AM13	AKU17085	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2017
AM14	AKS5104	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2017
AM15	RAP2404	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2023
AM16	AMC2375	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2021
AM17	WMN9922	TOYOTA COROLLA (A) 1.8	2005
AM18	AKL343	NISSAN X-TRAIL 2.0	2016
AM19	AKT4722	PERODUA AXIA 1.0	2017
AM20	PKL1925	PERODUA INO	2011
AM21	AHB6645	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2010
AM22	ALH3943	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2019
AM23	ALG5557	TOYOTA CAMRY 2.5	2012
AM24	JTSS1699	HONDA BRV 1.5	2019
AM25	PKS2710	PROTON EXORA 1.6	2012
AM26	CBK2035	PROTON PREVE 1.6	2012

(Perhatikan: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perletangan akan dilelong semula pada 23-01-2025)

### 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG DALAM KEBANKRAPAN NO. PA-29NCC-603-09/2024**

Per: Tan Beng Hai (No. K/P: E31117-01-5493) Penghutang Penghakiman  
 Ex parte: Hong Leong Bank Berhad (No. Syarak: 19340100023 (97141-X)) Pemilutang Penghakiman

**NOTIS**  
 Dalam perkara Notis Kebankrapan yang bertarikh pada 11-09-2024

Kepada: **Ooi Yen Chen** (No. K/P: 740414-02-2011 / A2747139) Penghutang Penghakiman  
 Dan/atau  
 No. 30, Mount Erskine Road, 10470 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang.

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa satu Notis Kebankrapan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh Hong Leong Bank Berhad yang berlatarbelakng di Tingkat 30, Menara Hong Leong, No. 6, Jalan Damansala, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan supaya Notis Kebankrapan tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampalakan salinan-salinannya beserta satu salinan temerlabel Perintah Untuk Penyempakan Ganti pada papan notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Pulau Pinang dan penampalan di tempat ketara premis Penghutang Penghakiman di No. 2C-4-7, Desa Airmas, Jalan Helang, 11700 Gelugor, Pulau Pinang.

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa satu Notis Kebankrapan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh Hong Leong Bank Berhad yang berlatarbelakng di Tingkat 30, Menara Hong Leong, No. 6, Jalan Damansala, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan supaya Notis Kebankrapan tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampalakan salinan-salinannya beserta satu salinan temerlabel Perintah Untuk Penyempakan Ganti pada papan notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Pulau Pinang dan penampalan di tempat ketara premis Penghutang Penghakiman di 402-5-8, Jalan Abdulah Arif, 11400 Ayer Itam, Pulau Pinang dan juga dengan menyebarkan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhbar harian tempatan berbahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" dan bahawa penampalan dan penyempakan sedemikian disediakan penyempakan yang sempurna dan cukup akan Notis Kebankrapan tersebut kepada kamu selepas tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan atau penyempakan sedemikian Notis ini mengikut mana yang berkenaan.

Jika kamu bersetia untuk menentang dan membebani diri, kamu mestilah dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan dan pengiklanan tersebut menjadi sempurna, memohon kepada Mahkamah untuk mengesahkan Notis Kebankrapan tersebut dengan memasukkan satu affidavit bagi maklud tersebut di Mahkamah ini. Jika tidak, suatu Petisyen Permintaan boleh dikeluarkan terhadap kamu.

Notis Kebankrapan tersebut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 10 Disember, 2024.  
 tandatangan  
**MUHAMAD QAYUM BIN NOORDIN**  
 Penolong Kanan Pendafatar  
 Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia  
 Georgetown

Notis ini ditailkan oleh Tetuan Kee Ooi & Lee Hong, Peguamcara bagi Pemilutang Penghakiman yang dinamakan di atas dan almat untuk penyempakan kepadanya ialah di 53, Tingkat 1, Lebu Panta, 10300 Pulau Pinang.

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF TAN SWEE LONG HOLDINGS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 239404-M**  
 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT Mr. Wong Soon Fong of 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur has been appointed as the Interim Liquidator of the Company by its directors on 06.01.2025 pursuant to Section 440(1) of the Companies Act, 2016.  
 Dated this 13.01.2025

**SECTION 440 (1) OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 STATUTORY DECLARATION OF INABILITY OF COMPANY TO CONTINUE BUSINESS, AND THAT MEETINGS OF THE COMPANY AND ITS CREDITOR HAVE BEEN SUMMONED**  
 I, **HOW AH BOY I/C No. 331212075140 OF TAN SWEE LONG HOLDINGS SDN BHD** do solemnly and sincerely declare that the company cannot, by reason of its liabilities continue its business, and that meetings of members of the company and of its creditors have been summoned for a date within thirty (30) days of the date of this declaration.

The meetings of the Company and of its creditors will be held on 07.02.2025 at 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur at 10.00am and 11.00am respectively.  
 And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1960.  
 Subscribed and solemnly declared by **How Ah Boy, Director**, at Kuala Lumpur before me, **Md Hamdan Bin Kamarudin** this 08.01.2025

**TAN SWEE LONG HOLDINGS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 239404-M**  
**I, HOW AH BOY I/C No. 331212075140 OF TAN SWEE LONG HOLDINGS SDN BHD** do solemnly and sincerely declare that the company cannot, by reason of its liabilities continue its business, and that meetings of members of the company and of its creditors have been summoned for a date within thirty (30) days of the date of this declaration.

The meetings of the Company and of its creditors will be held on 06.02.2025 at 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur at 10.00am and 11.00am respectively.  
 And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1960.  
 Subscribed and solemnly declared by **How Ah Boy, Director**, at Kuala Lumpur before me, **Md Hamdan Bin Kamarudin** this 08.01.2025

### 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG DALAM KEBANKRAPAN NO. PA-29NCC-611-02/2024**

Per: Tong Chin Peng (No. K/P: 69072-02-5295 / A1313835) Penghutang Penghakiman  
 Ex parte: Hong Leong Bank Berhad (No. Syarak: 19340100023 (97141-X)) Pemilutang Penghakiman

**NOTIS**  
 Dalam perkara Notis Kebankrapan yang bertarikh pada 10-10-2024

Kepada: **Tong Chin Peng** (No. K/P: 69072-02-5295 / A1313835) Penghutang Penghakiman  
 Dan/atau  
 d/4 Northern Office Automation Sdn. Bhd., 190-11 Thuan Teik Road, Ayer Itam, 11500 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang.

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa satu Notis Kebankrapan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh Hong Leong Bank Berhad yang berlatarbelakng di Tingkat 30, Menara Hong Leong, No. 6, Jalan Damansala, Bukit Damansara, 50490 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan supaya Notis Kebankrapan tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampalakan salinan-salinannya beserta satu salinan temerlabel Perintah Untuk Penyempakan Ganti pada papan notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Pulau Pinang dan penampalan di tempat ketara premis Penghutang Penghakiman di 14-03, Ocean View Residences, Jalan Harbour Place, 12100 Butterworth, Pulau Pinang dan di 12A-6 Jalan PJS 3/46, Taman Sri Manja, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor serta juga dengan menyebarkan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhbar harian tempatan berbahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" dan bahawa penampalan dan penyempakan sedemikian disediakan penyempakan yang sempurna dan cukup akan Notis Kebankrapan tersebut kepada kamu selepas tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan atau penyempakan sedemikian Notis ini mengikut mana yang berkenaan.

Jika kamu bersetia untuk menentang dan/atau membebani diri, kamu mestilah dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan dan pengiklanan tersebut menjadi sempurna, memohon kepada Mahkamah untuk mengesahkan Notis Kebankrapan tersebut dengan memasukkan satu affidavit bagi maklud tersebut di Mahkamah ini. Jika tidak, suatu Petisyen Permintaan boleh dikeluarkan terhadap kamu.

