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Overall increase in achievements of candidates reflects effectiveness of continuous efforts by Education Ministry to provide inclusive, quality education: DG

Traditional solutions not enough to cut flood risks: Expert

'Resilience beyond temporary protection can be created by aligning engineering with ecosystem-based planning.'

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JUMPING WITH JOY ... A group of top scorers from Sekolah Sultan Alam Shah in Putrajaya celebrate their SPM achievements yesterday.
 - AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

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Asean languages move draws flak

Malaysia should reinforce proficiency in core subjects such as English, BM and Mandarin instead of adopting policies that derail more pressing academic goals: Education group

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Former Dewan Rakyat speaker appointed Penang governor

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Dewan Rakyat speaker Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib has been appointed as the ninth Yang di-Pertua Negeri of Penang, effective May 1.

He received the instrument of appointment from His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim during the Presentation of the Instrument of Appointment Ceremony at Dewan Singgahsana Kecil, Istana Negara yesterday.

At the ceremony, Rahim, 84, was also conferred the Seri Maharaja Mangku Negara award, which carries the title "Tun".

Ramli's appointment as the Yang di-Pertua Negeri of Penang was made in accordance with Article 1 of the Constitution of the State of Penang for a term of four years, beginning from May 1, 2025 until April 30, 2029.

He takes over from Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak, who held the post since May 1, 2021.

The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

Also present were Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar, Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Johari Abdul, Dewan Negara President Senator Datuk Awang Beme Ali Basah, Human Resources Minister Steven Sim Chee Keong and Deputy Finance Minister Lim Hui Ying.

Ramli previously held several key positions at both federal and state levels, including as the eighth menteri besar of Perak for 17 years, from 1982 to 1999.

He is a distinguished figure with extensive experience and achievements in politics and public administration.

Born on March 16, 1941, in Pasir Salak, Perak, he was the state's longest-serving menteri besar.

His political career began in 1978 when he was elected as Kampung Gajah assemblyman and appointed to the state executive council.

After his state-level service, Ramli moved to the national stage. He became Pasir Salak MP in 2004. During his first term, he chaired the Public Accounts Committee and later served as speaker of the Dewan Rakyat from 2004 to 2008. He was also transport deputy minister from 2000 to 2004.

Within Umno, Ramli played a key role, leading the Perak Umno liaison committee for 16 years (1984-2000) and serving on the party's supreme council from 1980 to 2006.

Ramli studied at the prestigious Malay College



The King presenting the Seri Maharaja Mangku Negara award to Ramli yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

Kuala Kangsar and earned a law degree from Queen's University, Belfast. He was admitted to the Bar at Lincoln's Inn, London. While in the UK, he was active in student leadership and edited the *Kesatuan Melayu United Kingdom* magazine.

After returning to Malaysia, he became a law lecturer at the Mara Institute of Technology (now UiTM) and also taught part-time at Universiti Malaya in the early 1970s.

In 1971, he became the first in-house legal adviser to the National Electricity Board (NEB) (now Tenaga Nasional Berhad). – Bernama

King receives credentials of eight foreign envoys

KUALA LUMPUR: His Majesty the King of Malaysia Sultan Ibrahim yesterday received the credentials from eight foreign envoys to Malaysia in a ceremony at Dewan Singgahsana Kecil, Istana Negara.

The envoys were Yadira Ledesma Hernandez of Cuba, Irakli Asashvili of Georgia, Ajay Sharma of the United Kingdom and Aloys Bizindavyi

of Burundi, Bernama reported.

The others were Mait Martinson (Estonia), Mario Jose Armengol Campos (Nicaragua), Marie Claire Mukasine (Rwanda) and Allan Joseph Chintedza (Malawi).

Also present were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan and Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Seri Amran Mohamed Zin.

SPM 2024 results best since 2013: Education DG

➤ Number of candidates who obtained distinction in all subjects increased by 0.6% from 11,713 in 2023 to 14,179

PUTRAJAYA: The 2024 Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination results are the best since 2013, with a National Average Grade of 4.49 points compared with 4.60 in 2023, said Education Director-General Datuk Azman Adnan.

He said 355,933 candidates or 94% are eligible to receive the SPM certificate compared with 349,297 candidates in 2023.

"This is an increase of 6,636 candidates or 0.5%. This increase is the best achievement since the certification requirements were introduced in 2013 when candidates were required to pass two subjects, Bahasa Melayu and History (to be issued the SPM certificate)," he told a media conference yesterday.

Azman said an analysis of the 2024 SPM examination results showed an overall increase in candidates' achievements.

He said of the 402,918 candidates registered for the 2024 SPM examination, 386,714 were new candidates who had registered for at least six subjects.

"Of the total, 344,919 were candidates from schools under the ministry, but only 338,673 sat for the examination. A total of 6,246 candidates were absent compared with 8,676 in 2023.

Azman said the number of candidates who obtained distinction (Grades A+, A and A-) in all the subjects they sat for increased by 0.6% from 11,713 candidates in 2023 to 14,179 in 2024.

"The number of candidates who obtained at least a credit or grade C in all subjects was 86,040 in 2024 compared with 83,112 in 2023, while 136,791 obtained at least a pass or grade E in all subjects compared with 131,489 in 2023."

He said the achievement of candidates in urban areas increased by 0.11 points, which is 4.47 points in 2024 compared with 4.58 points in 2023, while in rural areas it increased by 0.09 points, which is 4.92 points compared with 5.01 points in 2023.

Meanwhile, Education Minister Fadhlina

Sidek said the results clearly reflect improvements in the national education system, although several areas still require attention.

She said these include attendance rates, the performance gap between urban and rural candidates and the pass rates of core subjects.

On candidates' performance based on subjects, Azman said there was an improvement in 59 out of 95 subjects while there was a decline in 30 subjects.

He added that there was an improvement in performance in six out of seven core subjects while there was a decline of 0.07 points in the Moral Education subject, which is 4.73 points compared with 4.66 points in 2023.

Azman said the ministry would work on intervention measures, including improving the content of Moral Education, to ensure improved performance, Bernama reported.

He said there was improved performance in the elective subjects of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), Pure Science and Additional Mathematics.

"Chemistry recorded the highest performance increase of 0.37 points, from 4.89 points in 2023 to 4.52 points."

Work cited as reason for skipping exam

PUTRAJAYA: Education director-general Datuk Azman Adnan has revealed that more than half of the students who missed the 2024 SPM cited work as the main reason.

He said 6,246 candidates, or 1.8% of those registered, did not sit for the exam this year, down from 8,675 candidates in 2023.

He added that of those absent, 57.8% cited work commitments, 35.5% mentioned family issues and 4.7% health problems.

Azman said night-shift work was among the factors contributing to the increase in candidates who failed all subjects, up from 1,467 in 2023 to 1,789 in 2024.

"One of the causes behind this (failure) is the lack of focus on learning, as many of these students work night shifts, especially those in urban areas," he told a media conference to announce the 2024 SPM results yesterday.

Azman said unresolved literacy and numeracy issues, as well as a lack of support in the home learning environment, also contributed to the rise in the number of candidates who failed all subjects.

"The Education Ministry is reviewing its approach for this group ahead of the 2025 SPM, including strengthening programmes to develop students' analytical abilities, expanding targeted academic support initiatives and activating partnerships with NGOs and community agencies.

"If we look at the trend over the past three years, there has been a significant drop in the number of candidates who did not sit for the exam. This is a positive development." – Bernama

Anwar tight-lipped on PKR re-election prospect

PUTRAJAYA: PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has remained tight-lipped on the prospect of re-elections in several party divisions.

This follows defeats for several PKR heavyweights – thought to be aligned with deputy president Rafizi Ramli – who lost to their rivals in the divisional polls.

Among the vanquished were Cabinet members and MPs who gained public recognition during the height of Anwar's reform movement.

"You'll need to ask the (party election committee)," the prime minister said before getting into his car at the Seri Perdana Complex.

He had earlier attended the Home Ministry Hari Raya celebration event.

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong and Deputy Home Minister Datuk Seri Shamsul Anwar Nasarah were also present.

In the recently concluded PKR divisional elections, major losses included Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, who was defeated in the Setiawangsa division chief race, and Unity Deputy Minister K. Saraswathy, who lost the Bukit Bintang division contest.

Youth and Sports Deputy Minister Adam Adli Abdul Halim also fell short in his bid for Hang Tuah Jaya division deputy chief post.

Several MPs were also unseated in their respective constituencies, including Batu MP P. Prabakaran, Wangsa Maju MP Zahir Hassan, Ampang MP Rodziah Ismail and Sungai Siput MP S. Kesavan.

Immigration officers to get body cams

PUTRAJAYA: The Home Ministry will provide about 600 units of body cameras for use by immigration officers, as part of efforts to improve the integrity and transparency.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the move was in response to concerns raised by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on the issue of integrity in the immigration service.

"Datuk Seri himself called the Immigration director-general and expressed the need to immediately work on the use of body cameras," he said when speaking at the Home Ministry Hari Raya Aidilfitri celebration event yesterday.

Saifuddin said he then instructed the ministry secretary-general to expedite the process, and the procurement will be carried out on April 28 to enable 600 body cameras to be provided as soon as possible.

In addition, he said the autogate system would replace most of the manual counters at international airports starting in June, in line with the prime minister's wish to speed up the process of entrance and departure by tourists at border checkpoints.

"As Datuk Seri wishes, by June, most of the international airports will replace manual counters with autogates, which will allow the departure of travellers to take place in a very short time. That is our commitment," he said. – Bernama

Ports to act as checkpoints in lorry overloading crackdown

■ BY AZURA ABAS
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➤ Need for stricter measures to ensure safety of road users and reduce fatal crashes caused by excessive vehicle cargo: Minister

PETALING JAYA: Starting July 1, ports will serve as frontline filters in a nationwide crackdown on overloaded heavy vehicles.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the move is part of a broader effort to enhance road safety and reduce crashes caused by excessive vehicle loads.

Loke, who chaired the National Logistics Task Force (NLTF) meeting on Nov 25 last year, said the ministry will begin implementing stricter measures targeting overloading violations, particularly in logistics operations involving heavy vehicles.

"In that closed-door meeting, I informed key industry players to prepare for tougher enforcement.

"This is a necessary step to safeguard road users and promote systemic safety improvements," he said.

Currently, enforcement requires officers to intercept heavy vehicles and escort them to weigh stations, a method that limits the number of

vehicles that can be inspected.

The upcoming changes will leverage port infrastructure to screen vehicles more efficiently, expanding enforcement coverage.

"Many heavy vehicles entering or exiting our ports are involved in import and export activities.

"Ports, therefore, serve as an ideal checkpoint to detect and deter overloaded vehicles," he said.

For a start, this enforcement strategy will be rolled out across all federal ports in Peninsular Malaysia.

For import transactions, the system will check load compliance at the booking stage.

If a booking exceeds the legal gross vehicle weight, it will be automatically rejected, and the vehicle will be barred from entering the port to collect cargo.

For export activities, vehicles will be weighed at the port entrance. Those found to be overloaded will be denied entry to deliver their goods.

Further details on the enforcement policy will be communicated to industry stakeholders by the respective port authorities.

Loke urged industry players to fully cooperate with the initiative.

"Improving safety standards may entail higher operational costs, but such investments will pay off by reducing road crashes linked to overloaded vehicles," he said.

In response to a troubling rise in fatal crashes involving heavy vehicles, Loke was quoted saying early in this year that the ministry would form a special task force dedicated to enhancing road safety.

The initiative was catalysed by devastating crashes, including a five-vehicle collision near Ayer Keroh in December 2024 that resulted in seven fatalities, including five members of the same family. Investigations revealed that a detached lorry tyre was the cause of the crash.

The newly established task force, led by Transport Ministry secretary-general Datuk Jana Santhiran Muniayan, has been tasked with implementing immediate measures.

Its objectives include formulating effective strategies to ensure the safety of all road users, involving multiple stakeholders in the process.

Reported statistical data underscores the urgency of the initiative. From January to October 2024, 825 lorries were involved in fatal crashes, averaging three incidents daily.

The ministry also plans to review and amend the Road Transport Act 1987 and the Land Public Transport Act 2010 to impose stricter penalties for overloading offences.



Loke said improving safety standards may entail higher operational costs, but such investments would pay off by reducing road crashes linked to overloaded vehicles. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ / THE SUN

On-call allowance hike for health workers approved

PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry has received approval to increase the On-Call Duty Allowance for health workers, said its minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

He stressed that the welfare of health workers has always been primary and the issue has been his priority throughout his leadership at the ministry.

"We have already received approval for the increase in the active allowance, we just need to announce the amount. I have

been asked to wait for the announcement," he said after launching the National Health and Morbidity Survey 2024: Nutrition at the ministry yesterday.

The On-Call Duty Allowance is compensation for additional responsibilities carried out by medical officers in treating patients during on-call duty at hospitals after normal working hours.

Dzulkefly said he has also received approval regarding the

fee schedule involving private clinics and hospitals.

Commenting on the claim that the ministry held a large-scale Hari Raya ceremony and invited famous artistes, he said the ministry did not pay Biduanita Negara Datuk Seri Siti Nurhaliza Tarudin to perform as her attendance was arranged through Yayasan Nurjiwa, while Datuk Jamal Abdullah was only given a small token.

"This (Hari Raya ceremony) is

also to celebrate the contributions of the ministry's senior staff in Putrajaya as well as other places," he said.

Several news portals had criticised Dzulkefly and his ministry for organising a lavish Hari Raya celebration, including inviting famous artistes such as Siti Nurhaliza.

Following this, Siti Nurhaliza said she was a guest at the event and was not there to perform. – Bernama



Policy to teach Asean languages draws flak

➤ Parents more concerned about boosting literacy, numeracy and proficiency in English, BM and Mandarin, says education group

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: The government's plan to introduce Asean languages such as Thai, Khmer and Vietnamese in schools has drawn the ire of education stakeholders, who warn that it risks derailing more pressing academic goals.

Parent Action Group for Education Malaysia (PAGE) founder Datin Noor Azimah Abdul Rahim questioned the relevance of the move, cautioning that Malaysia could be "spreading itself too thin" without first reinforcing core subjects such as English, Bahasa Malaysia (BM), Mandarin, Science and Mathematics.

"We shouldn't bite off more than we can chew. Asean may be the buzzword of the day, but the education minister must remember that the official language of Asean has always been English."

She said rather than Malaysia teaching regional languages, countries like Thailand, Vietnam and Cambodia should focus on improving their own English language standards.

"Vietnam is already ahead of us in English, with Thailand close behind. As for Cambodia, it has its own educational hurdles to address."

Azimah said the government's priorities seem out of sync with what most parents want.

"Parents are more concerned with boosting literacy, numeracy and proficiency in English, BM and Mandarin, particularly in Science and Maths."

She also criticised the excessive focus on BM and religious subjects, which she said had pushed English and Mandarin to the sidelines.

"The ministry has failed parents. It should be investing in impactful programmes such as the Dual Language Programme (DLP) which allows students to study Science and Maths in English."

She suggested reallocating the Asean language budget to strengthen BM proficiency among students excluded from DLP.

"Once their BM improves, they can be reassessed, and their (command of) English will benefit too."

Azimah dismissed the practicality of rolling



Munirah said while exposure to regional languages may sound appealing, it is necessary to first build a solid foundation in Bahasa Malaysia and English. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

out Asean languages at scale, adding that schools are already stretched.

"Let's not even go there. Focus on English and Mandarin," she said, describing the policy as a political gimmick that piles unnecessary pressure on students.

"It's purely symbolic and doesn't involve our children, who already have enough on their plates. Stay focused on existing priorities — deepen and elevate them, or risk being a 'jack of all trades, master of none.'"

Meanwhile, former university lecturer Dr Sharifah Munirah Alatas said the policy lacks coherence, and risks becoming another short-lived initiative that sidesteps the deeper issues in the education system.

"My main question is: What's the logic? Are our children even truly bilingual yet?" she said in a post on her Facebook page.

Munirah said while exposure to regional languages may sound appealing, it is necessary to first build a solid foundation in BM and English.

"Why not master English first? Channel all resources into developing a truly bilingual generation."

She also raised doubts over teacher quality and preparedness, asking whether there has been any proper planning.

"When politicians introduce new languages,

don't we need competent teachers?" she said, while calling for better integration with teacher training.

Munirah criticised the absence of evidence-based policymaking, urging the government to draw on existing data as well as consult universities, think tanks and the public.

"But is there political will?"

Pointing to the now-suspended PPSMI (Teaching of Science and Maths in English) policy, she said students have long suffered from inconsistent reforms.

"Instead of flashy policies like Asean language electives, publish solid research on how falling school standards impact university outcomes."

"Ideas such as Asean languages may look good, but do they really build a more competitive, united and forward-thinking Malaysia?"

In response, Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek clarified yesterday that the introduction of Asean languages will not sideline existing subjects as they would only be offered as electives.

She urged the public not to politicise the move, adding that foreign languages have long been part of Malaysia's elective curriculum, with core languages such as BM, Mandarin and Tamil.

Pahang ready to reduce land premium for public projects: MB

KUANTAN: The Pahang government is prepared to reduce land premium rates for federal development projects that benefit the people, including the expansion of the Tengku Ampuan Afzan Hospital, said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail.

He said the matter has been discussed on several occasions, including in a recent meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"When the federal government submits an application for a project, the state government will impose a suitable premium. The federal side may then appeal, and we will consider the request. In the case of the hospital project, I can confirm that a reasonable reduction will be given."

"We have never rejected such appeals, especially for people-centric projects such as hospitals and schools," he said during the state assembly sitting at Wisma Sri Pahang yesterday.

He was responding to a question from assemblyman Mohd Fadzli Mohd Ramly, who asked whether the state would consider reducing premiums, which could reach hundreds of millions of ringgit, to a nominal amount to facilitate the hospital project.

To a supplementary question from Mohd Fadzli regarding overcrowding at the hospital, Wan Rosdy said its expansion is a priority, with the federal government allocating RM500,000 for the construction of a 446-bed facility.

Meanwhile, State Agriculture, Agro-based Industry, Biotechnology and Education Committee chairman Datuk Seri Mohd Soffi Abd Razak said 3,672ha in Pahang were planted with coconut trees last year, producing 27,287 tonnes annually.

He said the supply still does not meet current demand, especially for old coconuts.

"To address this, the state has introduced several initiatives to boost coconut cultivation, including a replanting and new planting programme promoting high-yielding varieties such as the *Matag* coconut," he said in reply to a question from Su Keong Siong (PH-Ketari) on the shortage of old coconuts and state efforts to develop the coconut industry. — Bernama

International Space Port project set to create 2,350 jobs

KUANTAN: The development of the International Space Port in Pahang is expected to be completed in the next three to five years, said state Investment, Industry, Science, Technology and Innovation Committee chairman Datuk Mohamad Nizar Mohamad Najib.

He said the facility, which will be the first international rocket launch site in Southeast Asia, is expected to create 2,350 jobs and generate economic spillover effects, particularly in the tourism and research sectors.

"I was informed that one of the optimal locations for development is along the Equator on the east coast, especially Pahang or Sabah," he said in the state assembly yesterday.

He was responding to a supplementary question from Chan Chun Kuang (PH-Semambu) on the expected completion timeline and the job creation potential for the project. — Bernama

Kelantan to launch exclusive rice brand in August

KOTA BHARU: Kelantan is set to introduce its own rice brand in August, following the anticipated completion of the Darul Naim Rice and Padi Mill in Meranti, Pasir Mas, ahead of the first harvesting season of the year.

State Agriculture, Agro-food Industry and Commodities Committee chairman Datuk Tuan Mohd Saripudin Tuan Ismail said the mill would produce rice in 5kg packs under the Darul Naim brand, and is expected to create over 100 jobs for local residents.

He said the construction of the mill is a flagship project under his portfolio, in line with the state government's goal to have its own padi processing and rice production facilities through a state-owned agency.

"The initiative is being realised through a

collaboration between Kumpulan Pertanian Kelantan Berhad and a private investor to build and operate the facility.

"The mill can process up to 600 metric tonnes of padi per day, with a dry padi storage capacity of over 40,000 metric tonnes," he said during the state assembly sitting at the Kota Darulnaim Complex yesterday.

He was responding to a question from Mohd Adnan Hassan (PAS-Kelaboran) on the state government's efforts to ensure that Kelantan is capable of producing its own rice.

He added that the collaboration with the investor also includes training in modern technology for farmers, especially the younger generation.

"The investor has outlined a strategic plan to

train farmers with the latest technology, including organising several courses at a rice academy in Kedah.

"In addition, several high-tech solar pumps have been introduced at selected areas to help offset agricultural production costs."

Tuan Mohd Saripudin said the state government plans to establish a hybrid rice seed production facility under the same strategic collaboration, in line with Kelantan's aspiration to become a "rice bowl" state.

To a supplementary question from Harun Ismail (PAS-Tawang) on the transparency of the operation of the mill, he gave an assurance that the rice produced would be 100% from locally sourced padi, with no mixing of imported rice. — Bernama

Need for nature-based strategies to curb flood risks

► Shifting climate patterns call for more than traditional solutions as present infrastructure no longer adequate, says academic

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH AND DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: Despite years of government investment and major infrastructure projects aimed at reducing flood risks, many areas in Malaysia - especially flood-prone zones like Taman Sri Muda in Shah Alam - continue to experience recurring flood disasters.

According to environmental experts, the core issue is not a lack of action but rather the absence of adaptive, integrated, and nature-based strategies that address both present-day challenges and future climate scenarios.

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan Environmental Science and Water Resources Assoc Prof Dr Mohamad Faiz Mohd Amin said while substantial infrastructure investments have been made, the growing complexity of urban hydrology and shifting climate patterns call for more than traditional solutions.

"The infrastructure may have been sufficient for past conditions, but it's no longer adequate. Our approach must evolve to meet today's realities."

He said Malaysia's current flood mitigation systems still rely heavily on engineered or "hard" solutions such as drains and barriers. These, he argued, must be complemented by catchment-wide planning, nature-based methods, and regulatory reforms.

"Maintenance of drainage systems, consistent land-use regulation, and cross-agency coordination are areas we must strengthen."

"By aligning engineering with ecosystem-based planning, we can



Aweng said widespread land-use changes, including the destruction of natural flood retention zones, have significantly undermined Malaysia's ability to manage excess water naturally. - ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

create resilience, not just temporary protection," he said.

Mohamad Faiz emphasised the importance of treating rivers as living systems.

He warned that overdevelopment, channelisation and the narrowing of floodplains - without integrated planning - have stripped rivers of their natural flood-buffering capabilities.

"Sustainable river management includes preserving riparian zones, maintaining sediment balance, and ensuring upstream-downstream coordination."

"With careful resource planning, rivers can become assets rather than liabilities," he said.

Although climate change is acknowledged in national planning documents, he pointed out that implementation at ground level remains slow and inconsistent.

"It's promising to see climate change reflected in policy, but we need to go further, updating flood models with climate-adjusted rainfall data and embedding adaptation indicators into infrastructure designs."

He also warned that unchecked urban expansion without proper environmental assessments could exacerbate the risks of both floods

and landslides.

"We must incorporate hydrological and soil data into development plans."

"Understanding slope stability, drainage patterns, and soil permeability is essential before approving construction."

Mohamad Faiz recommended adopting Integrated Flood Risk Management, which combines engineering, ecological, and social strategies.

This includes using advanced 2D flood modelling tools such as HEC-RAS or Mike Flood, along with climate projections and future land-use scenarios.

"Countries like Japan and the Netherlands have demonstrated how subsurface reservoirs and water-sensitive urban design can effectively manage floods - approaches Malaysia can adapt to suit our needs."

He suggested that Malaysia should invest in future-proof urban planning, restore natural buffers such as wetlands and forests, and promote community-based water stewardship.

"Climate resilience must be built into education, development guidelines and budgeting."

Universiti Malaysia Kelantan

Faculty of Earth Science lecturer Aweng Eh Rak echoed these sentiments, stating that Malaysia's flood strategies must move beyond physical infrastructure to include ecological restoration and stronger community involvement.

"One key reason floods persist is that current events often exceed the capacity of our control structures."

He added that widespread land-use changes - including increased impervious surfaces and the destruction of natural flood retention zones - have significantly undermined Malaysia's ability to manage excess water naturally.

"We don't have adequate regulations on ground elevation for individual housing, and there are no laws to protect natural flood-prone areas," he said.

Aweng stressed that river management and natural resource planning are crucial in determining flood severity, yet these remain poorly integrated into national flood policies.

He also highlighted the need for greater community participation. While initiatives like River Watch and "Sayang Hutan" have been introduced, many have struggled due to inconsistent support and coordination.

12,000 online scam cases recorded in three months

KUALA BERANG: Police recorded 12,110 cases of online fraud or "scam" throughout the country in the first three months of this year, involving losses of RM573.7 million.

Bukit Aman Commercial Crime Investigation Department acting director Datuk Rohaimi Md Isa said the number of cases from January to March showed an increase compared with the last three months of last year, namely October to December, which recorded 10,715 cases involving losses of RM519.9 million.

"In Terengganu, 1,251 cases of online fraud with a loss value of RM35.7 million were recorded throughout 2024, compared with only 1,139 cases (loss value of RM24 million) throughout 2023," he said after conducting a working visit to the Ajil police station yesterday.

Rohaimi said online fraud crimes include telecommunications crimes, e-finance crimes, love scams, e-commerce crimes, non-existent loans and non-existent investments.

He said the increase in these cases was due, among other things, to the rapid development of technology and the shift in today's lifestyle, which is focused on the use of online applications.

In addition, he said the rapid development of information technology and artificial intelligence (AI) was also identified as a factor in the increase in online fraud cases.

"Criminals are taking advantage of technology such as fake digital identity generators, fake websites, automated chatboxes, and deepfake technology to deceive victims. Generative AI also enables the creation of content that appears authentic, making it difficult for users to distinguish between genuine and fraudulent communications." - Bernama

Man loses five fingers in parang attack

KUALA LUMPUR: A man lost five fingers on his left hand after being attacked by five individuals armed with parangs and swords.

The incident occurred on Wednesday in front of a restaurant in Jalan PJS 1½ in Bandar Sunway, Subang Jaya, Selangor.

Subang Jaya police chief ACP Wan Azlan Wan Mamat said they dispatched police officers to the scene after receiving an emergency call at 1.54am.

"Investigations found that at the time of the incident, the victim and several friends were heading home after dining at the restaurant when a white Toyota Vios carrying five attackers arrived at the location," he said.

Police urged anyone with information on the incident to contact the Subang Jaya District Control Centre at 03-786 27222 or Insp Fadizah Ajamain at 019-85 82166. - Bernama

Senior citizen under probe over post on Prophet

CYBERJAYA: A Facebook post allegedly targeting Prophet Muhammad and Islam has landed a 63-year-old man in hot water, with the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) stepping in to investigate.

MCMC said in a statement yesterday it had recorded the man's statement on the allegation.

The man's statement was taken in coordination with the Iskandar Puteri Police Headquarters in Johor on April 20, it added.

A mobile phone and SIM card

used by the man to upload the remarks have been seized for forensic analysis.

The case is being investigated under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998.

The man faces a fine of up to RM500,000, a maximum two-year jail term, or both.

The commission added that investigation papers will be forwarded to the deputy public prosecutor at the Attorney-General's Chambers once completed.

"MCMC will not compromise or tolerate any party misusing social media platforms - especially those touching on 3R issues (religion, race, and royalty) - as this could incite inter-religious tensions and threaten the harmony of Malaysia's multi-racial society."

"The public is reminded to use social media ethically and responsibly," the statement read.

Meanwhile, in BUKIT MERTAJAM, police have launched an investigation into a food delivery rider accused of sending a racially

offensive message via a delivery app in a reported incident here.

Central Seberang Perai police chief Helmi Aris told Bernama that investigation is under way.

Police have opened an investigation file, and the case is being probed under Section 298 of the Penal Code and Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998," he said.

On Wednesday, National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang called for stern legal action against the rider.



From roadside fare to treats fit for royalty

➤ Operator of family *kuih talam* business proud to be receiving orders from prominent hotels and Selangor Palace

KUALA LANGAT: What started as a humble roadside business in Kampung Delek, Klang, over two decades ago has since blossomed into a proud family legacy.

Since its rebranding as Royale Talam in 2015, Arradzi Baihaqi Adzhar, the third generation operator of his family's *kuih* business, has carried on the tradition with his wife, Siti Hapizah Musa. Together, they have cultivated a loyal following.

Beyond that, their authentic *kuih talam* range has gained recognition in the corporate world, attracting several prominent hotels, catering companies and Malaysia Airlines. For the past 15 years, they have also been supplying regularly to Istana Alam Shah and Istana Bukit Kayangan in Selangor.

Apart from the success achieved, the couple are also driven by a mission to spark interest in traditional *kuih* among the younger generation by aligning the business with modern trends through the launch of a contemporary cafe.

Featuring over 40 types of *kuih talam*, Arradzi said the initiative aims to indirectly introduce young people to the variety and richness of traditional *kuih*.

"Our goal is to make *kuih talam* a top choice in society, not just a side treat served at parties or gatherings.



Arradzi and Siti Hapizah are committed to using only high-quality fresh coconut milk to preserve the soft texture and rich, creamy-sweet taste of *kuih talam*.
— BERNAMAPIC

"It is disheartening that some young people today are more inclined towards modern desserts and some hardly even know, let alone recognise, traditional *kuih*," he told Bernama.

He said the decision to open a cafe came after realising that not many outlets offer *kuih talam* as a main product, compared with Western menu options.

Arradzi and his wife decided to commercialise the business while prioritising the use of only high-quality fresh coconut milk to preserve the soft texture and rich, creamy-sweet taste of *kuih talam*.

Apart from adhering to strict standard operating procedures that include checks on appearance, smell and taste before the products are sold, Arradzi said Royale Talam is *halal*-certified and affordably

priced, starting from as low as RM3 for four pieces.

While maintaining the authenticity of traditional *kuih talam* recipes such as *seri muka pandan*, *seri muka durian*, *talam keladi* and *talam ubi kayu*, he said they have also adopted some recipes to suit modern palates in an effort to enhance appeal and attract younger consumers.

Even so, they remain committed to preserving the original taste of traditional *kuih talam*, ensuring that any innovation focuses mainly on improving the texture, making it more "springy" and enjoyable.

"In the past, there was no *kuih talam kacang merah*, *lapis kacang hijau* or *lapis jalur Gemilang*. Now, we're experimenting with flavours like red bean, *mung* bean, sago, coconut and palm sugar. These are

some of the modern elements we've introduced.

"If a customer wants *kuih talam* that's out of the ordinary, we'll try our best to make it happen. Usually, such requests come from older generations who are more knowledgeable about traditional *kuih*," said Arradzi, who currently employs 30 staff.

All Royale Talam *kuih* are freshly made daily at a central kitchen operating 24 hours a day in Section 7, Shah Alam, before being distributed to three other outlets in Bandar Saujana Putra, Taman Medan and Klang.

Looking ahead, Arradzi said he plans to expand by opening new branches in other states, including Kelantan and Terengganu, and has ambitions to enter the Indonesian market within the next five years.

Going nuts over pistachios

KUALA LUMPUR: Once consumed solely as a snack, the pistachio has surged in popularity and is now a new star in the local culinary scene.

No longer confined to cake and ice cream toppings, it has emerged as a prominent flavour in beverages such as lattes.

"Unlike the more neutral-tasting peanuts or almonds, pistachios offer a more complex flavour profile that is slightly sweet, subtly creamy and delicately nutty," said Universiti Teknologi Mara culinary arts senior lecturer Dr Mohd Hairi Jalis.

"Pistachios have a naturally balanced flavour that is mildly sweet, creamy and nutty, making them a very versatile ingredient in cooking. They can be made into a paste, chopped for texture or blended."

Mohd Hairi said pistachios play a key role in recipes because their natural fats give them a smooth and creamy texture that is perfect for desserts such as mousse, ganache or gelato, adding that they also help blend different flavours in a dessert.

He added that in Southeast Asia, pistachios are seen as rare and exotic, which gives them a luxurious feel, even in something simple like a latte.

Their use in local pastries, especially in trendy bakeries and fusion cafes, is likely to continue as they match modern tastes for healthy, natural and exclusive ingredients. But their lasting appeal will depend on how well they fit local flavours and culture.

"The high price of pistachios has also led to counterfeit versions, from green colouring to mixed pastes that contain little to no real pistachio," he said, adding that this compromises culinary integrity and diminishes the true gastronomic experience.

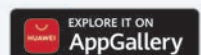
However, he cautioned against processed pistachio flavoured products that contain high amounts of sugar, artificial flavouring and offer little nutritional value. — Bernama

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India suspends water treaty with Pakistan after attack

➤ Rising tensions see border crossing closed, advisers expelled and plans to restrict visas

ANKARA: India has suspended a decades-old water treaty with neighbouring Pakistan on Wednesday, a day after unknown gunmen attacked tourists in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Additionally, New Delhi has declared Islamabad's military, naval and air advisers *persona non grata* at the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi, giving them one week to leave the country.

India also closed the border crossing with Pakistan at Wagah while New Delhi will restrict visas under the regional SAARC framework to Pakistani citizens, the government said in a statement.

At least 26 people were killed on Tuesday when unknown gunmen opened fire on tourists in Kashmir, forcing Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cut short his trip to Saudi Arabia.

The decisions were made at an emergency Cabinet Security Committee meeting chaired by Modi in New Delhi.

India will withdraw its defence, navy and air advisers from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, according to the announcement.

The posts in the respective high commissions are deemed null and



Residents in Amritsar gather at a memorial for tourists who were killed in the Kashmir attack. — AFP/PIIC

void, the statement said.

Five support staff of the service advisers will also be withdrawn from both high commissions, it added.

According to Anadolu, amid increasing tensions, Pakistan's government convened a National Security Committee meeting yesterday to decide how to respond to India's unilateral decisions.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif led the committee, which included the chiefs of the three

armed services and other officials.

New Delhi has suspended the Indus Water Treaty, a water-sharing agreement brokered by the World Bank in 1960 between the longtime rivals.

Under the agreement, India receives the waters of the Sutlej, Beas and Ravi rivers while Pakistan gets the waters of the Indus, Helum and Chenab rivers.

Pakistan has accused India of "continuously violating" the treaty by

building dams on western rivers whereas New Delhi believes Islamabad has more water than New Delhi as a result of the treaty.

The suspension of the treaty, according to some experts, would further aggravate tensions on the issue, giving New Delhi an edge to exploit water regulation.

This is the first time since the treaty was signed that either of the parties has unilaterally suspended it. — Bernama-Anadolu

US marines accused of rape in Okinawa

TOKYO: Two US marines in Okinawa, Japan are under investigation for alleged rapes, police said yesterday, with the incidents being the latest in a string of assault cases that have angered residents.

The United States has around 54,000 military personnel stationed in Japan, mostly on the subtropical southern island of Okinawa, to the east of Taiwan.

"A US marine in his 20s is suspected of raping a Japanese woman at an American military base in March and is also suspected of injuring another woman," a local police official said.

The second marine, also in his 20s, is suspected of raping a Japanese woman at a US base in January, the official said.

Police have referred the cases to prosecutors.

Washington will cooperate "fully" with Japanese authorities in the investigations, said US ambassador George Glass.

"We value the ties of trust we have built with our Japanese hosts and I am committed to doing everything I can to prevent actions that may jeopardise these bonds."

On Friday, US service members joined Japanese officials and residents in Okinawa for a one-off joint nighttime patrol along a downtown street dotted with bars.

The patrol, which is the first such joint operation since 1973, followed other sexual assault cases in Okinawa involving American servicemen.

A 21-year-old marine was charged with rape in June last year, just months after prosecutors charged a 25-year-old US soldier for assaulting a girl aged under 16.

Okinawa Governor Denny Tamaki called the latest cases "deplorable" and said authorities urge the US military to prevent similar incidents, Japanese media reported.

Japan's top government spokesman Yoshimasa Hayashi declined to comment on the cases but said crimes by US troops are "unacceptable".

The alleged rape in March took place in a restroom and the injured woman was trying to stop the assault, Japanese media said, citing police sources.

Relations have long been fraught between Okinawans and the US bases.

Last year, 80 individuals connected to the US military were charged in Okinawa for various crimes, police said.

The 1995 gang rape of a 12-year-old girl by three US soldiers in Okinawa prompted major backlash, with calls for a rethink of the 1960 pact allowing the United States to station troops in Japan. — AFP

S. Korea ex-president charged over graft

SEOUL: South Korean prosecutors yesterday said they have indicted former president Moon Jae-in on corruption charges related to the employment of his son-in-law at an airline.

Moon was "indicted for corruption for receiving 217 million won (RM663,549) in connection with facilitating the employment of his son-in-law at an airline," the Jeonju District Prosecutors Office said.

The case adds to the political drama gripping South Korea, which is facing elections on June 3 after Yoon Suk Yeol was stripped of his presidency for briefly imposing martial law.

Moon, who served as president from 2017 to 2022, is known for pursuing engagement with North Korea, including brokering talks

between Pyongyang leader Kim Jong Un and US President Donald Trump during his first term.

According to prosecutors, Moon's son-in-law was appointed managing director by low-cost airline Thai Eastar Jet "despite lacking any relevant experience or qualifications in the airline industry".

The son-in-law "frequently left his post for extended periods and did not perform his duties in a manner befitting the position", they said.

The airline, which was effectively controlled by a former MP from Moon's party, had given Moon's son-in-law the job in a bid to win favours from the then president, prosecutors said.

They added that any salary and financial benefits paid by the airline to the son-in-law between 2018 and

2020 "were confirmed as not legitimate salary payments but bribes intended for the president".

Moon's indictment means that two former presidents of South Korea are in legal jeopardy.

Yoon is facing trial on insurrection charges over his Dec 3 martial law decree, which only lasted around six hours as it was voted down by opposition MPs.

If convicted, Yoon could be sentenced to life in prison or the death penalty, although South Korea has had an unofficial moratorium on executions since 1997.

Yoon is the second South Korean president to be removed from office and the third to be impeached by parliament.

The only other living former presidents, namely Lee Myung-bak

and Park Geun-hye, were convicted of corruption and served prison terms.

Former president Roh Moo-hyun, for whom Moon served as chief of staff, died by suicide in May 2009 by jumping off a cliff amid a corruption investigation involving his family.

Moon's party condemned the prosecution yesterday, calling the indictment "an abuse of unchecked prosecutorial power".

The corruption charge was "nothing more than a politically motivated move aimed at humiliating a former president", Democratic Party spokesperson Park Kyung-mee said in a statement.

"So the salary paid to the son-in-law was a bribe to the president? Is this the best logic they could come up with after dragging the case out for four long years?" — AFP

Beijing, Seoul to boost communication

BEIJING: China and South Korea agreed to continue strengthening communication and properly manage differences related to maritime affairs after a meeting in Seoul on Wednesday, China's Foreign Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

The two sides agreed to advance

negotiations on maritime delimitation, and strengthen cooperation in law enforcement and sea and air security, the statement added.

The countries also exchanged views on the issue of fishery farming in the Yellow Sea, according to the ministry. — Reuters

Vietnam sets deadline for railway construction

HANOI: The Vietnamese government has set a deadline for the north-south high-speed railway line's groundbreaking by Dec 31 next year, Xinhua reported.

According to the Vietnam News Agency yesterday, citing a resolution issued on Wednesday, the

government has required the project's construction, procurement and equipment installation to be completed by 2035 for its operation.

The Vietnamese National Assembly approved the investment policy for the railway project in November last year, with a total

investment of 1.7 quadrillion Vietnamese dong (RM284 billion).

The railway line is scheduled to stretch roughly 1,541km, pass through 23 passenger stations and five freight stations, and have a design speed of 350km/h. — Bernama-Xinhua



US accuses alleged gang member of terrorism

➤ First instance of authorities using such charges against Venezuelan street gang

WASHINGTON: The United States on Wednesday added terrorism-related charges to its criminal case against an alleged high-ranking member of Tren de Aragua, which is the first time US authorities have used such charges against the Venezuelan street gang.

Jose Enrique Martinez Flores has been charged in a new indictment with conspiring to provide and providing material support to a foreign terrorist organisation, according to a court filing.

"Today's charges represent an inflection point in how this Justice Department will prosecute and ultimately dismantle this evil organisation, which has destroyed American families and poisoned our communities," Attorney-General Pam Bondi said in a statement.

In February, the United States designated Tren de Aragua and other transnational gangs as terrorist organisations.

Under President Donald Trump's

crackdown on immigrant gangs, the administration has sought to use wartime powers to deport alleged members of the gang, sparking court fights around the country.

Martinez Flores also faces international cocaine distribution charges, according to the indictment, which was filed in a federal court in south Texas.

He was initially arrested in Colombia in March at the direction of the United States.

He remains in custody in Colombia pending further proceedings, according to a statement by the Justice Department.

Attorney information for Martinez Flores was not immediately available. - Reuters

New Jersey wildfire prompts state of emergency

NEW YORK: A significant wildfire raging through New Jersey has triggered a state of emergency after consuming about 4,600ha by Wednesday, forcing thousands to evacuate, disrupting traffic and blanketing the sky with black smoke, reported Xinhua.

New Jersey Acting Governor Tahesha Way declared a state of emergency starting at 7am on Wednesday, adding that no fatalities or structural damage have occurred.

The Jones Road Wildfire, ignited on Tuesday in Ocean County's Greenwood Forest Wildlife Management Area, rapidly grew to 3,400ha by late evening, as reported by the New Jersey Forest Fire Service.

The blaze remained just 10% contained by Tuesday night, endangering 1,320 buildings and prompting 3,000 residents in Ocean and Lacey Townships to flee.

Authorities lifted all evacuation orders by 6:30am on Wednesday, although over 25,000 households lost power as officials deactivated lines to protect fire crews.

"We have averted a major disaster," New Jersey Forest Fire Service Commissioner Shawn LaTourette said on Wednesday.

"This wildfire is not under full and complete control, we still have a lot of work to do to achieve complete containment of the wildfire. But there were 1,300 homes that were



The blaze remained just 10% contained by Tuesday night, endangering 1,320 buildings and prompting 3,000 residents in Ocean and Lacey Townships to flee. - REUTERS/SPIC

threatened during the course of fighting this fire.

"We have been under continuing dry conditions, particularly in the southern part of the state, and those dry conditions have very much influenced this fire," he said, adding that

the cause remains under investigation.

Forecasts predicted that shifting winds would push smoke northward towards New York City, potentially reaching Long Island and New Jersey. - Bernama-Xinhua

Cases of vaccine-preventable diseases rising: UN

NEW YORK: Outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, such as measles, meningitis and yellow fever, are on the rise globally amid misinformation and cuts to international aid, the United Nations and the Gavi Vaccine Alliance said on Wednesday.

"Vaccines have saved more than 150 million lives over the past five decades. Funding cuts to global health have put these hard-won gains in jeopardy," said World Health Organisation chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

He added that the increasing outbreaks around the world are "putting lives at risk and exposing countries to increased costs in treating diseases".

Measles is making an "especially dangerous comeback", with cases rising every year since 2021 and reaching an estimated 10.3 million in 2023, which is a 20% increase since 2022.

The organisations believe that the trend is

likely to have continued into 2024 and this year.

In the past 12 months, 138 countries have reported measles cases, with 61 experiencing large or disruptive outbreaks, which is the highest number observed in any 12-month period since 2019, according to the statement.

The joint statement was signed by the World Health Organisation, United Nations children's fund Unicef and Gavi, and was released on Wednesday at the start of World Immunisation Week, which runs from yesterday until April 30.

Cases of meningitis and yellow fever also increased significantly in Africa last year, it said.

The spikes are taking place amid rising misinformation, population growth and humanitarian crises.

Funding cuts are also jeopardising progress and leaving millions of children and adults at risk, the groups said, without explicitly mentioning a drastic reduction

in US humanitarian aid under President Donald Trump.

"The global funding crisis is severely limiting our ability to vaccinate more than 15 million vulnerable children in fragile and conflict affected countries against measles," said Unicef chief Catherine Russell.

Even as countries attempt to catch up on their immunisation backlogs following the Covid-19 pandemic, the number of children missing routine vaccinations has risen.

In 2023, an estimated 14.5 million children missed all of their routine vaccine doses, presenting an increase from 13.9 million in 2022.