Notis Kebankrapan tersebut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 10 Disember, 2024.  
 tandatangan  
**MUHAMAD QAYUM BIN NOORDIN**  
 Penolong Kanan Pendafatar  
 Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia  
 Georgetown

Notis ini ditailkan oleh Tetuan Kee Ooi & Lee Hong, Peguamcara bagi Pemilutang Penghakiman yang dinamakan di atas dan almat untuk penyempakan kepadanya ialah di 53, Tingkat 1, Lebu Panta, 10300 Pulau Pinang.

### 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF VANGUARDIAN SDN. BHD. (REGISTRATION NO. 202101006883/1407182-H) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)**  
 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 439(2) of the Companies Act 2016, that the Special Resolution set out below was duly passed by the members of the Company on 6 January 2025  
 "That the Company be wound up voluntarily and Cheong Chee Leong of No. 33, Jalan Industri 3/3, Rawang Integrated Industrial Park, 48000 Rawang, Selangor Darul Ehsan be and is hereby appointed Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up."  
 Dated: 13 January 2025  
 Cheong Chee Yuen Director

**SECTION 440 (1) OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 STATUTORY DECLARATION OF INABILITY OF COMPANY TO CONTINUE BUSINESS, AND THAT MEETINGS OF THE COMPANY AND ITS CREDITOR HAVE BEEN SUMMONED**  
**T.S.L. PROPERTIES SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 361991-T**  
**I, HOW AH BOY I/C No. 331212075140 OF T.S.L. PROPERTIES SDN BHD** do solemnly and sincerely declare that the company cannot, by reason of its liabilities continue its business, and that meetings of members of the company and of its creditors have been summoned for a date within thirty (30) days of the date of this declaration.

The meetings of the Company and of its creditors will be held on 06.02.2025 at 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur at 10.00am and 11.00am respectively.  
 And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1960.  
 Subscribed and solemnly declared by **How Ah Boy, Director**, at Kuala Lumpur before me, **Md Hamdan Bin Kamarudin** this 08.01.2025

**T.S.L. PROPERTIES SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 361991-T**  
**I, HOW AH BOY I/C No. 331212075140 OF T.S.L. PROPERTIES SDN BHD** do solemnly and sincerely declare that the company cannot, by reason of its liabilities continue its business, and that meetings of members of the company and of its creditors have been summoned for a date within thirty (30) days of the date of this declaration.

The meetings of the Company and of its creditors will be held on 06.02.2025 at 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur at 10.00am and 11.00am respectively.  
 And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1960.  
 Subscribed and solemnly declared by **How Ah Boy, Director**, at Kuala Lumpur before me, **Md Hamdan Bin Kamarudin** this 08.01.2025

### 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI SHAH ALAM DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA DALAM KEBANKRAPAN NO. BA-29NCC-1408-05/2024**

BER: SEW CHRON OH (No. K/P: 780817-08-6161) PENGHUTANG PENGHAKIMAN  
 EX-PARTE: CIMB ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD (No. Pendaftaran: 20041010022 (97141-X)) PEMILUTANG PENGHAKIMAN

**NOTIS KILAN**  
 Keyapa: **SEW CHRON OH** (No. K/P: 780817-08-6161) No. 22, Jalan Amanputra/24, Taman Amanputra, 47130 Puchong Selangor Darul Ehsan

**NOTIS**  
 Dalam perkara Notis Kebankrapan yang bertarikh pada 12-09-2024

Kepada: **Sin Kok Huat** (No. K/P: 650512-01-5973/A0265182) Pemilutang Penghakiman  
 Dan/atau  
 12A-6 Jalan PJS 3/46, Taman Sri Manja, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa suatu Notis Kebankrapan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh CIMB ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD (No. Pendaftaran: 20041010022 (97141-X)) yang mempunyai alamat berdaftar di Level 23A, Menara CIMB, Jalan Selayang Sentral 2, 40150 Kuala Lumpur dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan supaya Notis Kebankrapan tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampalakan salinan-salinannya beserta satu salinan temerlabel Perintah Untuk Penyempakan Ganti pada papan notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Pulau Pinang dan penampalan di tempat ketara premis Penghutang Penghakiman di 14-03, Ocean View Residences, Jalan Harbour Place, 12100 Butterworth, Pulau Pinang dan di 12A-6 Jalan PJS 3/46, Taman Sri Manja, 46000 Petaling Jaya, Selangor serta juga dengan menyebarkan Notis ini sekali di dalam akhbar harian tempatan berbahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" dan bahawa penampalan dan penyempakan sedemikian disediakan penyempakan yang sempurna dan cukup akan Notis Kebankrapan tersebut kepada kamu selepas tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan atau penyempakan sedemikian Notis ini mengikut mana yang berkenaan.

Jika kamu bersetia untuk menentang dan/atau membebani diri, kamu mestilah dalam masa tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan dan pengiklanan tersebut menjadi sempurna, memohon kepada Mahkamah untuk mengesahkan Notis Kebankrapan tersebut dengan memasukkan satu affidavit bagi maklud tersebut di Mahkamah ini. Jika tidak, suatu Petisyen Permintaan boleh dikeluarkan terhadap kamu.

Notis Kebankrapan tersebut boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 10 Disember, 2024.  
 tandatangan  
**MUHAMAD QAYUM BIN NOORDIN**  
 Penolong Kanan Pendafatar  
 Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia  
 Shah Alam

Notis KILAN ini ditailkan oleh Tetuan Ghazi & Lim, peguamcara bagi pihak Penghutang Penghakiman dan almat penyempakan di Tingkat 12, Unit 8, Wisma New Asia, Jalan Raj Chuan, 50200 Kuala Lumpur. Tel: 03-2145 0717 (Fax: 03-2114 8826)

# Fast start for Sabalenka

### World No. 1 shows off dance moves after Stephens win

**A** battling Aryna Sabalenka (*pic*) survived an early wobble to beat Sloane Stephens 6-3, 6-2 yesterday as the world No. 1 began her bid for a historic hatrick at the Australian Open.

The Belarusian did not have it all her own way against the 2017 US Open champion Stephens on Rod Laver Arena.

She raced into a 4-0 lead before a series of unforced errors allowed the 31-year-old American to break back twice for 4-3.

The lapses fired up Sabalenka who changed her racquet and became more aggressive.

She created a succession of break points before finally converting on the fifth to move 5-3 ahead and then served out to take the set in 38 minutes.

Stephens, now ranked 84th, has a poor record in Melbourne, losing in the first round on four of her previous five appearances.

A double break took Sabalenka to 5-1 in the second set and she completed the win in 1hr 11min.

"I love this place," Sabalenka told Jelena Dokic during the post-match interview. "Full stadium, I couldn't ask for more."

"It was a tough match, always tough matches against her. It's not like I played my best, but I was glad I was able to close it out in straight sets."



After claiming she felt like Melbourne was "home," the topic suddenly turned to one of Sabalenka's traditions at the tournament.

The 26-year-old enjoys making TikTok videos with her team and, last year, she started the tournament by sharing a dancing clip with them.

It paid off and she won the title so Sabalenka took no chances in 2025,

posting another TikTok during practice week.

And Dokic was keen to see Sabalenka in action. "Enough tennis, you've got a bit of a tradition now when you come to Australia," the retired tennis star said.

"I know you like your dancing, your TikTok dancing. So you did one last year and you did one this year as well, it's now a real tradition."

The big screens on Rod Laver Arena quickly cut to a video of Sabalenka's latest dance with her team.

"I mean, I'm trying my best," the world No. 1 laughed. "As you can see, I'm not the best dancer but I'm trying my best."

The crowd quickly erupted into cheers, encouraging Sabalenka to bust her moves there and then. "Only if the whole crowd join me," Sabalenka replied.