Gavi is calling for at least US\$9 billion (RM39 billion) in funding ahead of its June 25 pledging summit "to protect 500 million children, saving at least 8 million lives from 2026 to 2030". - AFP

BRIEFS

TRUMP TO MEET LEADERS DURING VATICAN VISIT

ISTANBUL: US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he has "a lot of meetings set up" with world leaders during his upcoming visit to the Vatican for the funeral of Pope Francis, Anadolu Ajansi reported. The funeral, set for Saturday, will mark Trump's first overseas trip since taking office in January. He will be accompanied by first lady Melania Trump. Numerous world leaders are expected to attend the funeral, including French President Emmanuel Macron, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier and Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Argentinian President Javier Milei and Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, according to media reports. Francis was born in Buenos Aires in 1936 to Italian immigrant parents. Ordained as a Jesuit priest in 1969, he studied in Argentina and later in Germany before rising to lead the Catholic Church in 2013. - Bernama-Anadolu

PERU PRESIDENT UNABLE TO ATTEND POPE'S FUNERAL

LIMA: Peru's Congress on Wednesday denied President Dina Boluarte permission to attend the funeral of Pope Francis. As required by law, the president had sought permission to travel to the Vatican to attend Saturday's funeral of the pontiff. But the unicameral Congress rejected her request with 45 votes to 40, with one abstention. During the debate, lawmaker Susel Paredes said: "If she wants to pray for the pope's soul, let her follow his example, be austere, go to mass every day and not spend on superficialities." Peru declared three days of mourning for the pope and will be represented at the funeral by Foreign Minister Elmer Schialer. - AFP

54 KILLED IN EXTREMIST ATTACK ON MILITARY POSTS

COTONOU: Suspected extremist insurgents killed 54 troops in an attack last week on military posts in a Benin national park, the government said on Wednesday. Government spokesperson Wilfried Leandre Houngbedji gave the new toll to a press briefing on the April 17 attack. Authorities had previously said eight soldiers were killed. It is the heaviest official toll since the start of extremist attacks in the north. The attack was claimed by the Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims, which is affiliated with al-Qaeda. "The soldiers who have fallen are our children, our parents, our friends," the spokesperson said. The country deployed nearly 3,000 soldiers to secure its borders in January 2022. It later sent an additional 5,000 troops to bolster security in the north. - AFP

MEXICO TRAFFIC COLLISION LEAVES 11 DEAD

MEXICO CITY: A road crash in northern Mexico has killed 11 people, including a baby and a four-year-old, in an incident involving armed individuals, authorities said on Wednesday. Eight others were injured in the crash on Tuesday in the northern state of Chihuahua, the public prosecutor's office said. The victims came from the same community of Somarachi in the Sierra Madre Occidental mountains. The driver, who allegedly caused the crash by veering into another lane, fled and several unidentified armed individuals later came to take away his vehicle, the statement said. Criminal groups involved in drug production and trafficking are active in the remote region, which is also home to Indigenous people, such as the Raramuri. - AFP

Netanyahu slams Tehran as existential threat

JERUSALEM: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Iran is an existential threat and warned that "the fate of all humanity" is at stake if it acquires nuclear arms.

He was speaking on Wednesday at the start of Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day, which commemorates the murder of six million Jews by the Nazis during World War II and is observed every year in April or May according to the Jewish calendar.

"The regime in Iran is a threat to our destiny, to our very existence and to the fate of all humanity.

"This is what will happen if it obtains nuclear weapons. If we lose this battle, the Western nations will be next. Israel will not lose, will not give in and will not surrender."

Western powers and Israel, considered by experts to be the only nuclear-armed state in the Middle East, have long accused Tehran of seeking nuclear weapons.

Iran has consistently denied the charge, insisting that its nuclear programme is for peaceful purposes only.

Netanyahu has repeatedly vowed that he would not allow Iran to have nuclear weapons.

In his remarks at Yad Vashem, he compared Palestinian militant group Hamas to the "Nazis, like Hitler".

"They want to kill, to destroy all the Jews. They openly declare their intent to destroy the Jewish state and that will not happen!" – AFP



Rescuers working at the site of a building hit by a Russian missile in Kyiv. – REUTERS/PIC

Trump blames Zelensky for failure to end war

▶ 'Refusal to accept US terms for ceasing conflict will do nothing but prolong killing field'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump lashed out at Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday, blaming his refusal to accept the Russian occupation of Crimea for failure to end the war.

As the leaders traded accusations, Ukrainian authorities issued an alert for an "enemy missile" attack on Kyiv, with explosions heard across the capital.

Trump said a deal was "very close", and effectively closed with Moscow, but Zelensky was proving "harder" to negotiate with.

Zelensky's refusal to accept US terms for ending the conflict "will do nothing but prolong the killing field", he added.

Ahead of Trump's broadside, Vice-President J.D. Vance laid out the US vision for a peace deal in which Russia would get to keep already occupied swaths of Ukraine, including Crimea.

Zelensky rejected this as a violation of Ukraine's constitution.

This prompted an outburst from Trump, in which he accused Zelensky of being "inflammatory" and taking a position that is "harmful to peace negotiations with Russia".

Zelensky "can have peace or he can fight for another three years before losing the whole country", Trump wrote on Truth Social.

He said Crimea, a Black Sea peninsula with longtime major

Russian naval facilities, "was lost years ago" and "is not even a point of discussion".

Zelensky responded by posting on social media a 2018 "Crimea declaration" by Trump's then-secretary of state Mike Pompeo, which said Washington "rejects Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea".

The US pressure on Ukraine to accept a deal comes after Trump regularly boasted on the campaign trail that he would resolve the conflict in 24 hours.

He has put no equivalent visible pressure on Russia while dangling a lifting of massive US economic sanctions against Moscow if the fighting stops.

Vance said the deal would "freeze the territorial lines at some level close to where they are today".

This would mean Ukraine losing large areas to Russia.

He did not explain what territory

Russia would have to give up.

It is time for Moscow and Kyiv "to either say yes or for the United States to walk away from this process", he said.

French President Emmanuel Macron's office said: "Ukraine's territorial integrity and European aspirations are very strong requirements for Europeans."

The diplomatic wrangling and strikes on Kyiv came after a fresh wave of Russian air attacks that shattered a brief Easter truce.

A Russian drone strike on a bus in the southeastern city of Marganets killed nine people and wounded at least 30, the Dnipropetrovsk regional governor said on Wednesday.

Ukrainian authorities also reported strikes in the regions of Kyiv, Kharkiv, Poltava and Odesa.

In light of the attacks, Zelensky called for an "immediate, full and unconditional ceasefire". – AFP

BRIEFS

LONDON SAYS PEACE TALKS PRODUCTIVE

MOSCOW: The United Kingdom Foreign Office said the Ukraine talks in London have led to significant progress towards common ground on next steps, reported Sputnik/RIA Novosti. "The talks today were productive and successful, and significant progress was made on reaching a common position on next steps. All agreed to continue their close coordination and looked forward to further talks soon," the ministry said. It added that all parties reaffirmed their support for US President Donald Trump's commitment "to stopping the killing and achieving a just and lasting peace". – Bernama-Sputnik/RIA Novosti

RUSSIA AGREES TO HAVE TALIBAN ENVOY

MOSCOW: Russia said on Wednesday it would allow Taliban authorities in Afghanistan to have an ambassador in Moscow, in a symbolic move days after it lifted the "terrorist" designation for the militant group. Moscow has taken steps to normalise relations with the Islamist Taliban administration since the group seized power in Afghanistan in 2021 after the withdrawal of US troops. The Russian Foreign Ministry said Russian officials have held talks with Afghanistan's foreign and internal ministers. It said the Afghan side "expressed deep gratitude for this step". Russia sees a potential economic partner in the Taliban authorities, who praised Moscow for scrapping the "terrorism" label last week. – AFP

Iran asked to clarify tunnels at nuclear site

WASHINGTON: The United Nations nuclear watchdog agency head has called on Iran to explain tunnels built around a nuclear site but voiced optimism that US-Iran talks would land a deal.

The Institute for Science and International Security, a Washington think tank, released satellite imagery on Wednesday that it said showed a new, deeply buried tunnel alongside an older one around the Natanz site, as well as a new security perimeter.

"I have been raising this issue

repeatedly and will continue to do so," said International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director-general Rafael Grossi.

Grossi, who visited Tehran last week, said all countries need to inform the IAEA of intentions for facilities around nuclear sites but Iran has a stance "unique in the world" that it does not need to inform the agency ahead of time.

He said it "cannot be excluded" that the tunnels would store undeclared material but did not want to speculate on intentions.

He also said Iranian and IAEA experts would meet to follow up on his visit, including on reinstalling cameras on nuclear sites.

Iran and the United States have held two rounds of talks since US President Donald Trump called for a diplomatic solution to avoid conflict. A new round of technical talks is expected this weekend.

"I think there is a general expectation that this goes well and that the agreement is verified by the IAEA."

Grossi said this was "more or less

the sense of what I am getting when I am talking to leaders", mentioning specifically Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi as hopeful for a US-Iran deal.

Trump in 2018 ripped up a nuclear agreement negotiated under previous US president Barack Obama and reimposed sweeping sanctions.

He has voiced hope in his second term for a new accord that would resolve the issue diplomatically, and has discouraged Israel from a military strike on Iran. – AFP



No single 'right' road after SPM

COMMENT by Dr Nahrizul Adib Kadri

FOR many 17-year-olds across the country, this will be a day to remember. For some, it would be the best day of their lives - finally seeing the fruits of their sleepless nights, tuition marathons and the prayers of hopeful parents. For others, it may feel like the end of the world. I have seen both sides and have been in both.

My SPM results came out in 1992. That was 33 years ago. Yet, I still remember the pressure - not so much about the grades but what came after. The pressure to choose the "correct" path, the "right" course, the "perfect" university, the "sure-win" future.

The truth is, at 17, who really knows?

I certainly didn't. But I did what many would do - I followed my childhood ambition. I wanted to be a doctor. It sounded noble, respectable and, honestly, a little cool. Plus, I had the results to back it up.

So, when I was offered a spot in the foundation programme for a medical school in Australia under a JPA scholarship, it felt like a dream come true. All systems go - until it wasn't.

I failed my first year - not just by a little, but completely; the kind of failure where you don't just have to retake a paper, you have to repeat the entire year because the system ran on terms.

Still, I pushed through. Repeated the year, picked myself up and moved forward. I barely passed the first and second years.

Then, I failed again in my third year. This time, JPA said, "Come home".

Was it the wrong choice? Maybe, maybe not. Was it the right thing to happen? Maybe, maybe not.

I'm now a professor of biomedical engineering at the top

university in Malaysia. I've had the privilege of teaching hundreds - if not thousands - of bright young minds.

I've travelled. I've spoken at conferences. I've written papers and articles and perhaps even inspired a handful of students (hopefully) along the way.

In my capacity as the fellow and principal of Universiti Malaya residential colleges, I've been involved in various community work - from feeding the homeless in downtown Kuala Lumpur to outreach programmes with urban poor children in People's Housing Programmes. It's all part of the same journey: trying to be useful in whatever way I can.

Does that mean I'm successful now? Maybe, maybe not.

You see, life is a really, really long journey. And wherever you are now - whether celebrating or crying, on a high or at rock bottom - you are simply at one leg of that journey. You are not defined by your results but by what you do with them next.

More importantly, you are not the sum of your choices but the product of your attitude towards those choices.

In hindsight, maybe medicine wasn't my true path. Or maybe it was, and I just took the scenic route into academia. Maybe those failures were the universe's way of nudging me towards where I truly belong.

Here's the thing: life rarely unfolds the way we plan it - it meanders, it throws detours, it gives us wins and losses, breakthroughs and breakdowns. Through it all, we evolve, we adapt and we make meaning out of our experiences.

So rather than obsessing over whether a decision is "right" or "wrong", perhaps the better



SPM results are just the beginning. Celebrate if you have done well and grieve if you have not done as well as expected but don't stop there. Whatever path you take next, give it your all. - ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

question is: Do I have the right attitude to see this through?

James Clear, in his bestselling book *Atomic Habits*, said: "Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become."

At 17, you won't have all the answers. You won't know where your path will take you. But if you show up, consistently and wholeheartedly, you will cast enough votes to become someone you can be proud of. I didn't become a doctor but I became someone else - someone I dare say my younger self would still respect.

So, to those who received your SPM results yesterday, I offer you this: celebrate if you have done well, you deserve it. And if you haven't done as well as you hoped, grieve if you need to, it's okay. But don't stop there.

Whatever path you choose next - pre-U, A-Levels, IB, matriculation, diploma, STPM or even taking a break - commit to it fully. Be present, be curious, be kind and work hard, not because the world is watching but because your future self is counting on you.

Don't be paralysed by the need

to pick the "right" road. Life is not a one-way street. It's more like a roundabout - with plenty of exits, re-entries and unexpected turns. You'll find your way, even if it takes a few extra loops or a detour after you miss an exit.

In the end, wherever you are, that is where you were meant to be.

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

Single-parent adoption requires serious thought

UNDER ONE ROOF

Q: I'm a single adult who is deeply concerned about the plight of orphans in this country and around the world, and I would like to do my part by adopting a child who needs a home. What is your advice?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: We applaud your selfless attitude and your willingness to welcome a needy child into your home. The need for more adoptive parents is huge.

That said, Focus on the Family Malaysia remains committed to the belief that the ideal environment for every child is a two-parent home built on a loving marriage between one man and one woman.

Studies have shown that children do best in all measurable ways when they are in stable homes with a mother and a father.

That is why - and as most single mums and dads would be the first to confirm - single-parenting is a stiff challenge even under the most favourable circumstances.

I would counsel anyone who is considering this option to proceed with great care.

Furthermore, mums and dads are innately different. Academic research has demonstrated the importance of a father's protective influence, especially for boys.

Mothers offer nurturing and emotional support that fosters a sense of security. Both maternal and paternal roles carry unique and immeasurable value, and anyone considering single parenthood should thoughtfully and creatively consider how to meet these needs with intention.

It is also important to make a

careful assessment of your resources.

Are you financially capable of providing for a child's material needs? Will you have the support of friends and extended family?

Have you thought about education, values training and childcare? Are your current living quarters large enough to accommodate another person?

Consider these factors as you endeavour to make a commitment to raise a child.

Q: I'm trying to educate our 14-year-old daughter about "best practices" for social media before we let her create her own account(s). I like to get input from various sources. What would you suggest?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: First, we commend you for your effort to guide your daughter in navigating today's social media landscape wisely. We compiled a list entitled

"The Top-10 Social Media Rules" for all ages but most are especially applicable to teenagers:

- 1) Always be kind - treat others the way you want to be treated.
- 2) View social media as a way to give; consider how things you post can benefit others.
- 3) Set privacy settings, including location.
- 4) Don't chat/message someone you don't personally know in the "real" world.
- 5) Please, no sleaze! Modesty trumps "likes" when posting photos. (And remember that everything you post will be available for future "significant others" - and employers - to see.)
- 6) Nothing should be truly private. Know your children's passwords and convey that you'll be friending them and reading their posts. Be sure your children can read yours, too.
- 7) Refuse to share a post that you haven't personally verified; that free dinner may just be a scam.

8) Limit your social media consumption/posting to just a few times per day, with parental input.

9) Avoid crudities, vulgarities, profanities or symbols for such. Don't say it online if you wouldn't say it to someone's face.

10) Reread carefully before you post - without facial expressions and personal contact, the best-intended post may be misinterpreted.

I would suggest printing out this list and discussing each guideline with your daughter, then placing it somewhere visible for reference.

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



Best of Malaysian tourism

Local hotels, destinations rank highly in Asia
- P12

WEEKLY FOCUS

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TUESDAY
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INSIDE

p21 Gen Z adventures from Penang to Johor

p25 Amanda Ang on her role in horror film Kulit Wayang

p26 Artistes seeking Plan B in business ventures



M'sian hotels, resorts, cities shine in Asia tourism rankings

➤ Local establishments in Langkawi, Kuala Lumpur, Redang take spotlight as they dominate regional categories

MALAYSIANS planning their next great getaway can look to Trip.com's newly released 2025 Trip.Best Global Rankings, which showcases the most-loved travel experiences based on verified traveller reviews and booking data.

From luxury stays and family hotels to unforgettable attractions and dining hotspots, the annual rankings offer travellers a curated guide to the best the region has to offer – and Malaysia has scored big this year.

For 2025, the rankings feature Malaysian establishments across multiple Asia-focused categories, highlighting how Malaysia continues to impress travellers with its vibrant hospitality, cultural richness and diverse culinary offerings.

Global highlights

While Malaysian establishments dominate Asia-focused categories, the 2025 Trip.Best Global Rankings spotlight broader trends and key highlights from across the world:

➤ Luxury and experiential stays dominate, with Paris, Tokyo and New York leading the Global 100 Luxury Hotels list. Paris' Hotel de Crillon tops the chart, joined by other icons such as Raffles Singapore and Aman Tokyo.

➤ Family travel is thriving, with world-class resorts like Atlantis Sanya (China), Tokyo Disneyland Hotel (Japan) and Atlantis, The Palm (Dubai) ranked among the best global family-friendly destinations.

➤ Theme parks are top global attractions, including Walt Disney World, Universal Studios Japan and Shanghai Disney Resort. These destinations continue to dominate the Global Best Things to Do list.

➤ Seasonal experiences such as autumn foliage viewing and water-themed fun are now featured in new categories such as Fall Views and Water Fun, responding to travellers' growing interest in nature and seasonal trips.

➤ Dining becomes part of the journey, as global food capitals Paris, New York, Bangkok and Singapore top fine dining lists. Meanwhile, new experiences such as sky-high dining in Dubai or riverside feasts in Seoul lead the Restaurants for Views & Experiences category.

➤ The "Destinations for the Months" feature helps travellers plan the best seasonal itineraries, suggesting top spots to visit based on time of year – such as Kyoto in winter or Seoul in cherry blossom season.

These global insights help travellers uncover not just where to go, but when and why, through a blend of real-time data, expert

Top-recognised Malaysian establishments, locales in Trip.Best 2025	
Category	Malaysian establishment / locale
Asia's Best Luxury Hotels	The Ritz-Carlton, Langkawi Four Seasons Resort Langkawi One & Only Desaru Coast
Asia's Best Family Hotels	Legoland Malaysia Hotel Club Med Cherating Beach ParkRoyal Langkawi Resort Renaissance Kuala Lumpur Hotel & Convention Centre Four Points by Sheraton Kuala Lumpur, City Centre ParkRoyal Penang Resort
Asia's Best Scenic Hotels	The St Regis Langkawi The Taaras Beach & Spa Resort Anantara Desaru Coast Resort The Danna Langkawi
Asia's Best Cultural Hotels	The Ritz-Carlton, Langkawi Eastern & Oriental Hotel Cheong Fatt Tze – the Blue Mansion
Asia's Most Instagrammable Hotels	The Luma Hotel
Asia's Best Gourmet Hotels	Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur Mandarin Oriental, Kuala Lumpur The Datai Langkawi
Asia's Best Villas	The Datai Langkawi Four Seasons Resort, Langkawi Ambong Pool Villas Langkawi
Asia's Best Things to Do	Petronas Twin Towers Legoland Malaysia KL Hop-on Hop-off
Asia's Best Family-Friendly Attractions	Legoland Malaysia Sunway Lagoon Theme Park Aquria KLCC Genting SkyWorlds Theme Park Underwater World Langkawi
Asia's Best Night Attractions	Petronas Twin Towers Kuala Lumpur Tower KL Hop-on Hop-off
Asia's Best Destinations	Kuala Lumpur Semporna Kota Kinabalu Langkawi Malacca
Asia's Best Family Friendly Destinations	Kuala Lumpur
Asia's Best Coastal Destinations	Semporna Langkawi

curator and trend mapping. Trip.Best is Trip.com's signature collection of curated travel rankings, updated annually and powered by an artificial intelligence-driven analysis of verified user ratings,

reviews and booking trends. Covering categories such as stays, attractions, restaurants and nightlife, the list helps travellers discover the top destinations and experiences globally and regionally.



The Petronas Twin Towers remain a popular picture-worthy backdrop.



Travellers are drawn by the many historical sites in Malacca.



Travellers love KL for its rich cultural history.

The KL Tower is ranked among Asia's Best Night Attractions.



Cherating's beach charms make Club Med a popular destination.



Langkawi's pristine shoreline attracts dedicated beachgoers.

– ALL PICS FROM PEXELS



U Mobile appoints CT Sabah as 5G fibre leasing partner

KUALA LUMPUR: U Mobile Sdn Bhd has signed a term sheet agreement to appoint Celcom Timur Sabah (CT Sabah) to deploy 5G leased circuits in Sabah and the Federal Territory of Labuan.

In a statement yesterday, U Mobile said that upon finalisation of the definitive agreement, the company will tap into CT Sabah's robust fibre infrastructure to support and accelerate its upcoming 5G rollout in the region.

"As part of the agreement, CT Sabah will upgrade its existing 4G leased circuit sites to 5G and develop additional new leased circuit sites to meet U Mobile's requirements as the nation's newest 5G network provider.

"U Mobile will benefit from CT Sabah's extensive fibre network, which spans over 10,000 kilometres across Sabah and Labuan, ensuring strong, stable and high-capacity connectivity for both enterprises and consumers in the region," it said.

U Mobile chief technology officer Woon Ooi Yuen said the company is committed to accelerating 5G coverage nationwide.

"With CT Sabah onboard, it further strengthens our ability to meet rollout goals and deliver a superior 5G experience that is highly reliable, supports massive capacity and delivers ultra-fast speeds to benefit enterprises and consumers across Malaysia. U Mobile is ready to play an even greater role in narrowing the digital divide, aligning to national ambitions of making Malaysia a high-income digital nation."

CT Sabah CEO Zurinah Hanafiah said her company is committed to advancing digital connectivity in Sabah and Labuan.

"We view the 5G rollout as a critical step towards unlocking new opportunities for the region, and this initiative will help digital transformation, drive economic growth, and improve the quality of life for communities.

"Our partnership with U Mobile is a key enabler in this effort, and we are proud to support their 5G expansion by delivering robust and reliable fibre infrastructure," she added. — Bernama

Gradual and transparent approach in port tariff review

■ BY **AIMIE SHAZRIE**
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

PORT KLANG: The government is reviewing port tariffs with a gradual and transparent approach to ensure the changes will not burden industry players, said Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook.

He said the implementation mechanism is still under discussion and has yet to be finalised, with authorities ensuring that there will be no sudden increases.

"Any decision would take into account feedback from industry players through the consultative committee under the port authority, ensuring a balance between investment needs and user welfare," he said in a press conference at the launch of a "Car-carrier Driver Training Programme for Electric

▶ Loke pledges changes will not burden industry players and there will be no sudden increases

Vehicle Handling" held at Port Klang Cruise Terminal (PKCT) yesterday.

"The latest tariff review is going through various processes, including consultations with stakeholders and discussions by the consultative committee at the port level," he said.

Previously, Loke said a proposed 30% increase in container handling and storage tariffs would be implemented in phases over a three-year period.

In a related development, Loke urged Northport to utilise and develop an additional 60-acre site

surrounding PKCT to expand its operations.

"The move is in line with efforts to position PKCT as a strategic home port, not just for Malaysia but for the wider Asian region. With expanded space and improved operational plans, PKCT is expected to ramp up container turnaround rates and accommodate increased vessel traffic," he said.

In addition, Loke said the terminal has potential to diversify its functions, evolving beyond a transshipment terminal to also

support automotive logistics and multipurpose port activities.

"We are confident that under dynamic private sector management, the initiative would deliver strong economic value and strengthen PKCT's position as a competitive logistics hub in the region."

Commenting on the Car Carrier Driver Training Programme for Electric Vehicle Handling, the minister said the launch is timely.

"As the government pushes forward the adoption of EVs in Malaysia, we must ensure that our industry and workforce are adequately prepared to address the logistical challenges involved. This is particularly crucial in ensuring the safe and efficient delivery and handling of EVs from the port to showrooms and customers nationwide."

The programme is organised by Northport (Malaysia) Bhd, a member of MMC Group, in collaboration with the Centre for Logistics Leadership in Business Sdn Bhd (CLLB) and KPX Sdn Bhd. The first cohort attracted 22 participants, comprising drivers and supervisors from five car carrier companies.