Dokic offered to help her out and Sabalenka agreed. She led the way as music filled the stadium and Dokic followed her lead.

After a few seconds, Sabalenka had enough, burying her face in her hands as she laughed. She added: "Now they have proof that I'm the worst dancer!" - AFP/Express Newspapers

## TRAMLINES

### Rain wreaks havoc on opening day

**ORGANISERS** cancelled five singles matches as persistent rain washed out a large chunk of play on the opening day of the Australian Open yesterday, disappointing the large crowds who had flocked to Melbourne Park. Five of the 32 scheduled singles matches were scratched and organisers will be giving thanks for the cushion of the extra day which was first added to the tournament last year. The number of matches on the first few days of the tournament mean that tennis enthusiasts can watch main draw singles action on the outer courts for the relatively cheap price of a ground pass. They were sent scurrying for cover inside the first hour of play, however, when a violent storm swept across the precinct accompanied by flashes of lightning and explosive cracks of thunder. "Lovely time here, beautiful sitting in the arena, nice watching the water collect, but we didn't get any tennis," said local academic Alex with more than a hint of sarcasm in her voice. "We've paid A\$60 (RM175) and haven't seen anything."

### Djokovic reveals new secret weapon

**NOVAK DJOKOVIC** has revealed a new secret weapon that he credits with helping keep him healthy and prolong his career - a new "energetic disc." Known for his green-eyeglass spiritual interests, the Serbian star is in Melbourne hoping to wind back the clock and win an 11th Australian Open and record 25th Grand Slam singles title. To help achieve the feat, he has a device made by an engineer in Serbia he claims has helped him deal with several ailments. The 37-year-old showed off the dinner-plate size disc in a video on *Instagram*. "It's (an) energetic disc, creates an electromagnetic field around it and (the) kind of secret is in this pattern," he said. "And so when you place it on a certain part of your body, place this part, for example, if you have stomach issues, which I do have often when I'm nervous, stressed before the match or indigestion issues, that creates heat. So then it starts enhancing the metabolic functions or it reduces inflammation in certain parts of the body."

## Nishikori hangs tough in winning return

**A** seemingly endless battle with injuries kept Kei Nishikori from the Australian Open for four years but yesterday the Japanese trailblazer returned to win a five-set marathon and reach the second round.

Pushed to the brink by Thiago Monteiro, Nishikori came back from two sets down and saved two match points in a 4-6, 6-7(4), 7-5, 6-2, 6-3 win over the Brazilian journeyman at Margaret Court Arena.

"Really tough one. I almost forgot he had two match points," Nishikori said after the four-hour, six-minute slog.

tough, with injuries seeing him tumble out of the top 100.

It has been a humbling fall for a former top-five player who remains the only man from an Asian country to reach a Grand Slam final following his run to the 2014 US Open decider.

But under Swedish coach Thomas Johansson, the 2002 Australian Open winner, things have been on the up.

He soared back into the top 100 with a runner-up finish at the Hong Kong Open a week ago, his first ATP final since Brisbane in 2019.

"Yesterday, an upper leg strain hampered Monteiro as the match wore on but there was plenty to like about the Japanese veteran's game.

He conjured the old magic with a string of breathtaking forehand winners from the baseline, leaving pockets of Japanese fans delighted.

"It was incredible. It was so much fun on the court even though I was dead by the end," said Nishikori.

"All the support really helped me to fight through today" - Reuters

## 'Nervous' Zheng relieved to survive

**OLYMPIC CHAMPION** Zheng Qinwen admitted to first-day nerves after surviving a scare yesterday to reach the second round of the Australian Open.

The fifth seed needed to save three set points before battling past gutsy debutant Anca Todoni 7-6 (7/3), 6-1.

The Chinese player said she had the jitters as she opened proceedings on Rod Laver Arena a year after losing the 2024 final to Aryna Sabalenka on the famous showcourt.

suspended on outside courts, Zheng dug deep under the roof to overcome the world No. 110 in almost two hours of play.

It had looked like a straightforward assignment when the heavy-hitting Chinese broke the 20-year-old Romanian to lead 5-3.

But Todoni, who has never beaten a top-10 player and was making her first appearance in the Australian Open main draw, refused to lie down and broke back to level at 5-5.

At 5-6, Zheng saved three Todoni set points to force a tiebreak which she wrapped up to seal a marathon first set after 75 minutes.

"The first set is always not easy, especially because I was doing stupid mistakes," Zheng admitted.

Zheng, who did not play a warm-up



event before the first Grand Slam of the season, stepped up a gear in the second set, racing to a 3-0 lead before wrapping up the match with an ace in 1hr 56min.

"I am just happy to win the match," said Zheng, who enjoyed vociferous support from a large Chinese contingent in the crowd.

"I was happy to win the tiebreak and start to find my rhythm."

"Feels like home, you know, because lot of crowd supporting me. I feel like I can get a lot of energy from them, especially when she get the set points." - AFP

## 322 Notices

**IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF DIAMOND AXIS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 380635-M**

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT Mr. Wong Soon Fong of 221R, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur has been appointed as the Interim Liquidator of the Company by its directors on 03.01.2025 pursuant to Section 440(1) of the Companies Act, 2016.

Dated this 13.01.2025

**SECTION 440 (1) OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 STATUTORY DECLARATION OF INABILITY OF COMPANY TO CONTINUE BUSINESS, AND THAT MEETINGS OF THE COMPANY AND ITS CREDITORS HAVE BEEN SUMMONED**

**DIAMOND AXIS SDN BHD COMPANY NO. 380635-M**

**I, HOW AH BOY IJC No. 35121207140 of DIAMOND AXIS SDN BHD do solemnly and sincerely declare that the company cannot by reason of its liabilities continue its business, and that meetings of members of the company and of its creditors have been summoned for a date within thirty (30) days of the date of this declaration.**

The meetings of the Company and of its creditors will be held on 05.02.2025 at 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur at 10.00am and 11.00am respectively.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the provisions of the Statutory Declarations Act, 1960.

Subscribed and solemnly declared by the abovesigned How Ah Boy, Director, at Kuala Lumpur before me, Md Hamdan Bin Kamaruddin this 08.01.2025

## 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI SHAH ALAM DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ERSAN, MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DALAM KEBAHUKHARAN NO. BA-29KUC-1407-95/2024**

BER: LIUK KHONG (No. KP: 770817-14-5337) ... PLAINTEE PENGHUTANG PENGHAKAMAN  
 DAN CHANG CHOH YONG (No. KP: 741120-10-9287) ... DEFENDAN  
 EMB-PARTE: CIMB ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD (No. Pendaftaran: 200401032872 (S71380-H)) ... PEMUTANG PENGHAKAMAN

## NOTIS IKLAN

**Kepada: LIM KOK HONG (No. KP: 780817-08-6161) 1847 D-108 Jalan Koles 43300 Seri Kembangan Selangor Darul Ehsan**

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa suatu Petyan Permintaan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya di Shah Alam oleh CMB ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD (No. Pendaftaran: 200401032872 (S71380-H)) yang mempunyai alamat berdaftar di Level 23A, Menara CIMB, Jalan Siasen Sentral 2, Kuala Lumpur Sentral, 50470 Kuala Lumpur dan kamu dikehendaki memintakan bahawa Petyan Permintaan ini disampaikan kepada kamu dengan cara penampunan ganti lalu dengan menampunkan satu salinan Petyan Permintaan dan Aduan di Mahkamah Kebanaran Petyan Permintaan Dalam Permohonan yang dikirakan oleh Tuan Hakim Sri Tuan Yusoff pada 20 November 2024 dengan sesialan bermenteri Perintah Peryampunan Ganti di Papan Notis Mahkamah Tinggi di Shah Alam dan di alamat terakhir kamu yang diketahui di 1847 D-108, Jalan Koles, 43300 Seri Kembangan, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan juga dengan mengiklankan Notis ini sekali dalam akhbar harian tempatan kebanaran bernama "The Sun" dan penampunan dan pengiklankan tersebut adalah dianggap penampunan yang sempurna dan mencakupi ke atas kamu selepas empat belas (14) hari dari tarikh terbit penampunan tersebut dilaksanakan.

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa Petyan Permintaan ini akan di hadapan Petyan Permintaan Kanan Pendaftaran, Mahkamah Tinggi Shah Alam, Tingkat 3 Sanyo Kiosk, Kompleks Mahkamah Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah, Perumahan Paganwil, Seksyen 5, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan pada **23 Januari 2025 jam 9.00 pagi** dan kamu dikehendaki hadir pada tarikh tersebut dan sekiranya kamu gagal hadir, Mahkamah boleh memintakan Perintah Peryampunan terhadap kamu.

Petyan Permintaan ini boleh dipertika oleh kamu atas permohonan kamu di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 18 Disember, 2024.

T.T. Penolong Kanan Pendaftaran Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya Shah Alam

**NOTIS IKLAN** ini ditalikan oleh Tetuan Ibrahimi & Fuaad, Peguambela & Peguambela bagi Plaintiff yang beralamat di No.125, Jalan Bidara 8, SU Mall, Sungai Utama 3, 47000, Sungai Buloh, Selangor. No. tel: 02-9593 0164 / 0601 email: info@ibrahimifuaad.com.my Raj fua: 17114453/16824/MHPS(m)

## 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI KUALA KUBU BHARU DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ERSAN, MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI KUALA KUBU BHARU GUAUMAN NO. BF-8720VC-288-11/2024**

**MAJLIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (MHPS) ... PLAINTEE DAN CHANG CHOH YONG (No. KP: 741120-10-9287) ... DEFENDAN**

## NOTIS IKLAN

**Kepada: CHANG CHOH YONG Prima Midah Heights, Blok 288-19-6, Jalan Midah 8A, Taman Midah, 55100 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.**

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa suatu Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan Tututan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh MAJLIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (MHPS) yang beralamat di Jalan Bukit Kerajang, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah telah memintakan supaya Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampunkan salinan salinannya beserta satu salinan yang dimeterai bagi Perintah untuk penampunan ganti pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majlisret di Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor, memamp satu salinan Writ Saman bersama dengan Perintah tersebut ke alamat terakhir Defendan yang diketahui dan pengiklankan Perintah tersebut dalam satu keluaran akhbar tempatan "The Sun" selama satu hari dan bahawa penampunan, pengosnan dan pengiklankan sedemikian dianggap sebagai penampunan yang wajar dan mencakupi akan Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan ini kepada kamu atas penamatan EMPAT BELAS (14) hari selepas tarikh terbit penampunan dan pengiklankan tersebut. **DAN SELANJUTNYA AMBIL NOTIS** bahawa tarikh pengurusan kes Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan Tututan tersebut telah ditetapkan di hadapan Majlisret **18.01.2025 pada 9.00 pagi** di dalam **Pengurusan Kes secara online** (dalam talian).

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk menentang dan/atau membatalkan diri, kamu mestilah hadir pada tarikh tersebut dan sekiranya pengiklankan tersebut menjadi sempurna, memohon kepada Mahkamah untuk memintakan kehadiran di Mahkamah ini. Jika tidak, suatu Pengiklankan boleh dikeluarkan terhadap kamu.

Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan ini boleh dipertika oleh kamu dengan melalui permohonan kepada Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh 30 Disember 2024

Petaling Pendaftar Mahkamah Majlisret, Kuala Kubu Bharu

**NOTIS IKLAN** ini ditalikan oleh **TETUAN IBRAHIMI & FUAAD**, Peguambela & Peguambela bagi Plaintiff yang beralamat di No.125, Jalan Bidara 8, SU Mall, Sungai Utama 3, 47000, Sungai Buloh, Selangor. No. tel: 02-9593 0164 / 0601 email: info@ibrahimifuaad.com.my Raj fua: 17114453/16824/MHPS(m)

## 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI KUALA KUBU BHARU DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL ERSAN, MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI KUALA KUBU BHARU GUAUMAN NO. BF-8720VC-288-11/2024**

**MAJLIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (MHPS) ... PLAINTEE DAN CHANG CHOH YONG (No. KP: 741120-10-9287) ... DEFENDAN**

## NOTIS IKLAN

**Kepada: CHANG CHOH YONG S8, Jalan D'Almeida 1B Seksyen B52, Bukit Sentosa, 45200 Rawang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.**

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa suatu Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan Tututan telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah ini oleh MAJLIS PERBANDARAN HULU SELANGOR (MHPS) yang beralamat di Jalan Bukit Kerajang, 44000 Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor Darul Ehsan dan Mahkamah telah memintakan supaya Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan tersebut disampaikan kepada kamu dengan menampunkan salinan salinannya beserta satu salinan yang dimeterai bagi Perintah untuk penampunan ganti pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majlisret di Kuala Kubu Bharu, Selangor, memamp satu salinan Writ Saman bersama dengan Perintah tersebut ke alamat terakhir Defendan yang diketahui dan pengiklankan Perintah tersebut dalam satu keluaran akhbar tempatan "The Sun" selama satu hari dan bahawa penampunan, pengosnan dan pengiklankan sedemikian dianggap sebagai penampunan yang wajar dan mencakupi akan Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan ini kepada kamu atas penamatan EMPAT BELAS (14) hari selepas tarikh terbit penampunan dan pengiklankan tersebut. **DAN SELANJUTNYA AMBIL NOTIS** bahawa tarikh pengurusan kes Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan Tututan tersebut telah ditetapkan di hadapan Majlisret **18.01.2025 pada 9.00 pagi** di dalam **Pengurusan Kes secara online** (dalam talian).

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk menentang dan/atau membatalkan diri, kamu mestilah hadir pada tarikh tersebut dan sekiranya pengiklankan tersebut menjadi sempurna, memohon kepada Mahkamah untuk memintakan kehadiran di Mahkamah ini. Jika tidak, suatu Pengiklankan boleh dikeluarkan terhadap kamu.

Writ Saman dan Petyan Permintaan ini boleh dipertika oleh kamu dengan melalui permohonan kepada Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh 30 Disember 2024

Petaling Pendaftar Mahkamah Majlisret, Kuala Kubu Bharu

**NOTIS IKLAN** ini ditalikan oleh **TETUAN IBRAHIMI & FUAAD**, Peguambela & Peguambela bagi Plaintiff yang beralamat di No.125, Jalan Bidara 8, SU Mall, Sungai Utama 3, 47000, Sungai Buloh, Selangor. No. tel: 02-9593 0164 / 0601 email: info@ibrahimifuaad.com.my Raj fua: 17114453/16824/MHPS(m)



## Ruud believes Leicester improving

**LEICESTER** boss Ruud van Nistelrooy feels his side are "getting better" after they ended a run of five consecutive defeats with a 6-2 win over QPR in the FA Cup.

After Jonathan Varane's stunner cancelled out James Justin's opener, the Foxes went 3-1 up courtesy of goals from Stephy Mavididi and Facundo Buonanotte.

Rayan Kollit cut the deficit on the stroke of half-time, but Leicester ran riot in the second half as Justin was on target again, Jamie Vardy netted on his 38th birthday and Wout Faes scored a brilliant long-range goal to seal their fourth-round spot.

Van Nistelrooy was pleased with what he saw after he won for the second time as Foxes boss.

He said: "A performance where you can score six goals is always a good performance."