Northport CEO Fakhru Azhar Tajudin said the programme offers a comprehensive curriculum that combines both theoretical and practical training.

"This is to ensure participants are fully equipped with the essential knowledge and skills required for EV handling. By leveraging our experience and working together with CLLB and KPX, this initiative reflects our commitment to developing and supporting the EV logistics ecosystem."



Loke at the launch of the Car-carrier Driver Training Programme for Electric Vehicle Handling at Port Klang Cruise Terminal yesterday. — **BERNAMAPIC**

M'sia, as Asean Chair, to champion regional food security and sustainability

■ BY **JOHN GILBERT**
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is strategically positioned to spearhead regional initiatives in sustainable agriculture as the Asean Chair in 2025.

Agriculture and Food Security Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Isham Ishak said by focusing on slow food, local sourcing, and climate-smart farming, Malaysia is not only protecting its heritage but also future-proofing food systems.

"This reaffirms our commitment to the National Agrofood Policy 2.0 – a comprehensive policy built to modernise Malaysia's agrofood sector and secure our food resilience for generations.

"The agrofood sector contributes not just to GDP but to the daily well-being of every Malaysian household,"

he said at the International Café and Beverage Show 2025 and MyFood 2025 yesterday.

Isham said the National Agrofood Policy 2.0 lays out a bold vision, which is to transform Malaysia's agrofood system into one that is resilient, sustainable, technologically advanced, and inclusive.

Five strategic thrusts support this transformation – modernisation and smart agriculture, market and product development, human capital empowerment, sustainable and resilient food systems, and conducive business environment and governance.

"For 2025, we are prioritising the reformation of the paddy and rice industry, including upgrading paddy fields and restructuring the value chain.

"Our aim is to improve productivity, raise farmers' income, and

ensure a rice supply chain that can weather global volatility and climate threats. We are also working to boost the productivity of the ruminant subsector and attract greater private sector participation in high-value areas such as aquaculture, floriculture and fruits.

"A thriving local agriculture base is the foundation of export readiness. As we strengthen domestic production, we are naturally better positioned to tap into export markets – especially with premium products like durian, edible bird's nest, and ornamental fish, which already enjoy global demand," Isham said.

He noted that the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry's export facilitation initiatives have yielded remarkable outcomes.

Isham pointed out that in 2021,

296 Malaysian companies and 335 stock-keeping units (SKUs) were successfully introduced to international markets through food expos.

"By 2024, these figures had soared to 2,704 companies and 3,838 SKUs, an impressive leap that reflects the rising global recognition of Malaysian agrofood excellence. In the years to come, I am confident that we will witness an upsurge in these figures as more of our local food producers penetrate the global market," he said.

As Malaysia pushes towards a more competitive agrofood industry, quality and trust become the nation's strongest differentiators, Isham said.

"That is why we continue to champion 'Malaysia's Best', a commitment to quality assurance and sustainable practices across the agrofood supply chain. From MyGAP

to MyOrganic, and from Fama's Good Practice Labelling to globally accepted traceability systems, our certifications are not only benchmarks of safety and integrity but also symbols of Malaysian excellence."

Isham said through platforms such as MyFood, Malaysia can forge powerful collaborations among government, industry, academia, NGOs and agropreneurs.

"More than just a domestic showcase, an event like MyFood has also emerged as a catalyst in elevating Malaysia's agrofood identity on the global stage. By highlighting high-quality, value-added products, it opens up international markets for our local producers and enhances Malaysia's reputation as a reliable source of premium agro-based goods," he added.

US tariffs will cloud M'sian solar manufacturing sector

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: If the United States imposes tariffs on solar imports from Southeast Asia, Malaysia's solar manufacturing sector may face plant closures or relocations as producers reassess the cost of operating locally, said TERA VA Sdn Bhd business development manager JP Leong (*pic*).

He said some solar companies such as Jinko in Penang are slowing or shutting down production, so if the tariff environment remains harsh, manufacturers could leave Malaysia for other lower-cost, high-demand countries.

"If the tariffs are firmly enforced, it could lead some manufacturers to shut down or relocate to other countries. That is a big possibility. There is no edge for them to continue producing in Malaysia because the cost to produce in Malaysia is higher and the machinery is older compared to China," he told *SunBiz* at the sidelines of Bursa Malaysia Earth Week yesterday.

Although solar energy player TERA VA does not source panels from Malaysian factories, Leong said production at some local sites has been slowing "for quite some time already".

He added that many of TERA VA's clients are in manufacturing, with some exporting to the US.

"For sure, this US tariff will affect their plans, as a result, some are pausing solar installation projects while awaiting clarity on tariff impacts or potential Malaysian policy responses. So they hold a bit. But some already have budgets approved or are in progress, they'll still go ahead, especially with a possible electricity tariff hike in July. They want to take countermeasures first," he said.

For a big portion of its clients, Leong said they will still proceed with their solar installation plans because it is regulated, so it's not something companies can rush into without proper planning or guidance.

"We update them on what is the latest regulation and what will be the regulation, so they can make a more accurate decision," he added.

➤ There may be plant closures or relocations if Washington imposes duties, says TERA VA business development manager

However, Leong said the broader solar sector in Malaysia, particularly installation and EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) activities will remain largely unaffected.

"Most local installers source panels directly from China, not from Malaysian-based factories affected by the new US trade restrictions. So the recent duty imposed on Malaysia is unlikely to impact Malaysia's solar sector," he added.

As for TERA VA, Leong said the recent tariffs won't affect its solar installation work in Malaysia because it imports panels directly from China.

"There is also a lot of misunderstanding that there will be oversupply of panels. No. All this while, we get from China. Panels made in Malaysia are usually for export, to the US, Europe or other regions, not for domestic use."

He said Malaysia's domestic solar demand is small so if it becomes unprofitable, they will just shut down and relocate elsewhere. "Other countries like Vietnam and Indonesia have much higher energy needs and bigger markets, more attractive for manufacturers."

On Monday, the US Department of Commerce announced that it has finalised antidumping and countervailing duties on solar imports from Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia and Thailand, as high as 3,521%. Malaysia faces 34.4% country-wide duties, and specific firms like Jinko are hit with 40%.

The decision followed a year-long investigation prompted by the American Alliance for Solar Manufacturing Trade Committee. These duties are on top of US President Donald Trump's tariffs and aim to

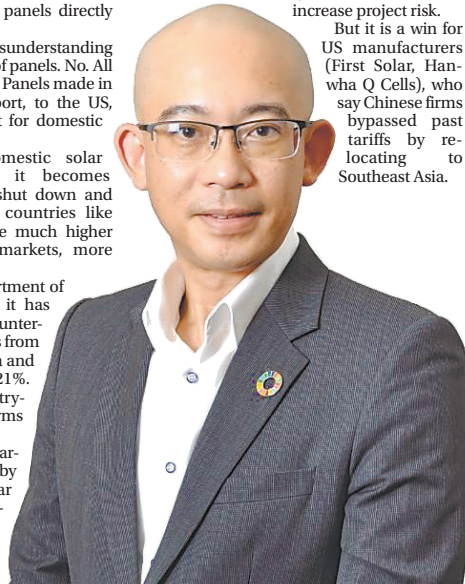
protect US manufacturers from alleged unfair foreign pricing/subsidies.

The solar tariffs will not come into effect until the International Trade Commission votes on whether the US industry was materially harmed by the imports. The vote must take place by June 2.

The four nations accounted for 77% of US solar module imports, worth US\$12.9 billion (RM56.6 billion) in 2023.

US developers depend on affordable Southeast Asian modules, so duties raise costs, slow rollout and increase project risk.

But it is a win for US manufacturers (First Solar, Hanwha Q Cells), who say Chinese firms bypassed past tariffs by relocating to Southeast Asia.



Malaysia remains 9th largest global exporter of high-tech products in 2023

CYBERJAYA: Malaysia successfully maintained its position as the ninth-largest exporter of high-technology goods out of 143 countries worldwide in 2023, the highest recognition it has achieved in the past decade.

Datuk Seri Hasnol Zam Zam Ahmad, secretary-general of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (Mosti), said that Malaysia's high-tech exports increased by US\$2 billion (RM8.8 billion) to reach US\$127 billion in 2023.

He said high-tech exports comprised 58.69% of total manufacturing exports in 2023, up from 52.48% recorded in 2022.

"Measuring the value of Malaysia's high-tech exports is not an easy task. First and foremost, the definition of 'high technology' must comply with international standards, including those set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and the World Bank.

"For a long time, the Malaysia Industry-Government Group for High Technology (Might) has been responsible for calculating and tracking Malaysia's high-tech export performance and will continue to carry out this important role moving forward," he said at the launch of the Malaysia High Technology Performance Report 2023 here yesterday. Hasnol Zam Zam emphasised Mosti's commitment to expanding and strengthening the national innovation ecosystem to ensure sustained competitiveness across all development sectors, especially in high technology.

In addition to Might, he mentioned that several international institutions also use high-tech export indicators as a key measure to assess a country's competitiveness and innovation capacity.

Might president and CEO Rushdi Abdul Rahim said that although the telecommunications electronics product group remained the largest contributor with US\$36 billion, accounting for 80.58% of total high-tech goods exports across nine subgroups, there remains significant growth potential in other categories such as scientific equipment, office machinery, electrical machinery, and aerospace surplus.

However, he highlighted that these categories must be supported by a robust innovation ecosystem and effective market penetration strategies. - Bernama

MAHB privatisation won't affect Aerotrain timeline: Chairman

KUALA LUMPUR: The timeline for completion of the Aerotrain project at KL International Airport (KLIA) is unrelated to the recent privatisation of Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB), said its chairman Dr Nungsari Ahmad Radhi.

Dismissing speculation that a delay was linked to the company's privatisation, the chairman attributed it to multiple changes in government and leadership over the years.

"In my view, any professional would know how to deal with obsolescence and replacement, and would make sure of its timely execution.

"No, it has nothing to do with privatisation. The time taken was due to too many changes in government since recent years, which impacted the decision-making process," he told Bernama.

He noted that a decision to replace the Aerotrain was made as early as 2016 but subsequent political shifts in 2018 until 2022 caused delays in implementation.

Nungsari said the Aerotrain project is progressing as scheduled, with testing under way. "Everything is in place. The train is on the track, the power supply is ready and testing is ongoing."

Chang: We're set to capitalise on opportunities in rare earth elements

BANGI: Malaysia is positioning itself to become a key player in the rare earth elements (REE) value chain, amid a shifting geopolitical landscape and the ongoing trade war between the United States and China.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang said there is growing interest from both Western and Chinese investors to collaborate with Malaysia in the sector, underscoring the country's strategic value and potential in rare earth processing.

"They are very keen to work with us. President Xi Jinping has also explicitly stated that China will assist us in developing the processing technology.

"Everything is developing at the pace and in the direction that we would like to see," he told Bernama and RTM after appearing as a panellist on Mosti's Tech Talk programme at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) on Wednesday.

To facilitate industry development, Chang said the government is in the process of amending the Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984 (Act 304), which currently limits industrial licences to three years, a timeframe he described as too short to support the sustainable growth of the REE industry.

"One of the key amendments involves



Chang (left) speaking at Mosti's Tech Talk programme at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia on Wednesday. With him are moderator Might COO Ida Semurni Abdullah Ali (centre) and Global Rare Earth Technology founder and managing director Prof Datuk Dr Badhrulhisham Abdul Aziz. - BERNAMAPIC

Section 16(6), which currently empowers the ministry to issue licences for only three years," he said, adding that the amendments are expected to be tabled this year.

Chang emphasised the urgency of accelerating development in Malaysia's midstream and upstream REE sectors.

"There is a need for us to accelerate its development because the window of opportunity is small. So, we need to harness whatever we have," he said.

Earlier in his talk, Chang said Malaysia has an estimated 16 million tonnes of unprocessed REE deposits, valued at over RM800 billion.

JOHOR BHARU: Industrial REIT AME Real Estate Investment Trust (AME REIT) delivered a 4.6% growth in rental income to RM13.1 million for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2025 (Q4'25) from RM12.5 million in the previous corresponding quarter.

The higher rental income supported a 1.6% increase in net property income (NPI) to RM11.6 million compared to RM11.4 million previously.

The improved performance was mainly driven by income contributions from the acquisitions of two fully-leased industrial properties during Q4'25.

For the 12 months ended March 31, 2025 (FY25), AME REIT generated total rental income of RM50.9 million, a 6% increase from RM48 million in the previous year, and NPI of RM46.4 million, rising 4.5% from RM44.4 million previously.

AME REIT, in a statement said it will distribute RM9.7 million in distributable income for Q4'25, equivalent to a distribution per unit (DPU) of 1.83 sen. The distributable income is adjusted for gain in fair value of investment properties less deferred tax expenses, unbilled lease income receivables, management fees payable in units, and amortisation of capitalised financing costs. The Q4'25 income distribution is payable on May 30, 2025 to unitholders whose names appear in the Record of Depositors of AME REIT at the close of business on May 9, 2025.

Total income distribution for FY25 will amount to RM39.2 million, representing 99.99% of distributable income for the year and resulting in a

AME REIT Q4 rental income rises to RM13m

➤ Investors to receive RM9.7m in income distribution, equivalent to 1.83 sen per unit for the quarter



Growth momentum is expected to continue, supported by the purchase of five more fully-leased industrial properties in Iskandar Malaysia.

DPU of 7.43 sen.

I REIT Managers Sdn Bhd CEO and executive director Chan Wai Leo said: "AME REIT's Q4'25 performance reflects the positive impact of our accretive acquisitions, supporting stable rental income growth and consistent returns to unitholders. Our growth will be further fuelled by the ongoing purchase of five more fully-leased industrial properties in

Iskandar Malaysia for a total purchase consideration of RM147.8 million from our sponsor AME Elite Consortium Bhd. The acquisitions, comprising 460,267 sq ft of ALA, are expected to be completed in phases between the third quarter of 2025 and the first quarter of 2026."

Going forward, he added they are focused on continued expansion in the Malaysian industrial property

market to optimise sustainable long-term returns.

AME REIT's portfolio includes 39 properties — 36 industrial units with 2.1 million sq ft of lettable space, and 3 industrial-related assets. Most are located in AME Group's industrial parks in Iskandar Malaysia.

As at March 31, 2025, AME REIT's properties under management are valued at RM773.5 million.

Tariffs will hit Guan Chong's US market margin: MIDF

KUALA LUMPUR: The US tariffs will negatively impact the margin for Guan Chong Bhd's (GCB) US-bound products, especially butter and liquor, MIDF Amanah Investment Bank Bhd said.

In a research note yesterday, the investment bank said President Donald Trump's tariff gaps suggested margin erosion risk for GCB's US-bound sales, especially from high-exposure regions like Malaysia and Côte d'Ivoire.

"This directly affects GCB, given that their two plants based in these two countries are the main supplier to GCB's US market. Based on its 2024 financial year total group sales, GCB has 28% butter, 15% liquor, 9% cake, and 3% powder exposure to the US market.

"Butter and liquor, which are higher margin products, face the highest US tariffs and exposure, directly pressuring GCB's profitability," added MIDF Amanah.

The bank said GCB is offsetting US tariffs by exporting more to the EU and UK, and adopting ratio-based pricing.

"Its Schokinag (Germany) and the UK operations offer low or no tariff alternatives. The Côte d'Ivoire plant is running at full capacity, with half its output supporting EU chocolate factories. The UK facility also expanded to 22,000 metric tonnes in late 2024," said MIDF Amanah.

"GCB's earnings remain stable, but US contributions face pressure from trade policies," it added. — Bernama

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PjH, Sunway Healthcare to develop medical centre in Putrajaya

PUTRAJAYA: Putrajaya Holdings Sdn Bhd (PjH) and Sunway Healthcare Holdings Sdn Bhd (SHH) have inked a Heads of Agreement (HoA) to jointly develop an integrated private medical centre in Precinct 7, Putrajaya.

After months of engagement and careful planning, Precinct 7 has been identified as the ideal site, given its strategic location and accessibility, with proximity to the Putrajaya Sentral, and key health institutions like the Putrajaya Hospital, Institut Kanser Negara

and Akademi Perubatan Malaysia.

The proposed medical centre is expected to house a tertiary hospital with over 300 beds, offering advanced medical services and specialist care, including a burns unit, that cater not only to Putrajaya residents but also to the wider Southern Klang Valley region as well as international patients.

"PjH as the master developer provides a lifestyle oasis with our state-of-the-art infrastructure, numerous facilities, and lush and

abundant open areas," said Putrajaya Holdings CEO Datuk Izwan Hasli Mohd Ibrahim.

"The creation of a healthcare ecosystem is just another step to create a more holistic quality of life, everything you need right here in Putrajaya.

"This marks a catalytic milestone in Putrajaya's growth journey, and we are excited to collaborate with a trusted partner like Sunway Healthcare to bring this shared vision to life.

Sunway Healthcare Group president Datuk Lau Beng Long said: "We are excited to partner PjH to build a medical centre in our nation's administrative capital, enabling the Putrajaya community and beyond to access comprehensive and quality private healthcare.

"We are honoured that PjH has placed their trust in us and our years of experience in developing integrated healthcare facilities and networks from the ground up, including an

internationally recognised flagship Sunway Medical Centre ranked as the top Malaysian hospital according to Newsweek's World's Best Hospitals 2025 rankings.

The collaboration is poised to elevate Putrajaya's position as a centre for quality medical services.

It marks a significant step in expanding access to specialised care and enhancing the overall healthcare landscape in the nation's administrative capital.

Female entrepreneurs lead 21% of SMEs

➤ 241,767 businesses run by women form vital part of Malaysian economy

KUALA LUMPUR: Women-owned businesses, defined as 51% owned, managed, and controlled by one or more women, are on the rise.

Micro and small women entrepreneurs (MSWEs) make up 21% of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in Malaysia.

This translates to about 241,767 women-led businesses (MSWEs) forming a vital part of the country's economy, where SMEs account for 97.4% of all businesses.

While this is encouraging, there is still a notable gender gap as Malaysia aims to achieve a 60% female Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) by 2033. The latest female LFPR rose slightly to 56.3%, while the male LFPR stood at 82.9%, highlighting a notable gender gap despite the upward trend in women's participation.

In an effort to bridge the gender gap and uplift MSWEs in Malaysia, self-service laundrette dobiQueen recently organised a panel discussion entitled "Empathy Meets Innovation: How Women Entrepreneurs Utilise Purposeful Technology & Empathetic Leadership to Transform Businesses" with experts from the public and private sector, including TalentCorp's Wanita MyWira, Khazanah Research Institute (KRI) and Strive Malaysia.

A study by Strive Malaysia has revealed that women entrepreneurs face three main challenges.

Time poverty ranks tops with 97% citing juggling business, childcare,

and household responsibilities as the biggest challenge. This is deeply rooted in gender norms, as women are often expected to be the primary caregivers in Malaysia's social, cultural and religious contexts.

While over 80% of MSWEs acknowledge the potential advantages of digital literacy, and are able to search for information online via Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok, many use it for personal rather than for business purposes. There is a disconnect between digital literacy and entrepreneurial pursuits.

Lastly, only 50% of MSWEs expressed confidence in their financial knowledge and skill, limited to basic expenses of tracking income records, with many lacking understanding of broader financial concepts such as dynamic markets or funding applications.

Of this, 78% expressed the need for more information from financial institutions in the areas of loan management, grants, and market information.

Strive Malaysia programme officer Li Yang Lau said this insightful report has since guided the development of targeted interventions to address the unique needs of women-owned and women-led businesses.

"We provide them with easy access to a free self-assessment tool, tailored skill-building training and microlearning resources, and mentorship opportunities, thus



(From left) Natasha, Tan, Teoh and Li.

fostering a more enabling business ecosystem via Strivers' Hub, a one-stop-shop digital platform designed to cater to the evolving needs of small businesses, particularly women entrepreneurs", she added.

dobiQueen co-founder and executive director Nini Tan said: "Women spend close to 63.6% more time daily on unpaid work than men, with women continuing to perform an additional 3.6 to 4 hours on average for unpaid chores after office hours, leading to the 'double burden' or 'second shift'."

She point out that her self-service laundrette in Klang Valley, with 90 outlets and rapidly expanding, has eased many household burdens.

"What drives us forward is our understanding that women are well supported in their many roles in society," said Tan.

Meanwhile, TalentCorp Wanita

MyWira head Natasha Alias said in 2024, the Ministry of Human Resources, through TalentCorp, introduced Wanita MyWira to address workforce gaps by enabling more women to participate fully in Malaysia's economy.

"Wanita MyWira supports a broad spectrum of women - from students and returning professionals to entrepreneurs and industry leaders, through strategic advocacy, skills development, and employer engagement. The aim is to create real pathways into meaningful, sustainable employment," she said.

Khazanah Research Institute research associate Dr Teoh Ai Ni said that based on KRI's gender gap research conducted among 3,300 agrifood smallholders, agrifood production has similar economic importance for both men and women smallholders, but women are more likely to face challenges.

M'sia positioned to be leader in cybersecurity in Asean: Kaspersky

SINGAPORE: Malaysia ranks highly in cybersecurity readiness within Asean, according to global cybersecurity firm Kaspersky.

Kaspersky's general manager for Southeast Asia Yeo Siang Tiong said Malaysia has demonstrated strong capabilities in managing and addressing cyber threats, positioning the country to lead the region in this critical field.

"My observation is based on several factors. One clear indicator is the Cyber Security Act 2024, which came into effect on August 26 last year.

"It identifies critical industries and establishes a regulatory framework for cybersecurity.

"The second factor is the country's capabilities and resources. Malaysia has a large pool of cybersecurity professionals and threat researchers.

"Third, there is strong public awareness, with effective outreach programmes led by CyberSecurity Malaysia and the National Cyber Security Agency, which have shown significant progress," he told Bernama yesterday at GITEX Asia 2025.

Yeo said Malaysia is playing an increasingly pivotal role in uniting regional efforts to enhance cybersecurity.

"Malaysia is leading the Asean Digital Economy Framework Agreement (DEFA), where cybersecurity is a key foundational pillar.

"As cybercriminals know no boundaries, DEFA enables Malaysia to coordinate with other Asean nations to prevent the escalation of cybercrime in the region," he added.

When asked about the upcoming Malaysia Cyber Security Strategy (2025-2030), Yeo outlined four key pillars designed to strengthen national cyber defence.

"First is building resilience, not just to withstand attacks but to recover from them.

"The second pillar is immunity, where we advocate our concept of 'cyber immunity'.

"Third is awareness, which remains essential, and lastly, intelligence - focusing on countering cyber threats, including those from organised crime groups targeting critical infrastructure, government, and the supply chain," he explained.

Kaspersky made its debut as the first Cyber Immunity Partner at GITEX Asia 2025, held from April 23 to 25 at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore.

GITEX Asia is part of the GITEX GLOBAL series, the world's largest technology exhibition and startup showcase.

FDI drives 80% of Johor's new investment in April

PASIR GUDANG: Foreign direct investment (FDI) remained the primary source of new investment in Johor, accounting for about 80% of the RM23 billion in proposed investments recorded in April.

Johor investment, trade, consumer affairs and human resources committee chairman Lee Ting Han said the trend followed a strong first-quarter performance, during which FDI made up nearly 90% of the RM27.4 billion in new

investments secured by the state.

He said nearly all the investments were located in the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), with key sectors including petrochemicals, advanced manufacturing, and data centres.

"The main sources of investment in Johor at the moment are certainly Singapore, China and Japan," Lee told reporters after the completion and commissioning ceremony of the Ferrotec Power Semiconductor

Malaysia Sdn Bhd factory here on Wednesday.

The event was officiated by Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi.

Lee said the state government was also working to boost domestic investment by encouraging partnerships between local firms and multinational corporations (MNCs).

"Any local companies that are interested can be matched with MNCs entering Johor to further strengthen domestic participation."

Ferrotec Power Semiconductor Malaysia is a subsidiary of China-based Jiangsu Ferrotec Semiconductor Technology Co Ltd.

The company invested approximately RM650 million to build the factory, which specialises in the production of ceramic substrates for power semiconductor modules.

Once fully operational, the factory is expected to generate an annual output valued between RM658 million and RM878 million. - Bernama

Singapore's GIC inks deal with SAMHI as Indian hotelier looks to trim debt

NEW DELHI: Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC will take 35% stakes in three individual units of SAMHI Hotels for a total investment of 7.52 billion rupees (RM387 million), as part of a joint plan to develop upscale hotels in India.

The three units – SAMHI JV Hotels, Ascent Hotels, and Inmar Tourism and Hotel – together operate four hotels in the Indian cities of Bengaluru and Pune, with two of the hotels Marriott-branded and one more hotel still under construction, the Indian hotelier said yesterday.

SAMHI said that out of GIC's total investment, 6.03 billion rupees will be majorly used towards scaling down SAMHI's debt – which some analysts have flagged as higher than peers.

Brokerage Prabhudas Lilladher, earlier this week, had said that over the next three years, SAMHI's net debt to core profit would still be higher than other hoteliers with debt, such as Chalet Hotels and Lemon Tree Hotels.

The company, whose debt as of 2024-end stood at 20.64 billion rupees, expects the deal to trim it by 5.8 billion rupees.

Once the deal closes, SAMHI JV will become debt free and Ascent will be left with a debt of roughly two billion rupees, SAMHI CEO Ashish Jakhanwala said in an analyst call.

The plan clears investor concerns around SAMHI's debt pile, Prabhudas Lilladher analyst Jinesh Joshi said.

The 7.52 billion rupees deal is a part of a joint plan to create a million venture aimed at developing upscale hotel assets in India – wherein GIC holds 35% share and SAMHI retains 65%.

Jakhanwala said the joint venture's focus will be to tap "acquisition and turnaround" opportunities in the urban business hotels segment. – Reuters

Indonesia expects steady 5% growth in 2025

Jakarta working to reduce trade barriers, protect domestic demand

JAKARTA: Indonesia's economic growth this year will likely stay around 5% despite trade tensions, its finance minister said yesterday, stressing a government delegation was still negotiating terms with Washington to try to avoid high tariffs.

The minister's outlook is roughly the same growth pace as last year's 5.03%.

The government's target is 5.2% this year and President Prabowo Subianto has pledged to lift growth to 8% by 2029.

In its latest world economic outlook, the IMF downgraded Indonesia's economic growth estimate for 2025 to 4.7% from 5.1%.

Sri Mulyani Indrawati's remarks came at an online press conference of Indonesia's stability board, which consists of its finance minister, central bank governor, head of financial services authority and head of deposit insurance corporation.

The minister and Bank Indonesia Governor Perry Warjiyo were in Washington to attend IMF-World Bank meetings.

A delegation led by Chief Economic Minister Airlangga Hartarto was also in the US capital trying to conclude trade talks within 60 days since its April 17 meetings with American officials including the US Trade Representative.

In those meetings, Indonesia has offered to buy more American products, such as liquefied petroleum gas and wheat, as well as cut its own non-tariff barriers so that the United States would not apply a 32% tariff on Indonesia's exports, which include electronics, apparel and footwear.

"The government will actively conduct early mitigation, including communicating with the US government and, as instructed by the president, will continue deregulation efforts to reduce trade barriers," Sri Mulyani said.

"Efforts will also continue to protect domestic demand."

Indonesia's financial markets have been hit by capital outflows since President Donald Trump's announcement of hefty tariffs in early April.

Sri Mulyani said the rupiah's movements against the US dollar are expected to be stable.

In a separate statement, Airlangga said his team has officially begun technical negotiations with US counterparts for a framework agreement on tariffs and would soon discuss topics like market access and national tariff estimates.

"The US Trade Representative has stressed the importance of a final package for President Trump's consideration as the final decision maker," the Indonesian Economic Ministry said.

Sri Mulyani said she is scheduled to meet with US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent later this week.

She had met with Chinese Finance Minister Lan Fao on the sidelines of the IMF-World Bank

meetings, during which they agreed to strengthen ties, Sri Mulyani said.

Sri Mulyani has previously estimated that if the United States keeps its planned 32% tariff for Indonesia, it could reduce growth potential by 0.3 to 0.5 percentage points.

Indonesia's exports to the US account for just about 2% of its gross domestic product, the government has said, but fallout from the trade war could hurt its economy more.

During their trip, Indonesian ministers also met with US business people to discuss tariffs, including executives of mining giant Freeport McMoRan and the US-Asean Business Council chief executive, Ted Osius, according to the ministers' social media posts. – Reuters



A barge carrying coal on the Barito River in Indonesia's South Kalimantan province. – REUTERS/SPIC

South Korea's economy shrinks in first quarter

SEOUL: South Korea's economy unexpectedly contracted 0.1% in the first three months of this year, the country's central bank said yesterday, as the Asian export giant reels from months of political chaos and heightened trade tensions.

US President Donald Trump's threatened 25% "reciprocal" tariffs on export-dependent South Korea have rattled Asia's fourth-largest economy, sending Seoul-listed shares tumbling and pushing the currency to its weakest level since 2009.

The country is also still emerging from a political crisis triggered by former president Yoon Suk Yeol's December attempt to suspend civilian rule, which culminated in his impeachment and removal from office this month.

"Real gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 0.1% compared to the same period last year," the central bank said, adding that it contracted by 0.2% from the previous quarter.

"Two developments hit confidence and the economy – fallout from

former President Yoon Suk Yeol's failed martial law attempt and worries about shifts in US trade policies," said Hyosung Kwon, an economist at Bloomberg Economics.

"Looking ahead, we see the economy rebounding in the second quarter of this year, helped by easing political uncertainty at home.

"But the recovery will likely remain fragile as elevated US tariffs weigh on external demand," Kwon added.

The country's economy expanded 1.3% in the first quarter of last year but

grew less than expected in the fourth quarter, as the fallout from Yoon's declaration of martial law hit consumer confidence and domestic demand.

According to the Korea Customs Service, as of the middle of this month, the country's exports had dropped by more than 5% compared to the previous year, with declines reported in nine out of the country's ten major export categories excluding semiconductors.

The sharpest fall was in exports to

the United States, which plunged by more than 14%.

The International Monetary Fund this week sharply revised down its growth forecast for South Korea for the year, cutting it from 2% to 1%.

"The South Korean economy is facing structural burdens of high inflation and a weak won-dollar exchange rate, and under this dual pressure, a slowdown in growth is becoming increasingly evident," said Kim Dae-jong, a professor at Sejong University. – AFP

SK hynix posts record profits thanks to strong AI demand

SEOUL: South Korean chip giant SK hynix reported record quarterly profits yesterday thanks to soaring global demand for artificial intelligence, highlighting the firm's ability to weather mounting tariff threats.

The world's second-largest memory chip maker dominates the market for high-bandwidth memory (HBM) semiconductors and is a key supplier for US titan Nvidia.

SK hynix said it recorded an operating profit of 7.44 trillion won (RM22.8 billion) – a 158% year-on-year

increase – on revenue of 17.64 trillion won from January-March.

Both figures marked the company's second-highest quarterly results on record, following last quarter's performance.

Net income also quadrupled compared to the previous year to 8.11 trillion won, with the firm saying the "memory market ramped up faster than expected due to competition to develop AI systems and inventory accumulation demand".

The company added that its

annual HBM sales for this year are expected to double compared to last year.

South Korea is a major exporter to the United States and its powerhouse semiconductor and auto industries would suffer greatly under President Donald Trump's looming 25% tariffs.

Experts say SK hynix's resilience is because of the company's growth in the DRAM market.

SK hynix recently took the lead in DRAM revenues with a 36% market share, according to specialist research

firm Counterpoint, surpassing Samsung for the first time and marking the first change in the top spot in over four decades.

"Right now the world is focused on the impact of tariffs, so the question is: what's going to happen with HBM DRAM?" said Counterpoint research director MS Hwang.

"At least in the short term, the segment is less likely to be affected by any trade shock as AI demand should remain strong.

"More significantly, the end

product for HBM is AI servers, which – by definition – can be borderless."

During a conference call, SK hynix noted that "uncertainty has grown around demand for semiconductors", but sales plans for key clients for the company this year "remain unchanged". "Global customers are, overall, maintaining their previously discussed memory demand levels with us," said an SK hynix official.

"Additionally, some clients are pulling forward demand by requesting short-term supply advances." – AFP



EU slaps fines on Apple and Meta

➤ Google and X also face potential penalties, White House decries 'economic extortion'

BRUSSELS: Apple was fined €500 million (RM2.5 billion) and Meta €200 million on Wednesday, as European Union antitrust regulators handed out the first sanctions under landmark legislation aimed at curbing the power of Big Tech.

The EU fines could stoke tensions with US President Donald Trump who has threatened to levy tariffs against countries that penalise American companies.

Trump's White House called the fines a "novel form of economic extortion" that the US will not tolerate.

They follow a year-long investigation by the European Commission, the EU executive, into whether the companies comply with the Digital Markets Act (DMA) that seeks to allow smaller rivals into markets dominated by the biggest companies.

The fines signal that the EU is sticking to its guns in enforcing the

new rules, which were introduced in 2023.

That is despite Trump citing the DMA while vowing in February to "defend American companies and innovators from overseas extortion".

Alphabet's Google and Elon Musk's X are also facing potential fines from European regulators.

The EU will be encouraged by a US court judgment earlier this month which found that Google illegally dominates two markets for online advertising technology, Commission sources say.

That ruling could pave the way for US antitrust prosecutors to seek a breakup of its ad products.

Apple said it would challenge the EU fine.

"Today's announcements are yet another example of the European Commission unfairly targeting Apple in a series of decisions that are bad for

the privacy and security of our users, bad for products, and force us to give away our technology for free," Apple said in an e-mailed statement.

Meta also criticised the EU decision. "The European Commission is attempting to handicap successful American businesses while allowing Chinese and European companies to operate under different standards," its chief global affairs officer Joel Kaplan said in an e-mailed statement.

"This isn't just about a fine; the Commission forcing us to change our business model effectively imposes a multi-billion-dollar tariff on Meta while requiring us to offer an inferior service."

The fines are modest compared to the penalties meted out by the previous EU antitrust chief Margrethe Vestager during her term.

Sources, speaking on condition of anonymity, have said this is due to the short period of the breaches, a focus on compliance rather than sanctions, and a desire to avoid possible retaliation from Trump.

The EU competition watchdog said Apple must remove technical and commercial restrictions that

prevent app developers from steering users to cheaper deals outside the App Store.

It said Meta's pay-or-consent model introduced in November 2023 breached the DMA in the period up to November 2024, when it tweaked it to use less personal data for targeted advertising.

The model gives Facebook and Instagram users who consent to be tracked a free service that is funded by advertising revenues.

Alternatively, they can pay for an ad-free service.

Meta is discussing with the EU the new version introduced in November last year to see if it is DMA compliant.

The companies have two months to comply with the orders or risk daily fines.

Apple avoided a fine in a separate investigation into its browser options on iPhones after making changes that allow users to switch to a rival browser or search engine more easily.

Regulators said these comply with the DMA and closed the investigation on Wednesday.

The iPhone maker was still

charged with breaching DMA rules on the grounds it hindered users from sideloading, a practice that involves downloading alternative app stores and apps from the web.

Regulators criticised Apple's conditions, which include a new fee called Apple's Core Technology Fee, saying these serve as a disincentive for developers to use alternative app distribution channels on its mobile operating system iOS.

The EU regulator also dropped Meta's Marketplace's designation as a DMA gatekeeper because the number of users fell below the required threshold.

EU lawmaker Andreas Schwab urged the Commission to maintain its investigations against Google's lucrative adtech business and Elon Musk's X and not delay decisions.

"There can be no leeway in enforcement as this may also impact the importance of competition policy in general," he said, adding a decision that was apparently linked to trade policy issues was "dangerous for the whole European Union construction". - Reuters

Australia to stockpile critical minerals

SYDNEY: Australia will stockpile critical minerals in a new strategic reserve, Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said yesterday, as nations scramble to source rare earths and coveted metals outside China.

Mining superpower Australia sits on bulging deposits of lithium, nickel and cobalt - metals used in everything from smartphones to electric vehicles.

But most of this boon is sold as raw ore to processing factories in China, which has a chokehold on the global supply of finished critical minerals.

Albanese said Australia would start stockpiling these commodities at home, striking deals to sell them to "key partners".

"Increasingly uncertain times call for a new approach to make sure Australia maximises the strategic value of critical minerals," he said in a statement.

"We need to do more with the natural resources the world needs, and that Australia can provide."

Australia would initially set aside A\$1.2 billion (RM3.3 billion) to get the reserve up and running.

Albanese's government has previously suggested Australia could use its critical minerals as a bargaining chip in tariff talks with the United States.

Australia sits on some of the largest lithium deposits in the world, and is also a leading source of lesser-known rare earth metals such as neodymium.

Major manufacturing nations such as the United States, Germany and Japan are eager to obtain these critical minerals from sources other than China.

Japan has its own critical minerals stockpile, while the US has been investing in metals refineries and other processing technology. - AFP



YouTube's corporate headquarters in San Bruno, California. - AFP/PPIC

YouTube turns 20, says more than 20 billion videos uploaded in two decades

SAN FRANCISCO: YouTube on Wednesday celebrated more than 20 billion videos being uploaded to the platform since the first clip debuted two decades ago.

The online video-sharing platform has evolved from a dinner party lark into a modern lifestyle staple poised to overtake US cable television in paid viewership.

PayPal colleagues Steve Chen, Chad Hurley, and Jawed Karim conceived YouTube in 2005, reportedly during a dinner party.

The domain YouTube.com launched on Valentine's Day that year. Video uploading capabilities were added on April 23, when

Karim posted the first video, titled *Me at the Zoo*.

The 19-second clip showing Karim at the San Diego Zoo's elephant exhibit has garnered 348 million views.

Over the next 20 years, the site expanded beyond what was imagined possible back in 2005.

YouTube says that it now sees an average of some 20 million videos uploaded daily.

The platform hosts everything from concert clips and podcasts to political ads and tutorials.

YouTube has become the world's largest digital video service in terms of time spent by viewers

and ad revenue, according to eMarketer analyst Ross Benes.

The platform reached more than 2.5 billion viewers globally last year, and hit 100 million subscribers to its music and premium tier, according to market tracker Statista.

YouTube is projected to surpass all US cable television services in paid subscribers within two years, according to Benes.

Users worldwide watch more than a billion hours of YouTube content daily on television sets alone.

YouTube said it will upgrade its TV viewing experience this summer with improved features and "quality tweaks". - AFP

Nestle beats quarterly sales estimates

LONDON: Nestle said yesterday the indirect impact of American tariffs was "unclear" and posted better-than-expected first-quarter organic sales growth, as the world's biggest packaged food company hiked prices for its Kit-Kat chocolate bars and Nescafe coffee.

The Swiss firm maintained its 2025 outlook, saying it still expects organic sales growth to improve and estimates an underlying trading operating profit margin at, or above, 16%.

"This is based on our assessment of the direct impact of current tariffs and our ability to adapt," CEO Laurent Freixe said in a statement.

"The indirect impacts - on consumers and customers, as well as currencies and commodity prices - remain unclear at this stage."

President Donald Trump has imposed broad tariffs on several countries around the world in recent months, sparking worries that the US will be pushed into recession.

"(Big areas) that are impacted are, of course, our water business coming into the US, and espresso capsules and some of our ingredients," Nestle's finance chief Anna Manz said.

Nestle's organic sales growth, which excludes the impact of currency movements and acquisitions, rose 2.8% in the first quarter ending March 31, Nestle said. Analysts had forecast average organic sales growth of 2.5%.

The company's 2.1% price increases were above the average analyst estimate of 1.8%. Real internal growth - or sales volumes - rose 0.7% versus expectations of a 0.8% increase.

Total reported sales increased by 2.3% to 22.6 billion Swiss francs (RM120 billion), slightly ahead of analyst expectations of 22.5 billion francs. - Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: APRIL 24

Bursa Trade Statistic

24 April 2025

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

Retail (18.28%)		Institution (44.32%)		Foreign (37.40%)	
Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)	Net (in RM mil.)
-32.48	-113.23	+145.71			
Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)	Bought (in RM mil.)	Sold (in RM mil.)
375.95	408.43	893.87	1007.10	874.98	729.27

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

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

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

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

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Bursa Indices

INDEX		CHANGE
FBMEMAS	11,154.50	+32.94
FBMKLCI	1,506.52	+5.33
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	496.50	-0.44
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	145.91	+0.72
CONSTRUCTION	254.83	+2.05
FINANCIAL SERVICES	17,995.90	+57.71
ENERGY	665.84	+4.11
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	495.02	+3.23
HEALTH CARE	1,845.21	-3.34
TRANSPORTATION	970.71	+5.34
PROPERTY	959.76	+4.39
PLANTATION	7,193.36	-21.13
FBMSHA	10,989.30	+42.68
FBMACE	4,603.50	+0.81
TECHNOLOGY	45.67	+0.07

TURNOVER: 3.084 bil **VALUE: RM2.144 bil**

Bursa extends uptrend amid improving market sentiment

BURSA Malaysia extended Wednesday's uptrend to close on a firmer footing yesterday, staying above the 1,500 mark, supported by improving market sentiment amid easing US-China trade tensions, despite mixed performances across regional markets.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI rose 5.33 points, or 0.36%, to 1,506.52 from Wednesday's close of 1,501.19.

The benchmark index opened 0.64 of a point lower at 1,500.55, and moved between 1,500.40 and 1,507.45 throughout the day.

Market breadth was positive, with advancers beating decliners 462 to 426, while 457 counters were unchanged, 1,070 untraded, and 13 suspended.

Turnover improved to 3.08 billion units valued at RM2.14 billion against Wednesday's 2.99 billion units valued at RM2.08 billion.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors Sdn Bhd head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan said, domestically, the sustained strength in financial services heavyweights, underpinned by renewed institutional participation, remained a key driver of market resilience.

He said Malaysia's latest trade data reaffirmed its external robustness, adding to the bullish undertone.

Among the heavyweights, Tenaga Nasional put on 10 sen to RM13.60, CIMB went up 13 sen to RM6.98, IHH Healthcare was 2 sen higher at RM6.88, while Public Bank eased 3 sen to RM4.37 and Maybank was flat at RM9.95.

As for the actives, Bina Puri rose 3 sen to 37.5 sen, SFP Tech and My E.G. Services edged up half-a-sen to 21 sen and 89.5 sen, respectively, Pos Malaysia perked up 5.5 sen to 29 sen, and Tanco climbed 1 sen 85.5 sen. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWC4	0.095	-0.020	-17.39	1,967,384
HSI-PWD2	0.065	+0.005	+8.33	1,805,978
HSI-CWEP	0.115	-0.015	-11.54	1,658,909
HSI-CWEI	0.160	-0.025	-13.51	1,107,069
BPURI	0.375	+0.030	+8.70	1,036,799
HSI-PWDU	0.060	+0.005	+9.09	1,023,650
HSI-PWFQ	0.110	+0.010	+10.00	550,651
SFPTECH	0.210	+0.005	+2.44	541,150
HSI-CWC7	0.055	-0.010	-15.39	523,449
GAMUDA-C2R	0.030	-0.005	-14.29	508,851
BPURI-WB	0.485	+0.185	+61.67	411,665
POS	0.290	+0.055	+23.40	402,851
CIMB	6.980	+0.130	+1.90	322,059
SALCON-WB	0.015	-0.005	-25.00	303,598
MYEG	0.895	+0.005	+0.56	295,831
TANCO	0.855	+0.010	+1.18	272,422
VELESTO	0.150	-0.005	-3.23	266,812
YONGTAI-WB	0.095	+0.030	+46.15	261,820
XIAOMI-C36	0.140	-	-	252,131
DIGISTA	0.045	-	-	244,657



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
F&N	27.200	+1.100	2,497
MPI	16.160	+0.520	3,361
AYER	7.900	+0.340	452
HLFG	17.140	+0.220	2,711
PANAMY	13.380	+0.220	97
HLBANK	19.860	+0.200	4,374
BPURI-WB	0.485	+0.185	411,665
LPI	14.060	+0.160	368
UTDPLT	23.000	+0.160	12,969
APM	3.190	+0.150	1,753
PETGAS	16.800	+0.140	2,503
CIMB	6.980	+0.130	322,059
ALIBABA-C41	0.395	+0.125	1
CANONE	2.160	+0.120	583
TM	6.830	+0.120	68,606
DRBHC0M	0.785	+0.115	176,426
MBMR	5.640	+0.110	2,160
MSM	1.250	+0.100	69,125
TENAGA	13.600	+0.100	57,101
ARKA	1.350	+0.090	11

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
DRBHC0M3K	0.015	+200.00	6,239
GENM-C3F	0.015	+200.00	403
SMTRACK	0.015	+200.00	910
SUPERMX-C4F	0.040	+166.67	1
DRBHC0M3L	0.045	+125.00	77,994
DRBHC0M3N	0.165	+120.00	3,867
BJCORP-WC	0.010	+100.00	13,451
CIMB-C1W	0.010	+100.00	1,762
DNEX-C37	0.010	+100.00	1
EAH	0.010	+100.00	131
ENRA-WA	0.010	+100.00	48
GIJB-WA	0.010	+100.00	2,382
HONGSENG	0.010	+100.00	20,625
JADI-WB	0.010	+100.00	5,000
MAHSING-C74	0.010	+100.00	5,811
PCHEM-C1F	0.010	+100.00	2,063
SUNCON-C20	0.010	+100.00	4,000
TENAGA-C2S	0.010	+100.00	3,890
DRBHC0M3M	0.130	+85.71	54,011
TM-C1Q	0.055	+83.33	600