"It's not easy, especially against a QPR side that's very well managed, on and off the ball, and on a great run of form. To be able to score six against them is a compliment to the team."

"I wanted to continue in that development with the team and not make too many changes in that sense."

"I feel we are in a process where we are getting better, doing things better, and in a certain way. That's why I wanted to continue that."

"The third goal I enjoyed the most. It was a great move with a lot of movement and coordination that we try to work on. When things come off like that, it's a great satisfaction." – The Independent

## Iraola lauds players after Cherries down West Brom

BY ANDY SIMS

**BOSS** Andoni Iraola hailed his flying wingers after Bournemouth made light of their striker crisis with a thumping 5-1 FA Cup third-round win over West Brom.

The Cherries were left reeling last week after forwards Evanilson and Enes Unal suffered serious injuries.

But Iraola's makeshift strikeforce ran riot against the Baggies with Dango Ouattara scoring twice and fellow widemen Justin Kluivert and Antoine Semenyo also on target.

Rookie striker Daniel Jebbison then climbed off the bench to add the fifth after he was recalled from a loan spell at Watford. "The forwards played very well, most of them scored goals so it's really pleasing," said Iraola.

"Dango has played very well, he has played number nine in his national team. We have players who can help us there even if it is not their best position."

"A lot of players have played in positions they are not used to and everyone has helped us."

Chris Brunt is still in temporary charge of West Brom as the club close in on a successor for Carlos Corberan, who left just before Christmas.

"It's disappointing, obviously, to lose. A heavy defeat never easy to take," said Brunt.

"We started well, went a goal ahead and that was probably the worst thing that could have happened. Bournemouth showed their Premier League quality on the day."

Former Basel and Young Boys coach Raphael Wicky is reportedly set to take over at The Hawthorns next week.

"If that's the case then that's my job done," added Brunt. "If the new guy comes in next week then good luck to him." – The Independent

## Seagulls's Hurzeler happy to taste victory again

**BRIGHTON** head coach Fabian Hurzeler was delighted to see his side get back to winning ways as they triumphed 4-0 at Norwich to reach the fourth round of the FA Cup.

The Seagulls were without a win in eight Premier League games going into the tie – albeit with six draws – but tasted an overdue victory at Carrow Road after a dominant display.

Georginio Rutter bagged a first-half brace before Julio Enciso and Solly March struck after the break.

"It doesn't matter whether it is the Premier League or the FA Cup, winning is always a good feeling and it was good to have it again today," Hurzeler said.

"It is good for confidence and hopefully we can now take this into the Premier League."

"I thought we struggled a bit for the first 15 to 20 minutes and Norwich had their one big chance when they hit the post."

"But then we got into our stride, played some good football and scored some good goals."

"We have played a lot recently so I put out what I thought was our freshest side and I thought they did a good job."

Hurzeler was pleased with the contribution of Rutter, whose double late in the first half set up the win.

"Scoring those goals will be good for his confidence, I'm sure of that," he said.

"He worked very hard, getting into a lot of good positions, and he had already gone close on a couple of occasions before he scored his goals."

Norwich gave a reasonable account of themselves in the early stages, with Amankwah Forson striking an upright from distance, but the game was up once Rutter scored twice in eight minutes just before the break.

Norwich head coach Johannes Hoff Thorup said the game had been an important part of the learning curve for his Championship outfit.

"I thought it was a good game for us to have at this moment – to show us the difference between us and the Premier League and what we have to do," he said.

"I think we had some good moments, especially in the first half, and with a bit of luck could have gone ahead... but then we saw the Premier League quality." – The Independent



*Blues boss Maresca all smiles after Blues thrash League Two Morecambe*

Morecambe keeper Harry Burgoyne saves a penalty from Chelsea's Christopher Nkunku (left). – REUTERS/SPIC

BY ROBERT O'CONNOR

**CHELSEA** head coach Enzo Maresca praised a "serious, professional" display from his team after they romped past League Two Morecambe in the FA Cup third round.

The 5-0 win at Stamford Bridge came after the visitors held off the Premier League outfit until shortly before halftime, defender Tosin Adarabioyo eventually taking the initiative as Chelsea struggled for ideas, lashing in the first of two goals from outside the box.

The floodgates opened after the break as Christopher Nkunku doubled the lead and Joao Felix struck twice, throwing cold light on the 87 league places that separated the sides.

"It was good in terms of we won and that's important," said Maresca. "The performance in these kinds of game show how serious and professional we are, once again the players showed that."

The game will best be remembered for Tosin's long-range zingers, the 27-year-old

trebling his goalscoring return to help his team out of a fix as Morecambe's low block frustrated Chelsea and home fans audibly grew restless.

"It's a little bit the picture of the game," said Maresca. "He was most the time the only one with more space because all the rest were man to man inside the box, there was no space. He was the only one who could carry the ball and try that option."

"He can do that, but central defenders you struggle to see them at the edge of the box attacking."

There was further good news for Maresca with Reece James and Romeo Lavia surviving unscathed on their first starts since returning from injury.

Both were withdrawn at half-time at the start of what the head coach said would be a managed reintroduction to the first team.

The decision to bring them off Maresca said was "just to protect them... the idea was to play for 45 minutes."

"Hopefully we can start from there and build some physical condition and allow them to be

with us for the rest of the season."

"The idea is slow to build the right condition, especially for Reece, you have to be a bit more careful."

"The good thing is they both played 45 minutes with no problem. Now hopefully we can start to help them to build the right condition."

Morecambe boss Derek Adams, whose attention now reverts to the battle to keep his relegation-threatened team in the EFL, reflected on the chasm in resources his players were up against.

"I thought we started very well," he said. "We were in the 18-yard box many times in the first half. We could have probably done better with finding the final pass. We let Chelsea into the game."

"They put on three substitutes at half-time which did help, they've got the quality."

"Our wage bill is just over one million and they've spent a billion. The gap is huge, it's only going to get bigger, but I thought we acquitted ourselves well. We enjoyed the occasion." – The Independent

## Nuno hails Forest victory over Luton

BY JONATHAN VEAL

**NOTTINGHAM FOREST** boss Nuno Espirito Santo praised the professionalism of his side after they made it seven wins in a row.

Nuno made 11 changes to his starting XI for the FA Cup third-round tie with managerless Luton, but the strength of their squad was highlighted with a 2-0 victory thanks to goals from Ryan Yates and Ramon Sosa.

It meant they matched the run Colin Calderwood's side posted in October and November 2006 as the feelgood factor continues at the City Ground.

They easily put themselves in the hat for today's fourth-round draw and they can now turn their attention to Wednesday's (4am Malaysian time) crunch Premier League clash with Liverpool, which

could determine whether Forest really are in a title race.

"It was good. It was important for all the players to play and for us to reward them," Nuno said.

"They enjoyed themselves, playing at the City Ground. It was the first time playing together for many of them, but overall it was job done in a very professional way."

"We were organised and committed. Of course some of it didn't flow so good, but that's normal and is not so important."

"What was important was that we were able to continue (in the competition) and we did it in a nice way."

"All the players who come in are having an impact on the team. Today, they showed again that we have a good squad and we are ready to go."

"It is very important to keep the momentum,

the spirit and the habit going. It is always nice when we go to tomorrow with a smile and prepare for a tough game. If we are happy, it is easier."

Luton were playing their first game since Rob Edwards' departure in midweek and never really threatened victory.

Coach Paul Trollope was thrust into caretaker charge and does not know what the future will hold.

"It has been a difficult week, I thought the players gave everything, they showed a great spirit after the emotion of Rob leaving," Trollope said.

"There has been adversity this week and it has been difficult."

"The remit for myself was for the two days' training and take the game today, we have done that and we will see the future holds." – The Independent

# Kop serenades Alexander-Arnold

Captain leads from the front as Liverpool cruise into FA Cup 4th round

TRENT ALEXANDER-ARNOLD'S stunning strike lit up Liverpool's 4-0 win over League Two Accrington Stanley to cruise into the FA Cup fourth round yesterday.

The England international was named captain in the absence of Virgil van Dijk in a much-changed side named by Arne Slot and led by example after a being criticised for his display in a 2-2 draw against Manchester United last weekend.

Slot made eight changes after suffering just his second defeat in charge of the Reds in Wednesday's

League Cup semifinal first leg against Tottenham.

The Dutchman had warned the Premier League leaders that a trip to Anfield would be Accrington's "Champions League final."

A mammoth 86 league positions behind Liverpool in the 92-team English league system, Stanley held out for nearly half an hour.

"It was surreal," said Accrington forward and Liverpool fan Josh Woods. "They are world-class players and on the counter it is hard to stop."

Diogo Jota was left with a simple task to tap in from Darwin Nunez's low cross to open the floodgates.

Alexander-Arnold then stepped forward to double the lead with a sumptuous hit into the top corner from outside the box.

Jayden Danns made the most of just his second appearance of the season to fire in the

third 14 minutes from time.

Federico Chiesa's Liverpool career has so far failed to get going due to injury problems.

But the Italian took advantage of some rare game time to net his first goal for the club with a long range strike in off the far post.

"It is definitely a good first step, but as much as I liked the way Accrington Stanley played we have to take into consideration that we're talking about League Two level," said Slot on Chiesa's second half cameo off the bench.

"It is good to have him back on the pitch. He was a threat, but let's not get carried away."

On his assessment of the game, Slot said: "First of all, credit to them the way they showed themselves."

"Of course, before the game starts you watch

a few games of them and then you see, 'Ah, they're not afraid to press high, not afraid to play one-v-one.'

"But then you always wonder, will they do this at Anfield as well? But they definitely did. "They were not afraid."

"Their playing style is also when the goalkeeper has the ball to play it long, so it is not that they stole this from the team we played last week, that's just their style."

"They showed up in a very positive way. For us, it was all about the players that haven't played that much yet, to give them playing time and give some playing time to a few youngsters." - The Independent/Agencies



Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold (centre) celebrates scoring his second goal with Harvey Elliott (left) and Dominik Szoboszlai. -REUTERS/PIC

## Walker wants to leave: Pep

BY LUKE BAKER

PEP GUARDIOLA has revealed that club captain Kyle Walker has asked to leave Manchester City this month and explore the option of playing abroad as his career starts to wind down.

Walker, 34, still has 18 months left on his contract having signed a new three-year deal in the summer of 2023 when he was wanted by Bayern Munich but the German side were unable to agree a deal with City.

The right-back has fallen out of favour in recent weeks, having not started a game since the 2-1 defeat in the Manchester derby on Dec 15, and he wasn't even selected for the much-rotated side that thrashed League Two Salford City 8-0 in the FA Cup yesterday with Matheus Nunes deputising in defence instead.

Guardiola has now revealed why, admitting that the England international has requested to leave the club in the January transfer window to play abroad and he doesn't believe he is in the right headspace to contribute to the team.

"Two days ago Kyle asked to explore the options to play abroad at the end of his career," explained Guardiola in his post-match press conference following the Salford win.

"He asked two years ago after the treble, Bayern wanted him but the offer was not good enough and the club

asked him how important was this?"

"We cannot understand the success the club has had in these years without Kyle. It's impossible - he's been our right-back, giving us something we didn't have."

"But now, in his mind, he would like to explore going to another country to play his last years for many reasons. For that reason, I prefer to play other players whose mind is still here."

There is reported interest in Walker from Saudi Arabia and he has now taken matters into his own hands, approaching Man City directly to request a transfer this month.

"He went to Txiki (Man City director of football Txiki Begiristain) and I am pretty convinced that there's no one in our job who can perform when they don't want to be where they are," Guardiola explained.

"He asked to explore (his options) but it doesn't mean it's definitely going to happen because you never know the situation."

"I respect it a lot because I'm more than grateful to him for the many years he has been here for us."

"His first season here, we started to win, win, win, win. He's been important for the national team and important for our team but he said that he wants to explore options, in his mind and his heart he wants to explore it." - The Independent

**TOTO SPORTS TOTO RESULTS**  
 DRAW NO: 5910/2025 DATE: 12/01/2025 (SUN)  
 STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.  
 196901000090 (84203)

**TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL**

1st Prize	8438
2nd Prize	8984
3rd Prize	5164

Special: 1484 9536, 3599 6562, 2964 8749, 5199 2669, 2525 2946  
 Consolation: 6332 1027, 5189 2472, 7905 1600, 1904 8156, 1606 7915

**4D JACKPOT**

Jackpot 1: **RM 12,474,122.04**

8438 8984	8984 8438
8438 5164	5164 8438
8984 5164	5164 8984

Jackpot 2: **RM 238,667.44**  
 Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

**4D Zodiac**

1st Prize	8438	+	
2nd Prize	8984	+	
3rd Prize	5164	+	HORSE
4th Prize	Special Prize	+	
5th Prize	Consolation Prize	+	
6th Prize	Any 4D drawn number	+	

**TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL**

**5D** 1ST: 7 7 2 6 0  
 2ND: 5 1 8 3 5, 9 7 7 3 5  
 3RD: 9 7 7 3 5, 4TH: 7 2 6 0, 5TH: 2 6 0, 6TH: 6 0

**6D** 1ST: 2 9 2 9 9 3  
 2ND: 2 9 2 9 9, 9 2 9 9 3  
 3RD: 2 9 2 9, 2 9 9 3  
 4TH: 2 9 2, 9 9 3  
 5TH: 2 9, 9 3

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**SUPREME 7/68** 4 7 27 38 40 53  
 Jackpot: **RM 84,770,522.47**

**POWER 7/68** 22 23 28 31 34 41  
 Jackpot: **RM 6,215,094.80**

**STAR 7/68** 16 22 29 39 42 49 + 21  
 Jackpot 1: **RM 2,503,727.68**  
 Jackpot 2: **RM 240,167.22**

Toto 4D Jackpot 2: **RM 624,156**  
 Toto 4D Jackpot 2 (i-System): **RM 54,274**  
 won on 11/01/2025!

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**WINNING NUMBERS**  
 PAYMENT GUARANTEED IN FULL  
 Draw No: 5857/25 Venue: PERAK TURF CLUB

Draw Date: 12/01/25 (Sun) Draw No: 5857/25 Venue: PERAK TURF CLUB

**1+3D SUPER1+3D**

1st Prize	2233
2nd Prize	4292
3rd Prize	2213

Starters: 5124 3846, 9295 1154, 6678 5048, 4377 6741, 4878 2197  
 Consolation: 4568 9850, 4677 4725, 4327 8421, 6788 4772, 1548 3839

**1+3D Jackpot**

Jackpot 1: **RM5,825,652.30**

2233 + 4292	4292 + 2233
2233 + 2213	2213 + 2233
4292 + 2213	2213 + 4292

Jackpot 2: **RM111,091.40**  
 Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

**3+3D Bonus**

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
352 233 +	BOAR	RM110,000.00
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
004 292 +	SNAKE	RM1,105,904.60
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
712 213 +	DRAGON	RM1,601,506.00

Starters: 675 124 823 846, 449 295 821 154, 286 678 645 048, 474 377 426 741, 954 878 362 197  
 Consolation: 524 568 199 850, 644 677 174 725, 804 327 958 421, 096 788 944 772, 001 548 663 839

**3D**

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
233	292	213

**3D Jackpot**

Jackpot: **RM671,921.80**

233 + 292 + 213	292 + 213 + 233
233 + 213 + 292	213 + 233 + 292
292 + 233 + 213	213 + 292 + 233