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	39,606.57	419.59	1.07
S&P 500 (US)	5,375.86	88.1	1.67
NASDAQ (US)	16,708.05	407.63	2.5
NYSE (US)	18,631.09	175.95	0.95
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	5,061.04	-37.7	-0.74
FTSE 100 (UK)	8,379.36	-23.82	-0.28
DAX (GER)	21,808.95	-153.02	-0.7
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	35,039.15	170.52	0.49
TOPIX INDEX (JPN)	2,592.56	8.24	0.32
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	21,909.76	-162.86	-0.74
CSI 300 (CHN)	3,784.36	-2.52	-0.07
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	182.47	3.18	1.77
SHANGHAI SE COM (CHN)	3,297.29	0.93	0.03
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	2,522.33	-3.23	-0.13
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	79,808.94	-307.55	-0.38
ASX 200 (AUS)	7,968.23	47.71	0.6
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,175.12	49.89	0.61
FBM KLCI	1,506.52	5.33	0.36
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,835.61	3.29	0.09
WTI (US\$/BBL)	62.63	0.36	0.58
BRENT (US\$/BBL)	66.44	0.32	0.48
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	3,348.00	53.9	1.64
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	33.66	-0.21	-0.61
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	977.25	1.34	0.14
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	490.75	1.25	0.26
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	9,382.50	13.5	0.14
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	480.5	1.25	0.26
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	541.5	-2	-0.37
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	48.55	0.21	0.43
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	8,902.00	21	0.24
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	166.5	-0.7	-0.42

As at 5pm, April 24

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	80.000	-0.600	252
KLK	19.520	-0.340	3,527
FACBIND	1.050	-0.220	10
CARLSBG	18.800	-0.200	974
PETDAG	19.160	-0.140	683
NIKKEI-HN	0.305	-0.115	100
MBSB-C79	0.045	-0.105	5,000
MMIS	0.200	-0.100	950
EKOVEST-C70	0.055	-0.095	3,600
HSI-CWCV	0.535	-0.095	47,576
AMWAY	5.240	-0.090	312
BURSA	7.710	-0.090	14,021
HSI-PWFV	0.150	-0.090	50
AMBANK	4.940	-0.080	244,428
ICAP	2.330	-0.080	1,174
MISC	7.170	-0.080	23,156
PPB	11.940	-0.080	3,270
DIALOG-C2F	0.075	-0.075	1,000
UEMS-C1R	0.075	-0.075	2,400
HSI-CWCW	0.350	-0.070	48,277

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
MBSB-C79	0.045	-70.00	5,000
PMETAL-C10	0.015	-66.67	460
YTL-C1A	0.005	-66.67	4,439
EKOVEST-C70	0.055	-63.33	3,600
JTIASA-C3	0.030	-57.14	600
99SMART-CB	0.005	-50.00	190,499
DIALOG-C2F	0.075	-50.00	1,000
GENETEC-CE	0.005	-50.00	1,300
HARTA-C20	0.005	-50.00	100
HSI-CWAI	0.010	-50.00	6,373
INGENIEU-WB	0.005	-50.00	1,285
PBBANK-C1L	0.005	-50.00	11,290
UEMS-C1R	0.075	-50.00	2,400
VELESTO-C40	0.010	-50.00	20
HSI-CWCN	0.070	-44.00	13
ECOWLD-C38	0.085	-43.33	300
KLK-C36	0.035	-41.67	1,590
HSI-PWFV	0.150	-37.50	50
BURSA-C94	0.035	-36.36	885
HSI-CWCY	0.020	-33.33	5,410

MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

SUNBIZ presents extracts of a selection of commentaries and research reports received from stockbrokers on counters that could be of interest to investors.

Compiled by SunBiz Team

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M'sian headline inflation falls to 4-year low of 1.4% in March

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's headline inflation eased to 1.4% year-on-year (YoY) in March, down from 1.5% in February, marking the lowest rate since February 2021 and coming in below both market expectations and Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd's forecast of 1.6%.

The research firm said the decline was broad-based, primarily driven by muted price pressures across most categories and a decrease in transport costs, although prices for miscellaneous goods and education recorded modest increases.

Food inflation continued to rise but at a slower pace, registering a marginal 0.1% month-on-month (MoM) gain compared to 0.2% in February.

Meanwhile, core inflation remained unchanged at 1.9%, supported by sustained transport-related costs. On a monthly basis, the headline Consumer Price Index (CPI) was flat in March, following a 0.4% increase in February, while the core CPI moderated to 0.2% from 0.4% previously.

Kenanga noted that lower fuel and moderating food prices were key drivers behind the decline in the CPI.

The transport category remained flat YoY at 0.7% but fell 0.2% MoM, mainly due to lower costs for fuels and lubricants (-0.3%), diesel (-1.6%), and international flights (-7.4%).

Information and communication prices dropped 5.4% year-on-year, matching their record low from December 2024, as mobile telephone equipment became more affordable (-3.8%).

Food and beverage inflation held steady at 2.5% year-on-year but eased 0.1% month-on-month, with food-at-home prices falling due to cheaper dairy products, eggs (-0.3%), and vegetables (-4.5%).

For 2025, Kenanga's inflation forecast maintained at 2.7%, factoring in the likely RON95 fuel subsidy reform.

Ringgit strengthens against US dollar, other major currencies

THE ringgit closed stronger against the US dollar yesterday on weaker greenback demand, amid a decline in investor confidence due to ongoing US-China trade tensions and a lack of progress in negotiations.

At 6pm, the local unit stood at 4.3695/3750 against the greenback, improving from Wednesday's close of 4.3880/3925.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the ringgit gained about 0.32% yesterday amid the uncertainties over the US tariff spat with China and other global trading partners.

"It seems China has demanded that the US revoke all the unilateral tariffs. Such a tough stance suggests the trade war is likely to be protracted, leading to cautious sentiments in the currency market," he told Bernama.

Back home, the ringgit strengthened against a basket of major currencies.

It rose against the Japanese yen to 3.0670/0710 from 3.0925/0959 at Wednesday's close, gained on the British pound to 5.8127/8201 from 5.8457/8517, and advanced versus the euro to 4.9738/9801 from 5.0102/0154.

Against regional currencies, the ringgit also traded higher.

It firmed against the Singapore dollar to 3.3307/3354 from 3.3523/3579, and strengthened versus the Thai baht to 13.0632/0874 from 13.1251/1457.

The local note also increased against the Philippine peso to 7.727.74 from 7.757.77 and appreciated against the Indonesian rupiah to 258.9/259.4 from 260.0/260.5.

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.4680	4.3330	4.3230
1 Australian Dollar	2.8570	2.7420	2.7260
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3950	3.2950	3.2870
1 Canadian Dollar	3.2160	3.1290	3.1170
1 Euro	5.0710	4.9060	4.8860
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.6680	2.5680	2.5520
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3950	3.2950	3.2870
1 Sterling Pound	5.9360	5.7470	5.7270
1 Swiss Franc	5.4250	5.1930	5.1780
100 UAE Dirham	123.0500	116.6500	116.4500
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.7530	3.4940	3.2940
100 Chinese Renminbi	61.7200	59.1000	N/A
100 Danish Krone	69.6200	64.0600	63.8600
100 Hongkong Dollar	58.1800	55.2800	55.0800
100 Indian Rupee	5.3200	4.9900	4.7900
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0274	0.0248	0.0198
100 Japanese Yen	3.1260	3.0250	3.0150
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.8000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	43.6400	40.1000	39.9000
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6200	1.5200	1.3200
100 Philippine Peso	8.0200	7.5500	7.3500
100 Qatar Riyal	123.9000	117.6200	117.4200
100 Saudi Riyal	120.4000	114.3000	114.1000
100 South Africa Rand	24.8100	22.4000	22.2000
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5300	1.4100	1.2100
100 Swedish Krona	47.5900	43.3100	43.1100
100 Thai Baht	13.9100	12.3300	11.9300

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Inari Amertron Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM2.45



Source: Bloomberg

WE expect the loading factor to be stable YoY, with upside from urgent orders in the near term if there is pent-up demand in the current tariff exemption period. INRI's optoelectronic segment as well as memory products segment should chalk higher numbers, but more significant contributions should only be reflected in FY26. On the Yiwu JV, we expect a slow ramp-up, as competition is stiff in the Chinese OSAT market.

While INRI's exposure to the US was at 2.9% based on its FY24 annual report, the impact (if any) would be much more (20-25% of revenue) from demand disruptions (higher goods prices, poorer sentiment) if the trade war persists. The majority of its integrated circuits are not exported to US directly, so these may not be subjected to direct tariffs. Nonetheless, we pre-emptively trim our FY25-26 net profit forecasts by 8% and 13% on slower topline growth, and dial back our assumptions on the Yiwu JV – after taking into account the potential slowing demand.

We believe the stock is oversold despite short-term uncertainties from the US-China trade war. With stable loading factors, a potential short-term rush in orders and greater reallocation of manufacturing activities out from China, Inari Amertron is set to benefit in the mid-to-longer term, while onshoring activities for its US-based customer may not be imminent. Its current below-mean valuation provides a good opportunity to buy into this established OSAT player.

Inari Amertron is one of the largest OSAT players in Malaysia. The company provides semiconductor packaging, assembly and testing in radio frequency and optoelectronic products.

BUY with RM2.45 TP. – RHB Research, April 24

Malaysian Pacific Industries Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM29.70



Source: Bloomberg

MPI's headcount has reached an inflection point and has been rising over the past two quarters to reach 7.2k. On capex, it has been investing in technology and improving its efficiency and automation – such costs have amounted to RM541 million over the past two years despite the industry downturn. Its commitment to continue investing in technology and improving production efficiency underscores the confidence of the management team in the growth of the business.

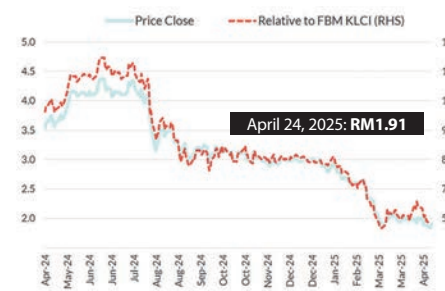
MPI's exposure to the US was at 20% based on its FY24 numbers. However, we understand that majority of its integrated circuits are not exported to the US directly, and may not be subjected to direct tariffs, if any. The impact will likely be on the potential demand disruption (higher prices of goods, poorer buyer sentiment) if the trade war persists. Given the uncertainties stemming from the ongoing trade war, we make a pre-emptive cut to MPI's FY25-27 earnings – by 13%, 8% and 6% on lower topline growth assumptions – post imputing the potential slowing in end-demand.

We believe the stock is oversold despite the short-term uncertainties. With the potential short-term rush in orders and intensified reallocation from manufacturing activities, Malaysian Pacific Industries stands to benefit and will prevail in the on-going trade war situation – given its diverse customer base, value proposition, and process know-how in a competitive environment. Its current trough valuation of under 20x P/E provides investors with a great risk-reward opportunity.

BUY with RM29.70 TP. – RHB Research, April 24

Unisem (M) Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM3.04



Source: Bloomberg

THE temporary pause on tariffs imposed on various semiconductor and various electronic goods was a relief for the sector in avoiding near-term demand shocks. However, a separate imposition of tariffs on chips may be on the cards, to reduce the US' reliance on China. A policy reversal or new tariffs from both the US and China could reintroduce uncertainty into the cards for the sector.

The established ecosystem in Malaysia (advanced infrastructure, skilled labour, competitive costs and pro-investment policies) makes it a prime beneficiary of the intensified reallocation of manufacturing activities to Asean and the China Plus One strategy in the longer term. We are comforted that US multinational companies' supply chains are entrenched in Malaysia, and some of these should still be under certain exemptions and fare better than counterparts in other nations where the initial reciprocal tariff rates are much higher.

UNI's capex spending trend has been encouraging – it amounted to RM653 million over the past two years for its capacity expansion and Gopeng plant. Its staff headcount has also risen in the past five quarters, from 5.67k to 6.57k. The commitment to continue investing in technology and improve production efficiency underscores the confidence of the management on the future growth of the business.

UNI's exposure to US was at 67% based on its FY24 numbers, but we understand that the majority of its integrated circuits are not exported to the US directly. Hence, these may not be subjected to direct tariffs, if any.

BUY with RM3.04 TP. – RHB Research, April 24



Kuala Selangor fireflies.



Ice skating.



Escape room.

Next-level experiences

► Five must-try activities that belong on gen Z's social feeds

FROM TikTok-worthy moments to adrenaline-pumping activities, gen Z craves unique travel experiences that go beyond the ordinary.

Whether you are a high schooler on a break, university student in between semesters or a young professional looking to shake off the 9-to-5, there is no better time to try something new.

To make it easier, here are five must-try activities from heart-racing adventures to immersive experiences. No matter your travel style, these experiences are worth adding to your list.

Craft your own pewter masterpiece at The Foundry Workshop

Step into Malaysia's rich tin heritage with hands-on experience at Royal Selangor's Foundry Workshop. Here, you will get to shape molten pewter into your very own creation – whether it is a pendant, keychain or a unique keepsake. With pre-set moulds to guide you, it is an easy yet rewarding way to tap into your creative side.

More than just a craft, this workshop is a blend of artistry and history, giving you a glimpse into the country's pewter-making legacy. Plus, you will walk away with a one-of-a-kind souvenir, designed and made by you.

Tee off with twist at Mini Golf Cafe

Mini golf has always been a laid-back classic, but DE'8000 Mini Golf Cafe in Penang takes it to the next level. This trendy indoor spot puts a fresh spin on the game with themed courses packed with tunnels, ramps and even roller coaster-inspired designs. Whether you are here for some friendly competition or just looking to shake up your weekend plans, it is the right mix of nostalgia

and excitement.

After the game, kick back at the on-site cafe because what is a gen Z hangout without a cosy spot to chill, recharge and snap the an Instagram-worthy shot for your socials?

Step onto ice and glide away

Whether you are wobbling through your first lap or clinging to the railing for dear life, ice skating is the kind of experience that stays with you.

It is all about the thrill, whether it is laughing as you and your friends try to stay upright, attempting a spin worthy of a viral TikTok or reenacting a rom-com moment on the ice.

So lace up your skates, hit the ice and see where the glide takes you! Available at 163 Retail Park, KL East Mall and Paradigm Mall Johor Bahru.

Put your wits to test in escape room

Ever found yourself locked in a room with just 60 minutes to break free?

That is the thrill of an escape room – where every second counts and the only way out is through puzzles, codes and hidden clues.

Whether you are cracking a high-security prison escape, piecing together a mind-bending mystery or surviving a horror-themed challenge, it is an adrenaline rush like no other.

With escape rooms popping up across different states, there is always a new challenge to take on. Check these rooms out at Malacca, Avenue K and Nu Sentral.

Witness nature's light show with Kuala Selangor fireflies

This might not be your typical Gen Z adventure, but it is one you absolutely need to experience at least once. Just outside Kuala Lumpur, the mangroves of Kuala Selangor light up at night as thousands of fireflies blink in rhythm, creating a glow that feels

almost unreal.

Gliding down the river by boat, you will have a front-row seat to this breathtaking natural spectacle, like stepping straight into a fantasy film.

Kuala Selangor Fireflies Boat Cruise experience is the ultimate nature-meets-fantasy adventure that is guaranteed to light up your social feed.

So, why stick to the usual when there is a whole world of experiences waiting?

Whether you are chasing an adrenaline rush, looking for a creative outlet or craving something completely out of the ordinary, these activities prove there is always something new to try. Time to tick off your gen Z adventure bucket list and flood your social feeds with next-level experiences.

This article is contributed by RedBus.



The Foundry Workshop.



Mini golf cafe.



A REFRESHING RETREAT
NEAR KUALA LUMPUR
colmartropicale.com.my



Marie Kondo uncovers new joy through travel

➤ Netflix star rediscovers what sparks joy through immersive experiences

MARIE Kondo built a global empire by helping millions let go of what no longer sparked joy for them. But in a refreshing turn of events, Kondo has found a new path to joy - not through perfectly folded clothes, but through travel.

In a new global campaign with Klook, a platform for experiences and travel services in Asia, Kondo trades structure for spontaneity, embarking on a deeply personal journey of rediscovery.

Aptly titled *The Best You*, the campaign reframes travel as more

than a getaway - it is a journey to becoming the version of yourself you did not know you were looking for.

"My system for tidying took the world by storm, but things had to change as I needed to focus on my family. I am coming back to where it all started, to discover what can spark joy in this new phase of my life. I want to always be open to new experiences, to never stop searching for things that touch my heart," said Kondo.

From bucket lists to better selves

According to its latest Travel Pulse study, one in two millennial and gen Z travellers are driven by the desire for personal transformation. They are not just looking for picture-perfect getaways, but real experiences that spark joy, clarity and wonder. And the best way to do that, according to nearly one in five travellers, is to embark on a nature retreat or take a short weekend getaway to chase meaningful moments beyond the miles.

"We have always believed experiences offer more than just activities - they are a way to see yourself differently. When the world feels unpredictable, people look for



Kondo's robot dance experience.



Kondo's samurai experience.



Kondo finds joy through travel.

moments that bring them back to who they are. *The Best You* is our invitation to rediscover joy, connection and personal growth through the simple power of travel and shared experiences," said Klook vice president of global marketing Marcus Yong.

Travel, whether near or far, offers a chance for renewal, with 48% of travellers reportedly feeling fully recharged after taking a trip. From local escapes to far-flung adventures, *The Best You* is delivering transformative experiences that foster personal growth to bring you closer to who you want to become.

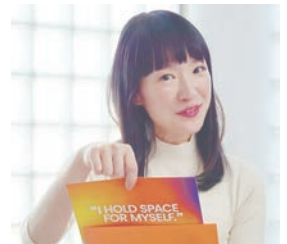
Manifesting best version of yourself

Whether it is finding your playful side at a theme park, embracing stillness on a scenic train ride or trying something new with loved ones, the list is about discovering experiences that bring you closer to who you want to be. To help travellers kickstart their journey to the best version of themselves, the travel and experience platform has created an interactive online quiz - part personality decoder, part choose-your-own-adventure.

Travellers can uncover one of eight distinct travel personalities that reflect their unique travel aura. More than just a label, each persona unlocks curated experiences designed to help bring your best self to life, wherever the journey takes you.

Walk in Kondo's footsteps in Japan

And if Japan is on your list, you can even follow in Kondo's footsteps with a curated itinerary that includes: channeling your inner samurai to find balance and focus, learning to see beauty beyond imperfection in a



The Best You reframes travel as more than a getaway.



Kondo's kintsugi experience.

kintsugi workshop and letting loose in a robot dance session. As part of *The Best You*, Klook has also teamed up with Merantau Dunia as she embarks on her own personal transformation journey. Known for embracing the unfamiliar, her travels are guided by a fearless curiosity and a deep belief that adventure is a powerful catalyst for growth.

Her journey of stepping beyond the familiar to embrace growth will unfold online - stay tuned to see how adventure shapes her into *The Best You*.

Hilltop Raya open house with Dolla

IMAGINE an epic weekend getaway to a dreamy hilltop escape featuring a star-studded welcome, as Airbnb's annual Riangnya Raya Open House is back, this time co-hosted by Malaysian girl group Dolla.

Known for their electrifying performances and dynamic personalities, the three stars are stepping into a new spotlight as Airbnb co-hosts. Dolla will welcome one lucky guest with up to nine companions for one unforgettable weekend, to a memorable Raya getaway at the stunning Brickhouse

Bukit Tinggi, just an hour's drive from Kuala Lumpur.

Curated in collaboration with Dolla, this special Raya stay runs from May 3 to 5 at Brickhouse Bukit Tinggi. Priced at RM100 before taxes and fees, the two-night getaway accommodates up to 10 guests and offers a cozy, festive send-off to the season.

Guests can look forward to a personal welcome by Dolla, an intimate festive meal shared with Dolla, acoustic performance featuring some of their most popular hits and a

live Q&A session with them where fans can hear more about their creative process and what is inspiring them lately.

Guests will also enjoy a private stay at Brickhouse Bukit Tinggi, featuring two villas with a private swimming pool, BBQ area, karaoke facilities and sweeping views of the surrounding mountains and durian orchard.

Whether relaxing by the pool or sharing a meal under the stars, this special getaway blends nature, music and Raya cheer in one unforgettable escape.



Join Dolla for a memorable Raya getaway.

➤ Global openings blend bold design, luxury, local culture

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

A wave of bold new openings is reshaping the global hospitality landscape, offering travellers a rich tapestry of experiences from urban escapes to beachfront sanctuaries. Whether it is a whimsical hideaway in the heart of a northern city, a serene island retreat or a luxurious palace steeped in cultural heritage, each destination delivers its own distinctive charm.

These properties are redefining how we travel, elevating comfort, design and culinary experiences while anchoring deeply in local context. With immersive wellness, exclusive adventures and inspired design at their core, these new openings invite guests to explore the world with fresh perspective and elevated expectations.

Treehouse Hotel Manchester

As of its opening on March 19, Treehouse Hotel Manchester has welcomed guests to its 224 guest rooms for fun and free-spirited stays in a one-of-a-kind addition to the city's hospitality scene. This hotel provides a unique retreat for visitors seeking comfort and an element of adventure, where visitors can expect whimsical interiors, evoking the charm of a forest, blended with Treehouse's signature "perfectly imperfect" design ethos.

Alongside its cosy accommodations, it offers an array of destination dining and drinking options celebrating some of the North West's most celebrated culinary talents.

These include Pip by Mary-Ellen McTague on the ground floor, Sister Moon by Sam Grainger that is set to open later this year, The Nest in Treehouse on the 14th floor that overlooks the city and The Hideout rooftop lounge. Other facilities include a gym, screening room and event spaces. The hotel will also play host to curated cultural events led by Luke Crodrey and Justin Crawford.

Raffles Sentosa Singapore

Singapore's first all-villa resort Raffles Sentosa Singapore has opened within a lush tropical greenery on Sentosa Island, where guests can look forward to immersing themselves in nature.

Located within a 15-minute drive from the city's business district, Raffles Sentosa Singapore features 62 villas, each with a private pool and outdoor terrace, ranging from a one-bedroom villa to the four-bedroom Royal Villa. Guests will also be able to enjoy the resort's Raffles Butler service, ensuring their every need is met with impeccable care. For a grand arrival, guests can arrange to be chauffeured up a driveway in one of the resort's Rolls-Royce limousines.

Set to be a new dining destination in the city, Raffles Sentosa Singapore is home to five restaurants and lounges, showcasing a diverse array of global cuisines and culinary talent from Italian to Japanese cuisine. It is also available as a venue for weddings and events, with its large ballrooms, where the largest is able to seat up to 400 guests.

Cube Social

Following the success of its earlier openings, Singapore's Cube Boutique Capsule Hotels has launched its first Cube Social @ Boat Quay in the historic riverside area along the Singapore River, offering affordable premium capsule accommodation. Similar to its sister properties, the three-storey Cube Social @ Boat Quay consists of 72 capsules fitted with a mixture of queen-sized and single beds. There are 13 private rooms designed to accommodate small groups or families, with one room specifically equipped for wheelchair accessibility.

Fitted with plush mattresses and high-quality linen duvet, each capsule is designed to moderate its own temperature and air-flow. These are also solidly insulated to reduce ambient noise for a comfortable rest. Each capsule is equipped with a universal electrical outlet protected with childproof adapter, room

New hotels, new horizons



Treehouse Hotel Manchester.

safe, mirror/vanity area, foldable table, bedside light, embedded cove light for ambient mood, footwear lockers and ample luggage cabinets.

Cube Boutique Capsule Hotels target savvy travellers seeking high-quality, affordable accommodation without sacrificing comfort or lifestyle. By providing popular hotel amenities and services such as daily housekeeping, 24-hour reception, free Wi-Fi, digital access and all-day refreshments, along with modern features such as universal plugs, Cube offers an upscale experience at a budget-friendly price.

Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur

Anantara Hotels & Resorts, the experiential luxury brand of Minor Hotels, has unveiled its first property in India - the Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur. Overlaid with royal design and immersive cultural experiences, it offers a window into a bygone era when some of India's oldest dynasties ruled Rajasthan.

The hotel's 150 rooms and suites connect guests to India's past, with each giving a different experience to guests. For Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur's dining, guests will savour a unique side of the country, as the hotel's executive chef Sunil Jajoria uses two decades of experience in Rajasthani techniques to bring guests on a gastronomic journey in heritage Indian cuisine.

For a walk on the wild side, guests can book a Private Safari and Heritage Tour that will take them deep into Ranthambore National Park to see Bengal tigers and other wildlife. After a tour of the Ranthambore Fort, a UNESCO World Heritage site, guests can have a picnic overlooking the wilderness. At the cultural village of Chokhi Dhani, pottery-making and turban-tying classes led by skilled artisans are paired with folk performances and a traditional feast. Guests can also explore Amber Fort during a private tour, milk cows in a local village and walk with giants at an elephant village.

Banyan Tree Beach Residences Oceanus

Banyan Group presents the pinnacle of beachfront lifestyle with the unveiling of the new ultra-luxe Banyan Tree Beach Residences Oceanus on world famous Bang Tao Beach in Phuket. No expense has been spared to ensure the 16 beachfront residences at internationally-renowned Laguna Phuket are vacation-worthy in every way.

Ground floor residences have their own private pools stretching beyond spacious terraces. Meanwhile, the penthouses have stunning views out to the horizon over Thailand's Andaman Sea from expansive living area balconies and breathtaking rooftop terraces with a private swimming pool and stunning reflecting ponds. Residents of Banyan Tree Beach Residences Oceanus also enjoy privileges and rewards at the integrated resort,



Raffles Sentosa Singapore one-bedroom pool villa.

including a complimentary Thailand Elite visa and membership at the Laguna Golf Phuket.

They also benefit from exclusive access to a diverse array of high-end amenities and services - including a luxurious private beach club, premium health and wellness facilities from BDMS Wellness, signature restaurants, world class spas and recreational facilities.

Jati

Private island retreat Jati offers a unique blend of Khmer-inspired luxury and barefoot island bliss with the 82-villa being located on the island of Koh Russey or "Bamboo Island" in southern Cambodia's scenic and unspoiled Koh Rong archipelago.

Jati offers first-class experiences at exceptional value, from world-class leisure and sports facilities to indulgent relaxation under the island's shady trees. Indoors, the bright, Khmer-inspired one-and-two-bedroom villas is an understated luxury, some with their own private pools, directly on the beachfront or nestled in lush tropical gardens. Recreation facilities that are being introduced in phases in the first two to three months include a racquet and sports club for tennis and pickleball, basketball, mini golf, badminton, Thai boxing, paddle-boarding, kayaks, snorkelling and island trails for a stroll or bike ride.

The resort also offers a variety of dining experiences - with island branches of Phnom Penh wine bar Le Manolis and the capital's most popular steakhouse KoKo bringing an urban international vibe to the seaside setting.

Fairmont Mumbai

Opened earlier this month, Fairmont Mumbai promises to deliver the Fairmont Hotels & Resorts's signature blend of timeless luxury and world-class hospitality. Drawing from the golden age of New York's Art Deco splendour, the hotel intertwines historic architectural finesse with contemporary luxury, embodying a legacy of elegance reimagined for the present.

This new destination features 446 rooms, including elegant suites, a dedicated wellness floor and one of the city's largest and most



Cube Social @ Boat Quay.



Anantara Jewel Bagh Jaipur Hotel.



Banyan Tree Beach Residences Oceanus.



Jati.



Fairmont Mumbai.

luxurious event spaces.

Guests can savour globally-inspired flavours across five dining venues. The hotel offers dining experiences that celebrate authentic cooking methods and the finest locally-sourced ingredients. From immersive theatrical gastronomy to menus that honour Mumbai's cosmopolitan spirit, each venue offers a unique escape, blending creativity with culinary excellence to craft moments of discovery for every guest.

It also has an entire floor offering wellness therapies and advanced longevity treatments. Advanced age-defying therapies at the Blu Xone are combined with bespoke wellness rituals, creating a transformative journey that rejuvenates body and mind.



Cirali Beach.



A Caretta turtle.

Turkish Riviera offers idyllic coastline for holidaymakers

► Enjoy sunny days in Antalya, gateway to paradise of beaches

ANTALYA, the breathtaking resort city overlooking the Mediterranean Sea along the Turkish Riviera, stands unmatched with its golden sands, azure skies and deep blue waters. Located in the southwest of the country, the city also enjoys a consistently pleasant climate with 300 days of sunshine, creating an ideal setting year-round for visitors seeking summer bliss.

However, this world-famous coastal gem is not only a magnet for seaside and sun aficionados but also a proud custodian of some of the world's cleanest beaches. Antalya holds the world record for having the highest number of Blue Flag-certified beaches at 233. These untouched and pristine beaches stretching as far as the eye can see offer the summer holidays of your dreams.

Sun-kissed sands meet crystal waters

As summer vacations draw closer, let your wanderlust lead you to some of the world's cleanest beaches. You can pick among Antalya's beaches, which have been awarded the prestigious Blue Flag distinction thanks to their quality and safety. Antalya's commitment to preserving its natural treasures ensures that each beach is maintained to the highest sustainability standards. Crystal-clear waters, clean stretches of sand and a well-protected natural environment, all bathed in radiant sunshine. You will have no shortage of choices regarding Antalya's idyllic beaches.



The Patara Ancient City.

the clear waters, Kas is among the world's top diving centres. Windsurfers and kite surfers are also in luck in Antalya, as Alanya is one of the best spots for this fun sport thanks to its excellent winds and beautiful sea. One can also try parasailing, jet-skiing and even kayaking here.

Luxury, history, sustainability

Antalya's virgin beaches are surrounded by several luxury resorts offering high-end amenities, including world-class spa facilities, adventure parks, golf courses and gourmet restaurants. There are also many surrounding ancient sites and villages that you can visit. For example, the eternal flame called the Chimera and Olympos Ancient City, home to the ruins of the Lycian civilisation, are must-see destinations near the Blue Flag Cirali Beach. Similarly, you can embark on a fantastic time travel in the Patara Ancient City, the historical capital of the Lycian League, after relishing Patara Beach, one of Turkey's longest (18km) beaches.

Turtle conservation

Antalya's Blue Flag beaches, standing out with their healthy and safe tourism services, also contribute to sustainable natural balance. Among these beaches' most precious conservation efforts are the Caretta turtles. These endangered sea turtles rely on clean, undisturbed beaches for survival. The city's Blue Flag beaches, such as Belek, Patara and Cirali, provide a safe reproduction area with strict conservation measures, such as protected nesting areas, controlled beach lighting and awareness programmes. During the breeding season, you can even witness the Caretta turtles' life journey, a once-in-a-lifetime, sustainable experience.

Unforgettable experiences

Whether you are looking to relax by the clear blue sea, engage in water sports or simply enjoy the stunning natural surroundings, Antalya's Blue Flag beaches promise unforgettable experiences. After a day spent on these beautiful beaches, all you have to do is enjoy the delicious seafood of the Mediterranean accompanied by local Turkish wines and experience the vibrant nightlife.

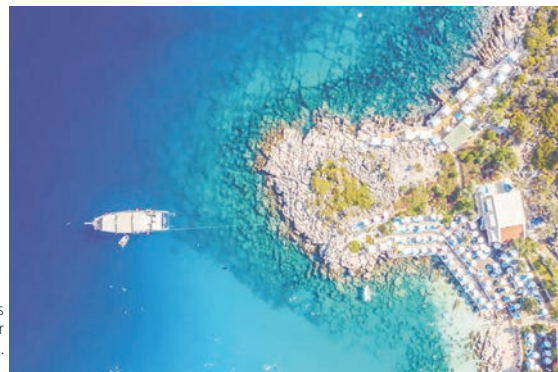


The tranquil waters of Finike Beach.

Serene beaches

Discover the serene beauty of Alanya, Side, Manavgat, Finike, Kemer, Kalkan, Ka and many other towns, each boasting Blue Flag beaches that offer tranquility and calmness. Patara, Kleopatra, Kaputas, Lara and Konyalti Beaches are definite standouts. Imagine hearing the soothing sounds of the crystal-clear

Mediterranean Sea washing up the shores, sinking your feet into the soft and warm sands and sipping a refreshing cocktail while sunbathing. These beaches are also ideal spots for various adrenaline-filled water sports. Kas is one of Turkey's best locations, not only for its Blue Flag beaches but also for diving. With several sites offering excellent visibility thanks to



Kas is great for diving.

Ang as Mak Ta in *Kulit Wayang*.

Drawing horror from tradition

► Amanda Ang on starring in upcoming occult film *Kulit Wayang*

BY JOHN TAN

LONG before she took home best actress at the 2020 New York Festivals TV & Film Awards, Amanda Ang was already landing roles for the big screen and stage.

Since leaving her career in advertising, the Labuan native has forged a long and exciting path for herself in the acting world, appearing in numerous plays, movies and TV dramas.

Her role in the upcoming local horror film *Kulit Wayang* is Ang's latest highlight. Directed by Dain Said, the film tells the story of Ramlee, played by actor Fattah Amin, a *dalang* (puppet master) living in the dark swamps of a remote coastal Malaysian village in the 1980s.

His life took a plunge when his daughter Ayu was brutally murdered. While the rest of the village blames the wild crocodiles of the swamps, Ramlee believes otherwise.

Ang plays Mak Ta, a senior resident in the coastal village. Speaking with *theSun*, she elaborates on her role and experience making the film.

How would you describe the movie in three words?

The first word would be traditional. Second would be mystery and third would be mystique.

What was it like to return to the world of horror after *Harun Malam* in 2022?

I do not normally do horror films. I actually do not know why I get involved in horror films. It is not my genre of choice to watch.

But it is a challenge to face my fears in a way. For *Kulit Wayang*, I would say a big part of me being in this film is because of director Dain Said.

I enjoy watching his mind work. He is just so creative. He has such a beautiful mind. So much so that you want to keep discovering horror with him.

And I am happy to say my journey from *Harun Malam* to *Kulit Wayang* was a fruitful one. I have gained a lot more enjoyment doing this one with him. It was very enjoyable.

Why did you decide to take on this role and script?

When I read the character



Ang is an industry veteran, having won best actress at the 2020 New York Festivals TV & Film Awards for her role in *Last Madame*.

description of Mak Ta, it sounded as if she was a *makcik bawang* (nosy old lady). But when I read the script, I realised I could not be further away from that.

It made a lot of sense because it is Dain Said. He would not write a role like that. So, it was exciting to me because it was a character I had not done before.

She is a Chinese woman who lives in Kelantan. She, like many other Chinese people in Kelantan, has assimilated into the local culture.

I love and respect that. There is so much colour to the role. She is also someone who is older than me. To work on those muscles, to be more grounded was a lot of fun playing with.

How did you get into the shoes of Mak Ta?

When I am given a role such as this, it always starts with a voice. I let the voice carry where my character goes. It allowed me to get into her characteristics, someone who is basically in her world and is

consumed by her grief and darkness.

The voice helped me carry through that a lot, which made it easier for the other physicalities to come in.

What was the scariest part about making the film?

When you are filming a supernatural film, it makes sense for most of the filming to take place at night. For us to be in quite a rural area, the mystical aspect will come through on set.

You are always wondering if something is going to happen at night. Whether someone is going to go missing from the set. Sometimes, you are also afraid to go to the washroom alone.

Your mind plays tricks on you. In my case, a lot of my scenes were shot at an old-school wooden house. So, there is a lot of creaking. It sets the mood in front of the camera and behind it.

Do you believe in the supernatural?

I am agnostic. So if the supernatural is true, it is true. If it is not, I am okay.

But I am open to it being true but I am also open to it just being nothing.

Speaking of which, did you play with *wayang kulit* when you were younger?

No, I did not and I did not know how spiritual it actually was. That was a real eye-opener and it definitely added a layer, which made me more interested in it. If I ever had the chance, I probably would play with it. But I do not think I have the talent for it.

What is going to surprise people about the film?

I would use the word shocking instead. There are elements that will shock people. Even though it is something we do not experience, it is something we can definitely relate to.

How would you convince fans to watch the film?

If you are interested in finding out more about traditional arts and how Malaysians view the mystique, come and watch this film.



Ang (right) with fellow actors (from left) Fattah Amin and Pekin Ibrahim.

Artistes need plan B

► Popularity does not last forever

WHILE the entertainment industry may appear glamorous, the constant influx of new talent creates intense competition, making it challenging for those in the field to stay relevant. As a result, many have begun formulating backup plans - often by branching out into business.

One example is actor and entrepreneur Datuk Rosyam Nor, who believes an acting career offers little long-term security, as it relies heavily on available roles and is often limited by age, which can reduce opportunities over time.

"An artiste should have a backup plan. We can see how older artistes are no longer in demand because people want replacements. It is like with vehicles - people tend to prefer newer models. The same goes for artistes, as they age, so do their fans, many of whom have followed them since the beginning of their careers," he said.

Rosyam, known by the nickname "Hero Malaya", said since an artiste's popularity typically lasts (about) 10 years, they need to be smart in planning their career if they wish to stay relevant in the industry.

"I was fortunate because I planned my career. For example, I acted in the film *Memoir Seorang Guru*, playing the character Cikgu Sunan, which was screened in all



Shiha runs a restaurant to earn a secondary income.

schools across Malaysia. After that, school kids started calling me Cikgu Sunan, so I gained a new group of fans," he said.

Rosyam, who gained fame for his role as Iman in the drama *Keluarga Itu*, advised artistes to plan ahead and explore additional sources of income, including leveraging technology, which can also boost financial gains.

"Today's young artistes are more educated and intellectually equipped than in my time. They

have embraced the digital media landscape and know how to leverage it to generate additional income. Being an actor or celebrity can serve as personal branding to boost the business they want to pursue. These days, a business does not need to have a physical presence - it can exist entirely online. For instance, a single TikTok Live session can earn up to RM10,000," he said.

Echoing a similar sentiment, singer and entrepreneur Shiha Zikir believes it is essential for



Rosyam says an artiste's popularity typically lasts about 10 years.
- PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @IAMROSYAM

every artiste to have an alternative source of income, given the unpredictable nature of earnings in the entertainment industry.

"As an artiste, there are times when work is available and times when it is not, which is why I need to have a plan. I simply pursue businesses that interest me. For example, I love entertainment, so I thought, why not start a business related to it? In addition to entertainment, I also have a passion for food, which led me to open a restaurant. When people

ask, 'Are you not worried the restaurant might fail?' I believe that growth requires courage and taking risks. It is important to explore other interests beyond your main income to help supplement it," said the 38-year-old.

Shiha, who began her business on a small scale in 2016, shared owning a business not only serves as a future safeguard but also enables her to share her success with the local community. - Bernama

MIFFest assembles its strongest line-up of ambassadors yet

THE Malaysia International Film Festival (MIFFest) has named actresses Siti Saleha and Daiyan Trisha as the refreshed line-up of Festival Ambassadors, joining celebrated actor Bront Palarae who returns for the sixth consecutive year.

Together, they represent a generation of storytellers deeply connected to audience, culture and community, embodying MIFFest's mission of elevating cinema that speaks to the now and looks to the future.

In this eighth edition on July 19 to 27, this year's festival will open at MyTown Shopping Centre, marking a vibrant return to its signature annual in-person celebrations.

Infinite cinema

The 8th MIFFest carries the theme "Infinity", a reflection of cinema's boundless capacity to connect, heal and inspire in times of change. More than ever, a film festival becomes an endless space where stories flow and courage, hope as well as humanity converge through the shared experience of cinema.

Infinity speaks to the limitless power of storytelling to bridge distances, ignite compassion and with equal poignancy and quiet strength.

"As we reflect on how to best honour storytelling through this meaningful platform, we ask ourselves - how can MIFFest present stories in the most engaging, critical and compassionate way? Cinema is a universal language. The passion we speak, through the lens of our storytellers, remains our core. With



our new theme Infinity, we embrace a deeper sense of hope, to stay courageous, open-hearted and ready to discover stories that move us, challenge us and remind us of the strength we carry," said MIFFest president Joanne Goh.

Renowned Hong Kong visual artist and photographer Wing Shya, celebrated for his iconic

collaborations with Wong Kar Wai, was commissioned to craft the festival's key visual.

"Cinema has always been magic. A person's entire life can be condensed into a single film, bare, vulnerable, almost naked and yet, somehow, we feel it all. That is the power of storytelling. That is the magic of time in cinema," said Shya.



Themed Infinity, the key visual is brought to life by Shya.

Celebrating SEA films

As Malaysia takes on the Asean Chairmanship in 2025, MIFFest, in collaboration with the National Film Development Corporation Malaysia (Finas), unveils Asean On Screen - a dedicated programme celebrating the richness of Southeast Asian film and television. The initiative was announced by Finas CEO Datuk Azmir Saifuddin Mutalib.

Established as a key pillar of the festival, Asean On Screen places regional narratives at the forefront of MIFFest, nurturing cross-border collaboration, co-production opportunities and creative exchange for purpose-driven storytelling.

European partnership

MIFFest continues its partnership with the Delegation of the European

Union to Malaysia, presenting the 25th European Film Festival (EUFF) Malaysia as a parallel section of MIFFest. This collaboration promises EUFF's most extensive line-up to date, reflecting the shared commitment to cinematic dialogue, cultural exchange and the enduring power of European storytelling.

Running from July 20 to 27, the 25th edition of EUFF will span eight days of programmes and events, bringing European cinema closer to Malaysian audiences through a selection of films, special sessions and cultural showcases.

International exchanges

MIFFest continues to serve as a crucial platform for cultural exchange, reaffirming its collaborations with The High Commission of India in Kuala Lumpur and the Information and Broadcasting Ministry of India, which remain as the festival's principal cultural partner.

MIFFest looks to deepen this collaboration in the years ahead, expanding its role as a key occasion for cultural connection and cinematic dialogue between India and Malaysia.

MIFFest also continues its valued collaborations with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Cultural and Creative Industries Development Agency and the Hong Kong Film Development Council, returning for the third consecutive year to celebrate Hong Kong cinema through community-driven initiatives, academic discourse and industry engagement.

Pressure is pleasure for Swiatek

World No. 2 glad for high expectations ahead of Madrid title defence

IGA SWIATEK says she has grown accustomed to the high pressure of expectations she shoulders each clay-court season and that she is "grateful" for the public's "high hopes" for her.

The world No. 2 is the most successful clay-court player of her generation and has won the French Open four times.

By her stratospheric standards, Swiatek is having a sub-par season but she has the chance to turn her year around at the Madrid Open, where she is defending her title this fortnight.

"It's crazy, but people are not aware when they think about other people that we're also human. The expectations for sure are high, but they're high every year for me since 2022," Swiatek said yesterday at the Caja Magica.

"I'm just trying to keep my job and not really focus on what people say. Honestly, they have no idea what's going on in any of our lives, so if they think some things, they can just think, but it's not necessarily the truth.

"But for sure I'm grateful that they have high hopes."

The 23-year-old Pole kicked off her

clay season with a quarterfinal appearance in Stuttgart last week, where she lost to eventual champion Jelena Ostapenko for the sixth time in six meetings with the Latvian.

While she is feeling good in practice, Swiatek is still waiting for confirmation she can hit her peak level on her preferred surface.

"It's nice to have these first days and first week of just grinding and practising," she added.

"I love that, especially on clay, because tennis for me it's the most logical there, and also you can be more creative in terms of the tactics and everything."

Meanwhile, world No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka believes she will have "big chances" to perform well on clay this

season, should she recapture the level she showed during last year's Madrid final against Swiatek.

The Belarussian squandered three match points in a heartbreaking defeat by Swiatek in the Spanish capital 12 months ago, in what was a high-quality clash that earned WTA Match of the Year honours at the end of the season.

Targeting a third Madrid crown, Sabalenka reflects fondly on her final against Swiatek, despite coming agonisingly close to victory before falling just short.

"That match was a blockbuster, and I really enjoyed playing, it was very intense, very long. If I can play like that in every match on clay, I think I have big chances to perform well on the clay-court season this year," Sabalenka said yesterday.

First-round action in Madrid yesterday saw a returning Petra Kvitova squander a 4-1 double-break lead en route to a 6-4, 6-0 defeat by American Katie Volynets.

Kvitova came back from a 17-month maternity leave two months ago and was contesting her first clay-court match in two years.

Britain's Emma Raducanu won her first outdoor clay-court match since 2022 by beating Suzan Lamens 7-6 (7-4), 6-4.

"Honestly I don't feel like I'm that used to it," said Raducanu of her lack of clay-court experience.

"I think it does feel completely new to me and I think I'm okay with accepting that and I'm okay with knowing that it is a surface that can be great for me. But for the moment it's not one that I feel incredibly amazing and confident on." - AFP



Iga Swiatek - REUTERS/PC

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF SOUTH ISLAND PACKAGING (PENANG) SDN. BHD.
Registration No. 197501001565 (23225-D)
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

Pursuant to the Extraordinary General Meeting of SOUTH ISLAND PACKAGING (PENANG) SDN. BHD. (Registration No. 197501001565 (23225-D)) ("the Company"), the following special resolutions were duly passed on 18 April 2025:-

Special Resolution 1 - That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439 (1)(b) of the Companies Act 2016.

Special Resolution 2 - That Ms. Png Chew Keem of 51-21-A Menara B&K Bank, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 George Town, Penang be and is hereby appointed as the Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up pursuant to Section 445 of the Companies Act 2016. And that the Liquidator be and is hereby authorised to exercise all the powers laid down under Section 456 of the Companies Act 2016 and to distribute either in cash, specie or in kind the whole or any part of the assets of the Company amongst the contributors to the rights in accordance with his respective rights and interests therein.