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

**1+3D Jackpot 2 RM203,257.90 won on 11/01/2025!**

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## MALAYSIA OPEN 2025

Finals	
<b>Men's singles</b> Yu Qi Shi (CHI) 21-8, 21-15	vs Anders Antonsen (DEN)
<b>Women's singles</b> Se Young An (KOR) 21-17, 21-7	vs Zhi Yi Wang (CHI)
<b>Men's doubles</b> Bo Yang Chen (CHI) Yi Liu 21-19, 12-21, 12-21	vs <b>Won Ho Kim (KOR)</b> Seung Jae Seo
<b>Women's doubles</b> Yi Fan Jia (CHI) Shu Xian Zhang 21-17, 15-21, 15-21	vs <b>Yuki Fukushima (JPN)</b> Mayu Matsumoto
<b>Mixed doubles</b> Yan Zhe Feng (CHI) Dong Ping Huang	vs <b>D. Puavaranukroh (THA)</b> S. Paewsampran

## RESULTS & STANDINGS

**ENGLISH FA CUP (3RD ROUND):** Birmingham 2 Lincoln 1, Bournemouth 5 West Brom 1, Brentford 0 Plymouth 1, Bristol City 1 Wolves 2, Chelsea 5 Morecambe 0, Coventry 1 Sheffield Wednesday 1 (Coventry win 4-3 on pen aet), Exeter 3 Oxford United 1, Leeds 1 Haringate 0, Leicester 6 QPR 2, Liverpool 4 Accrington Stanley 0, Manchester City 8 Salford 0, Middlesbrough 0 Blackburn 1, Norwich 0 Brighton 4, Nottingham Forest 2 Luton 0, Reading 1 Burnley 3 aet, Sunderland 1 Stoke 2 aet.

**LA LIGA:** Alaves 0 Girona 1 (Solis 90+1), Real Valladolid 1 (Perez 58) Real Betis 0, Espanyol 1 (Cabrera 2) Leganes 1 (Cisse 14), Sevilla 1 (Pedrosa 90+3) Valencia 1 (Rioja 61).

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Real Madrid	19	13	4	2	43	19	43
Atletico	18	12	5	1	33	12	41
Barcelona	19	12	2	5	51	22	38
A. Bilbao	19	10	6	3	29	17	36
Villarreal	18	8	6	4	34	30	30
Mallorca	19	9	3	7	19	21	30

**SERIE A:** Empoli 1 (Cacace 47) Lecce 3 (Morente 6, Krstovic 11, 90+1), AC Milan 1 (Morata 51) Cagliari 1 (Zortea 55), Torino 1 (Vlasic 45+1) Juventus 1 (Yildiz 8), Udinese 0 Atalanta 0.

TOP 5	P	W	D	L	F	A	PTS
Napoli	19	14	2	3	30	12	44
Atalanta	19	13	3	3	43	20	42
Inter Milan	17	12	4	1	45	15	40
Lazio	20	11	3	6	34	28	36
Juventus	19	7	12	0	31	16	33

**BUNDESLIGA:** B. Monchengladbach 0 Bayern Munich 1, Hoffenheim 0 Wolfsburg 1, Heidenheim 2 Union Berlin 0, SC Freiburg 3 Holstein Kiel 2, Mainz 2 Bochum 0, St Pauli 0 Eintracht Frankfurt 1.

**LIGUE 1:** Brest 2 (Camara 8, Ajourque 25) Lyon 1 (Veretout 45+2), Reims 2 (Ito 34, Diakhon 71) Nice 4 (Guessand 28, Laborde 44-pen, 64, Abdi 86), Rennes 1 (Kalimuendo 43) Marseille 2 (Greenwood 45, Rabiot 49).

# Stop moaning!

**T**HE Malaysian women's singles department has been in the doldrums for far too long and Akademi Badminton Malaysia (ABM) coaching director Rexy Mainaky (pic) was in no mood to sugarcoat his general assessment of the shuttlers following another dismal outing in the 2025 Malaysia Open.



He cited grumbling and making excuses as just two of the many factors holding back Malaysian women's singles shuttlers from going far and becoming world beaters.

Rexy revealed that there were even some women's singles shuttlers who complained of tiredness when undergoing training sessions at the ABM in Bukit Kiara in Kuala Lumpur.

"They grumble a lot and say they are tired. However, we hope they realise that they won't achieve anything by grumbling.

"You must know the reason why you must continue to fight and how to get what you want. Instead, what do you do? Train a little and you already complain of pains and aches," he told reporters on the sidelines of the 2025 Malaysia Open badminton championships at the Axiata Arena yesterday.

He added that if these players, armed with such an attitude, were playing for superpowers like China, Indonesia or Japan, they would have been expelled from

the team.

Citing the results of the 2025 Malaysia Open, Rexy urged the national shuttlers to emulate the feat of 21-year-old Thai ace Pornpicha Choeikeewong, who produced a sensation by ousting world No. 5 Han Yue of China 18-21, 21-13, 21-19 to advance to the semifinals.

What is frustrating is that the country's two singles players - Wong Ling Ching and K.Letshanaa, who did not get to compete in the 2025 Malaysia Open - had defeated Pornpicha before but still find themselves way behind the standard set by the world No. 44 Thai shuttler.

Rexy also urged the national women's singles shuttlers to take inspiration from the achievements of former ace Wong Mew Choo, who not only went toe-to-toe with the world's best but also created a sensation by becoming the only Malaysian woman shuttler to have won the China Open in the 2007 edition.

"However, this does not mean our women singles shuttlers are lacking in quality. It's just that they must be prepared to make sacrifices in their journey," he said.

Commenting on the performances of national shuttlers in the 2025 Malaysia Open, Rexy said men's doubles pair Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun failed to capitalise on their superiority in centre court to go down 26-24, 16-21, 15-21 to China's Chen

Chen Tang Jie (back) and Toh Ee Wei. - BERNAMAPIC



## 'Duo still lack mental strength'

**MENTAL STRENGTH**, or rather the lack of it, has been described as the reason top national mixed doubles pair Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei failed to get past the semifinals of the 2025 Malaysia Open badminton championships at the Axiata Arena on Saturday.

This was the opinion of national mixed doubles head coach Nova Widianto after Tang Jie-Ee Wei's hopes of making the final were dashed when they went down 19-21, 14-21 to China's Feng Yang Zhe-Huang Dong Ping in the last four.

Nova said if the world No. 5 Malaysian pair wish to go far, they must overcome this hurdle fast, especially when they are up against some of the world's top mixed doubles pairs, especially those from China.

"This is a perennial issue... where the moment their opponents catch up with them, their mental state goes haywire. It was the same last year.

"But I can see that they have started to address the issue, it's just that they are not so consistent yet.

"To take on the world's top mixed doubles pairs, such as those from China, you have to be mentally stronger than them and be more resilient," he said.

As for the early exit of another Malaysian mixed doubles pair, Hoo Pang Ron-Chen Su Yin, the coach felt that they failed to show their true colours in the Super 1000 tournament.

However, Nova hopes that Pang Ron-Su Yin will not give up easily and bounce back at next week's India Open in New Delhi.

"I can see that their performance level is on the rise. So, I hope that they won't let this one defeat drag them down," he said.

Pang Ron-Su Yin are expected to meet compatriots Tang Jie-Ee Wei in the opening round of the India Open from Jan 14-19. - Bernama

## Rexy slams poor attitude of women's singles shuttlers

Bo Yang-Liu Yi in Saturday's semifinals.

As for Malaysia's top mixed doubles combination of Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei, Rexy said their hasty pursuit of points contributed to their 19-21, 14-21 defeat by China's top-seeded Feng Yan Zhe-Huang Dong Ping.

Rexy also admitted that two-time Olympic bronze medalist Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik did not play aggressively enough in the Super 1000 tournament, which resulted in them going down 14-21, 18-21 to Taiwan's Lee Fang-Chih-Lee Fang-Jen in the second round of the men's doubles event.

The Indonesian also acknowledged that men's singles shuttler Leong Jun Hao, despite giving his best, still has a lot of catching up to do after losing 17-21, 21-16, 13-21 to China's Lu Guang Zu in their opening-round clash. - Bernama

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GROUP 3	<b>2325</b> OR <b>2568</b>
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GROUP 5	<b>23</b> OR <b>68</b>
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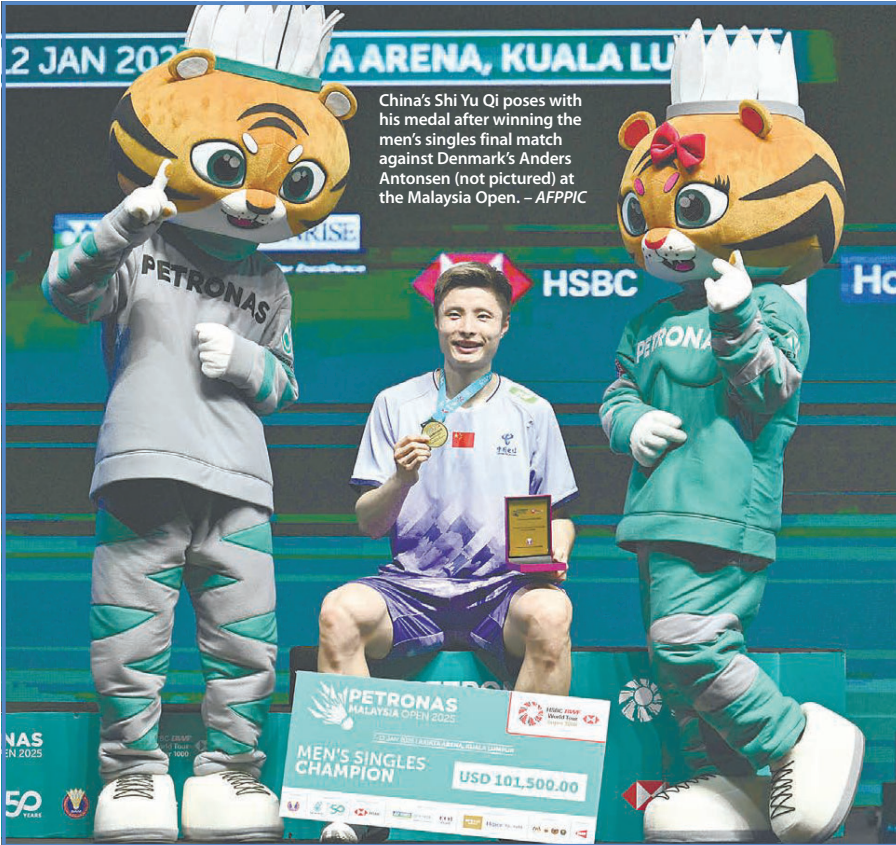
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SCAN ME



China's Shi Yu Qi poses with his medal after winning the men's singles final match against Denmark's Anders Antonsen (not pictured) at the Malaysia Open. — AFP/PPIC

## Sweet revenge for Yu Qi

CHINA'S men's singles ace Shi Yu Qi was crowned as the new Malaysia Open champion, by exacting sweet revenge over title holder Anders Antonsen of Denmark in the 2025 edition, in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The opening set was a one-way traffic, with Antonsen unable to find any answer to Yu Qi's exceptional gameplay, allowing the top seed to hammer the Dane 21-8.

Down 9-11 at the second set interval, the world No. 1 unleashed an unstoppable surge, mounting a comeback point by point to take the lead 14-11 and claim the title with a 21-15 victory in 39-minutes of the season opening final at the Axiata Arena.

The victory not only helped the 28-year-old avenge 14-21, 13-21 in last year's final loss to Antonsen but also end Denmark's three-year domination after two-times Olympic Games gold medalist Viktor Axelsen secured the title in 2022 and 2023.

Yu Qi said he was delighted to emerge the first Chinese men's singles player to win the competition since world badminton icon Lin Dan clinched it in the 2019 edition.

"I think my performance now is better than before," he told reporters in a post-match interview at the mixed zone.

Despite his disappointment, Antonsen said that it simply wasn't his day and admitted that his opponent was the better player today.

Meanwhile, South Korea's An Se Young showed exactly why she's the "hottest" women's singles shuttler at the moment as she effortlessly lived up to her bill as top seed to defend the Malaysia Open title against second seed Wang Zhi Yi of China.

After taking the first set 21-17, the world No. 1 proved to be too hot too handle for Zhi Yi, steamrolling the world No. 2, 21-7, in just 45-minutes.

"I just played my game and being persistent, that's why I was able to win today," she said when asked about the key factor that contributed to her first title of the new season.

As she kicked off the new season with a bang, the Paris 2024 Olympic Games gold medalist had warned her rivals that yesterday's victory had boosted her confidence to hunt for more titles and surpass her record-breaking 10 titles, in 2023.

Both Yu Qi and Se Young pocketed US\$101,500 (RM456,000) respectively as champions while Antonsen and Zhi Yi took home prize money worth US\$49,300 (RM221,000). — Bernama

# Welcome boost

*Pep says City far from best after 8-0 rout over League Two Salford*

**PEP GUARDIOLA** felt Manchester City were still far from their best as they thrashed League Two Salford 8-0 in the FA Cup third round.

The City boss did acknowledge, however, that the result should further lift spirits after the club's poor end to 2024.

James McAtee led the way with a second-half hattrick as City powered through to the next round with a dominant display in a one-sided tie at the Etihad Stadium.

City's victory was their third in succession in all competitions – the first time they have accomplished that feat since October.

Guardiola, whose side now face successive away games at Brentford, Ipswich and Paris St Germain, said: "It's just a game, but we cannot deny that we need the victories. It's the third in a row.

"Of course, we are far away and still we have a big, big problem behind, in the back four.

"But in the game everyone made incredible contributions and we

Manchester City's Divin Mubama (left) and Salford City's Curtis Tilt vie for the ball. — AFP/PPIC



scored a lot of goals. For a long time this didn't happen. We need it for our mood and the people are happier.

"Now we have really tough games away in the next days. We keep going."

Jeremy Doku weighed in with two goals while Jack Grealish got on the scoresheet for the first time in club football since December 2023.

Debutant Divin Mubama and fellow youngster Nico O'Reilly were the other scorers but the headlines were taken by McAtee, who scored his treble inside 19 second-half minutes.

The 22-year-old midfielder, who has impressed in separate loan spells with Sheffield United, is still to establish himself at City.

Guardiola was pleased for him, but will continue to demand more.

He said: "It's not that I'm not that happy that he scores a hattrick – that's not easy – but he can play better. That was not his best.

"But he's an exceptional guy and has a special talent and his work ethic is unbelievable."

The game was a harsh lesson for Salford, who had won their past six games in League Two without conceding a goal to put themselves into the promotion picture.

Manager Karl Robinson said: "I just said to the players that, seven games ago, if you'd said we were going to concede eight goals in seven games I would have taken it. I just didn't expect them all to be in that one game!

"I'm so proud of them. I knew coming into this game how this manager respects everybody, and the intensity of his players and himself. We're always going to have a problem.

"The thing I'll look back on is some silly errors and I don't think they had to work too hard for some of their goals.

"But I'm not going to carry it forward into next week and use it as an opportunity to slap my players.

"Our objective is to get out of the league that we're in and we've put ourselves in a wonderful position." — The Independent