Dated this 18th day of April 2025

TAN SRI DATO' SERI TAN KOK PING
Director

TAN POAY SENG
Director

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF SOUTH ISLAND PACKAGING (PENANG) SDN. BHD.
Registration No. 197501001565 (23225-D)
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Creditors of SOUTH ISLAND PACKAGING (PENANG) SDN. BHD. (Registration No. 197501001565 (23225-D)) which is being voluntarily wound up, are required to file their claims and addresses with particulars of their debts or claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, Ms. Png Chew Keem, the Liquidator of the Company at 51-21-A Menara B&K Bank, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 George Town, Penang and if so requested in writing from the Liquidator, are, by their solicitors personally to come and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts or claims are proved.

Dated this 18th day of April 2025

PNG CHEW KEEM
Liquidator

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF BRILLIANT PAVILION SDN. BHD.
(Company No. 201501024007 (1148338-D))
(In Members' Voluntary Liquidation)

At a General Meeting of the Members of the above-named Company, duly convened and held at Suite 1, No. 25, Jalan Meranti Merah, Melodies Garden, 80250 Johor Bahru, Johor on 21st April 2025 at 11.00 am, the following Special Resolution was duly passed:-

"That the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Ms. Cheong Min Kong of c/o Suite 1, No. 25, Jalan Meranti Merah, Melodies Garden, 80250 Johor Bahru, Johor be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator for the purpose of such winding up with all powers given by Section 456 of the Companies Act, 2016.

And that the Liquidator be indemnified by the Company against all costs, charges, losses, expenses and liabilities incurred in or sustained by him in the execution and discharge of his duties as Liquidator and in relation thereto."

NY NET KENG (P)
Company Secretary

Dated this 25th April 2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF BRILLIANT PAVILION SDN. BHD.
(Company No. 201501024007 (1148338-D))
(In Members' Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the Creditors of the above-named Company, which is being voluntarily wound up, are required to file their claims and addresses with particulars of their debts and claims, and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned liquidator at Suite 1, No. 25, Jalan Meranti Merah, Melodies Garden, 80250 Johor Bahru, Johor and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are, by their solicitors or personally, to come in and prove their debts and claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts and claims are proved.

CHONG MIN KONG
Liquidator

Dated this 25th April 2025

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF BINA GOODYEAR BERHAD (IN LIQUIDATION)
[REGISTRATION NO. 197401001541 (18645-H)]
SECTION 525

NOTICE TO ALL CREDITORS
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of Bina Goodyear Berhad (In Liquidation) ("the Company") having a claim present or future, certain or contingent, that:-

If you have not submitted your claim yet, you are required to submit an affidavit verifying debt together with all documents to substantiate your claim to the Liquidator of the Company at the following address not later than 5.00 p.m., Friday, 16th day of May 2025:

Address:
The Liquidator
Bina Goodyear Berhad (In Liquidation)
c/o Messrs Rodgers Reidy & Co. (NF 2243)
K-3A-09, No. 2, Jalan Solaris
Solaire Mont' Kias
50480 Kuala Lumpur

Telephone No: (03) 6204 0928
Fax No : (03) 6204 0428

Failure to submit your abovementioned affidavit to the Liquidator by the stipulated date can result in your claim being excluded from the benefit of any distributions made before the debt or claims are proved and from objecting to the distributions.

By Order of the Liquidator
LIM TIAN HUAT
Liquidator
Dated this 25 April 2025

- Note:**
- Please do not submit an affidavit if you have submitted once before.
 - If you have submitted an affidavit but have not received any response from the Liquidator, please contact them at the above address.
 - Creditors who have not responded to the Liquidator's request for further documents and/or particulars relating to their claims are reminded to submit the further documents and/or particulars without delay or risk having their claims rejected.

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI SHAH ALAM DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DANIL EHSAN, MALAYSIA (BAGIAN KELUARGA) PETISYEN PERCAERAIAN
NO: BA-33-92-02/2025

Dalam Perkaranya Seksyen 53, 54, 76, 88, 89 dan 93 Akta Membaharu Undang-Undang (Perkahwinan dan Perceraian) 1976

ANTARA
WONG SUI YIN (P)
(No. K/P: 730303-07-5392)
...PEMPETISYEN ISTERI

DAN
LEONG YEONG JIAN
(No. K/P: 751230-10-5527)
...RESPONDEN SUAMI

NOTIS

Kepada:

LEONG YEONG JIAN (No. K/P: 751230-10-5527)
B-310, Sunway Sutra Condo, Jalan Tropicana Utara P1J 3, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa satu Petisyen Perceraian terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Tinggi Shah Alam Petisyen Perceraian No: BA-33-92-02/2025 oleh **WONG SUI YIN (P)** Pempetisyen di atas dan **PENGURUSAN KES** ditetapkan pada **20 MEI 2025**. ADALAH DIPERITAKAN bahawa penyampaian Petisyen Perceraian bertarikh 10.02.2025 beserta kertas kausa lain kepada kamu dalam tindakan tersebut hendaklah dilaksanakan melalui penampalan sekali di papan notis Mahkamah Tinggi Shah Alam dan di premis beralamat di B-310, Sunway Sutra Condo, Jalan Tropicana Utara P1J 3, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor serta melalui pengiklanan notis sekali di akhbar tempatan "The Sun" ini, dan **BARAWA** Petisyen Perceraian tersebut adalah dianggap sebagai arahan yang sempurna ke atas kamu 7 hari selepas tarikh penyampaian akhir tersebut ini secara gantian tersebut.

Bertarikh pada 15 April, 2025.

-T-
Peguaacara Pempetisyen
Teuan Kelvin Wong, Phang & Associates

Notis Iklan ini difailkan oleh **Tuan Kevin Wong, Phang & Associates**, Peguambela & Peguamcara bagi Pempetisyen yang beralamat di Block 3-C&D, Seltowalk, Pusat Bandar Puchong, 47160 Puchong, Selangor Malaysia.
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- 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 programmes.
- Manage employee benefits programmes 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 staff training and recruitment matters.
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Requirements

- Diploma/Bachelor's degree in Human Resources Management or related field.
- Executive: 1+ years of experience in HR & Admin or related field.
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- Assist in preparation and management of maintenance budget.
- Assist in any ad-hoc operations and admin tasks assigned by Management from time to time.

Requirements

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PITLANE

Herbert calls out Horner over Max penalty

JOHNNY HERBERT has called out Christian Horner for his lack of "understanding" over Max Verstappen's penalty at the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix.

"I don't know how people will argue that it was an unfair penalty," the Former F1 star said. "The people arguing against it have probably never been in a race car, and definitely not in an F1 car, so they have zero understanding. I'll include Christian (Horner) in this, too.

"I know he's the team principal and he's trying to do what's best for Red Bull, but sometimes you have to just admit you're wrong and give the place back. Most drivers are very aware of when they should give the place back.

"It was a definite penalty, because when you go into any corner, especially a tight one like that, you've got to be on the apex near the kerb. The apex of the turn was not where Verstappen was, who was two metres out.

"Horner then came up with the picture of evidence to show who was in front in Turn One, which was a load of baloney, but to me, it was passing the buck to the FIA and the stewards.

"It's wrong, it shouldn't be like that. Red Bull had a chance to give the place back, but they chose not to."

Steiner: Verstappen, Piastri clash 'just racing'

FORMER Haas team principal Guenther Steiner believes that Max Verstappen and Oscar Piastri's incident at Turn One in Jeddah was "just racing".

"I wouldn't be okay," he replied on the Red Flags podcast when asked if the Dutchman could have picked up a 10-second time penalty. "But then they would have made a clear message.

"Because for me, in my opinion, it was racing. Obviously, there is games played here, and that's part of racing. You try to keep your position, and you play with it.

"And I think Max was in front. How he played that, it worked for him. It was like, as they said, mitigating circumstances. It was the first lap.

"But you're racing. That is what racing is about. Should he go off and brake and let the other one by? No."

SHORTS

Lowry hopes fun continues at Zurich

SHANE LOWRY kept tabs on Rory McIlroy while the latter was in pursuit of completing a career Grand Slam at the Masters.

Sure, Lowry was rooting for his good friend to become the sixth golfer to accomplish the feat, but he also had another thought in mind.

After all, would McIlroy still be interested in defending the pair's title this weekend at the Zurich Classic of New Orleans?

Lowry, in fact, told reporters yesterday that he cultured to his caddie Darren Reynolds that the golfers would be lucky to play in Louisiana.

"If things didn't go his way (at the final round of the Masters), I don't think he'd want to be here, and I thought if things did go his way, he'd want to be somewhere else," the 38-year-old Irishman said at the joint press conference. "But I'm happy he's here."

Apparently, so is McIlroy. "We're defending a title. We had so much fun last year here," the 35-year-old Northern Irishman said. "Obviously it's important for me to honour that commitment."

McIlroy has enjoyed the good life after winning the Masters. He revealed that President Donald Trump and former President Barack Obama – among many other notable people – reached out to him after he won his fifth major and first since 2014.

Can Thittikul turn consistent?

JEENO THITTIKUL'S 12th-placed finish at the Blue Bay LPGA in March looks like an awful result – but only because it is the sole time in her last 14 LPGA Tour starts that she has ended up outside the top 10.

The highlight of that excellent run was winning the CME Group Tour Championship in November for her second title of 2024 and now she is targeting a maiden major crown.

The Thai, 22, held the third-round lead at The Chevron last season before finishing 12th, while she ended up in a share of fourth spot here in 2023.

"She doesn't miss a shot. She is one of the most impressive young players I have ever seen," European Ryder Cup vice-captain Mel Reid said.

"She also has a fantastic head on her shoulders. If she is the future of the LPGA Tour, we are in good hands."

FORMER USA head coach Bruce Arena has criticised the appointment of Argentina Mauricio Pochettino to the role, saying that foreign coaches can't understand the importance of the job.

Pochettino, the former Tottenham Hotspur, Paris Saint-Germain and Chelsea manager, was appointed to the USA role in September 2024, replacing American Gregg Berhalter.

"You know if you look at every national team in the world, the coach is usually a domestic coach," Arena said during the *Unfiltered Soccer* podcast with former American internationals Landon Donovan and Tim Howard.

"And I think when you have coaches that

Rory raring to go

McIlroy ready for first start since emotional Masters triumph

RORY MCILROY said yesterday he was surprised at how his Masters victory, which ended years of heartbreak and made him only the sixth man to complete the career Grand Slam of golf's four majors, resonated with so many others.

McIlroy overcame a late collapse during the final round of the Masters 10 days ago before prevailing in a sudden-death playoff that ended his 11-year wait to join golf's most exclusive club.

Speaking ahead of this week's Zurich Classic of New Orleans where he and friend Shane Lowry are defending champions in the PGA Tour's only official team event, McIlroy spoke about the magnitude of his Masters triumph.

"The big thing for me is just how the whole journey sort of resonated with people and the people that have reached out to me. That's been absolutely amazing," McIlroy told reporters at TPC Louisiana.

"Look, it's not every day you get to fulfill one of your lifelong goals and dreams, and I've just really tried to enjoy everything that comes along with that."

Since slipping into the Green Jacket at Augusta National, the 35-

year-old Northern Irishman has been to London with his wife and daughter to see the home they are building there and then made a trip to Belfast to visit his parents.

McIlroy has also been in touch with many people eager to offer their congratulations, including several from outside the world of golf. "I spoke to two presidents the day after, which was pretty cool," said world No. 2 McIlroy. "Just people reaching out from all walks of life, whether it be sports, entertainment, culture. Just all of it."

"People that you would never even think that would watch golf or would know what's going on, that was very, very humbling, I guess."

After soaking up his career-defining Masters win, McIlroy is eager to get back to competition and feels doing so this week in a team event where "it's not all on me" is an ideal way for him to return.

McIlroy and Lowry headline the field of 80 pairings in the field as the Zurich is played as a team event for the eighth time.

While 2022 champions Xander Schauffele and Patrick Cantlay are not competing this year, other recognisable names include Collin Morikawa with Kurt Kitayama, Sahith Theegala with Englishman Aaron Rai and the Canadian duo of Nick Taylor and Adam Hadwin.

Danish twin brothers Nicolai and Rasmus Hojgaard are competing as a team, as are English brothers Matt and Alex Fitzpatrick once again.

The first and third rounds will be four-ball (best ball), while the second and final rounds will be foursomes (alternate shot). Alternate shot in particular requires both players to be on their A-game.

"I think winning as a team was honestly one of the coolest experiences you can have," Lowry said. "Any time you win – I know last year we won this tournament, and Rory obviously played great, but I knew I played my part, as well."

"So you're kind of going away thinking, 'We've both done pretty well to win this tournament.'"

As the golf season wears on, some are also thinking ahead to the Ryder Cup five months from now at Bethpage Black in New York. Englishman Luke Donald, the captain of defending champion Team Europe, will be watching how the Europeans fare in four-ball and foursomes while he teams up with Camilo Villegas of Colombia.

"It'll be interesting to see how they do. I'll certainly be keeping an eye," Donald said.

"I had a few conversations earlier in the year about potential partnerships amongst some of these Europeans that I thought might work." – Reuters/Level Field Media



Lydia Ko.
– AFP/ICC

Ko nursing pain in arm ahead of major

LYDIA KO is dealing with a tingling sensation in her right arm after waking up with a neck spasm earlier in the week.

Ko, the World's No. 3 player, discussed her situation ahead of the LPGA's first major of the season, the Chevron Championship in The Woodlands, Texas.

"I've been getting a lot of treatment on it," Ko told *Golfweek* after finishing up her nine-hole pro-am event on Wednesday. "It's better than yesterday but still doesn't feel like my normal arm."

Ko, who turned 28 yesterday, said she feels she can play through the issue.

"It was playable but I could feel it at the top of my backswing and my finish," Ko said. "My coach was like, 'Oh, you kind of finish like Mr. (Arnold) Palmer.'"

"I was like well that's good news, of all the people, I would love to be like Mr. Palmer."

A 23-time winner on the LPGA Tour and already a member of the LPGA Hall of Fame, Ko won this major in 2016 when it was played at Mission Hills in Rancho Mirage, California.

Meanwhile Lilia Vu went from

the champion's plunge into the Pecheno's Pond in front of the 18th green after winning the Chevron Championship in 2023 to wondering if she'd ever play a round of pain-free golf again.

She had to withdraw last year when painful back spasms flared up and she could barely hit a ball 40 yards on the driving range.

"I think last year, I was so much in panic with would I ever play a round of golf again, let alone a tournament round," Vu said this week.

"Took two months off, and that was probably the hardest two months of my life because I love competing."

Vu said she reevaluated her entire routine, how she practiced and trained, focused on better posture and how to recover from a round and be ready for the next one.

She steadily regained her form. She beat Lexi Thompson in a playoff last June in her first event back. She lost a playoff to Hoo Joo Kim at the Ford Championship last month.

"I would say I'm in a much better place than I was last year," she said. – Reuters

Pochettino doesn't understand role: Arena

don't know our culture, our environment, our players, it's hard.

"I'm sure our coach is a very good coach, but coaching international football is different than club football, it's a completely different job," he said.

Arena, 73, led the USA to the quarterfinals of the 2002 World Cup – their best finish in the modern era but he flopped in a second spell in 2017 when his team failed to qualify for the following year's World Cup in Russia.

The San Jose Earthquakes coach, who has

won MLS five times, suggested that Pochettino does not understand the culture of the USA national team.

"I think when you're a national team coach, you need to know your environment, you need to know the animals you coach, and we're lacking that," he said.

"If you're an American coaching the US team, you know the culture, you know the pride and how important the national team is."

"I think when you bring in somebody from the outside, they don't understand it, especially

in our country, because we're so different."

Arena, who had two spells as national team coach and was also a critic of German Jurgen Klinsmann's reign in charge of the team, said he was "shocked" at last month's losses to Panama and Canada in the Concacaf Nations League.

"I'm watching and I'm shocked. I'm shocked that we can't beat Panama and Canada. It was shocking to me," he said.

"I don't want to be disrespectful. I want them to do great in the World Cup, there's no question about it. But we only have a year left now. Time is running out, and they got to get going," he said.

The USA co-hosts the World Cup next year with Canada and Mexico. – AFP



BY SIMON PEACH

Looking for salvation

Champions League spot is City's Premier League trophy, say Nunes

MATHEUS NUNES says Champions League qualification is Manchester City's "Premier League trophy" right now, but Wednesday's match winner knows a top-five finish and FA Cup glory would not make this season a success.

Pep Guardiola's previously all-conquering side ended 2024 in a tailspin, leaving them scrambling for a return to European football's top table rather than competing for an unprecedented fifth straight league title.

But City have the chance to the season on a high, with Sunday's (11.30pm Malaysian time) FA Cup semifinal against Nottingham Forest at Wembley coming hot on the heels of Wednesday's last-gasp win against fellow Champions League contenders Aston Villa.

Nunes proved the difference deep in stoppage time, meeting a classy Jeremy Doku cross with a fine finish to secure a 2-1 victory that takes the reigning champions up to third with four matches to play.

"I mean, this is our Premier League trophy now to qualify for the Champions League," the

Portugal international said.

"I think it's massively important for us, in terms of everything, the club, in terms of the players, the mentality.

"I think we cannot describe how incredible it's going to be to be in the Champions League, because now we cannot fight for the Premier League trophy. So that's our main aim."

Nunes acknowledged City end the campaign with a "different aim" to what they started with, but their exacting standards remain the same.

Asked if Champions League qualification and FA Cup glory would represent a successful end to the season, he responded: "I mean, of course not. We know this.

"The club's standards are much higher than

this. We know that there is not the standards we want this club to be at.

"But this is our reality now and we have to accept it. And we just have to go for it like it's the Champions League, the Premier League trophy.

"Every game now is very important for us. There's no easy games now until the end of the season.

"This game was a pure example of how difficult the games can be and Nottingham this season has been specifically like doing an amazing season and we have to be ready for it."

There is a lot riding on the trip to Wembley and City's end to the campaign, but there appears little chance of Nunes getting caught up in the background noise.

The versatile 26-year-old has made 35 appearances in all competitions for Guardiola's men this season but, unlike his manager, is not obsessed with the game.

Quizzed on whether he had watched the Champions League quarterfinals thinking he wishes he was there, he responded: "No, I don't really watch football. I just don't watch football."

Nunes says he was more of a Netflix man and finds it better to switch off than constantly think about the game.

"It's just because our daily routine is just full of football," he added. "You know, it's the same as if you work in a computer and you're going home, you want to go for the computer." - The Independent

SIDENETTING

Juve out of Serie A's top four

JUVENTUS conceded their place in Serie A's Champions League positions yesterday after falling to a 1-0 defeat at Parma, one of four matches rescheduled from Monday following the death of Pope Francis. Mateo Pellegrino's thumping header on the stroke of half-time was enough for Parma to earn a precious win in their fight for top flight survival and damage Juve's Champions League hopes. Juve sit fifth after their first defeat of Igor Tudor's reign as coach, one point behind Bologna who are in the top four after beating Inter Milan on Sunday. Defeat for Juve was great news for Lazio who moved level on 59 points with the "Old Lady" of Italian football following a comfortable 2-0 win at Genoa, a match which finished with both teams down to 10 men. Eighth-placed Fiorentina are one of four teams - alongside Juve, Lazio and Roma - within four points of fourth-placed Bologna after coming from behind to win 2-1 at Cagliari.

Bilbao eye Euro entry

INAKI WILLIAMS fired Athletic Bilbao to a 1-0 home win over Las Palmas in La Liga yesterday to strengthen their chances of direct qualification for next season's Champions League. The Basque side sit fourth with five games to go, eight points clear of fifth-placed Villarreal. Bilbao also have a Europa League semifinal against Manchester United to come, and should they win that they will play the final in their home stadium. Five La Liga sides qualify for the Champions League this season. Sixth-placed Betis are a point behind Villarreal ahead of their encounter with rock-bottom Valladolid overnight. A fifth-minute goal from the elder Williams brother after he turned a defender in the box and side-footed home with the outside of his boot was enough for all three points. Bilbao needed two sharp saves from Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon before halftime as relegation-threatened Las Palmas went down fighting.

Los Blancos keep title hopes alive

ARDA GULER struck the only goal as Real Madrid won 1-0 at Getafe yesterday to claw back to within four points of La Liga leaders Barcelona.

The young Turkey international fired in from outside the area midway through the first half as Carlo Ancelotti's side stayed in title contention after Barcelona won by the same scoreline at Mallorca on Tuesday.

Arch-rivals Madrid and Barcelona will meet in the Copa del Rey final in Seville on Sunday (4am Malaysian time), with Kylian Mbappe poised to return from injury for the weekend *Clasico* - one of two remaining this season. The clubs are also due to meet in the league on May 11.

However, the win over Getafe may have come at a cost to Madrid with David Alaba and Eduardo Camavinga both forced off.

"We'll see what they have tomorrow, but I think they're both suffering from muscle soreness. It will certainly be difficult for them to be available (to play Barcelona)," said Ancelotti.

Left-back Fran Garcia twice went close for Madrid, his initial effort palmed away by David Soria before he blasted the rebound high and wide.

It wasn't long before Guler broke the deadlock



Real Madrid's Arda Guler (left) in action with Getafe's Mauro Arambarri. - REUTERS/SPIC

after Brahim Diaz looked to have wasted the chance.

Madrid worked the ball back out to Guler, whose powerful 20-yard drive flashed past Soria despite the Getafe goalkeeper getting a hand to it.

Getafe created opportunities of their own, the best of which fell in the second half to an unmarked Mauro Arambarri who dragged wide with only Thibaut Courtois to beat.

"The objective was to get the three points and we got them by playing a very good first half and a more difficult second half because Getafe pushed more and we had more difficulty controlling the ball," Ancelotti told realmadrid.com.

Looking ahead to the Copa final, the Italian said: "It's a final, and they may be favorites, but a final is a final, and anything can happen.

"In the final, you could play a 4-4-2 with six midfielders and no forwards. You have to defend well, and I'm convinced we'll defend well and have opportunities in attack." - AFP/Agencies

Inzaghi concerned over fatigue after loss to Milan

INTER MILAN coach Simone Inzaghi admitted his team is feeling the strain of a demanding season after their 3-0 defeat to AC Milan in the Coppa Italia semifinals yesterday.

With the Serie A and Champions League titles still on the line, Inzaghi said he is worried after a second straight defeat following Sunday's 1-0 league loss to Bologna, but urged his players to overcome the setbacks.

"Of course (I'm worried). We're not used to losing two in a row," Inzaghi told *SportMediaset*.

"We need to analyse both defeats the right way. We didn't deserve to lose in Bologna, and tonight we ran out of energy in the second half.

"We have to keep going. There's both physical and mental fatigue. We need to be stronger than all of that.

"This journey has brought us a lot of joy, but also

some disappointments, like tonight. We should've done better. We lacked sharpness in both boxes at key moments of the game."

The Italian manager insisted that a packed schedule is no excuse, while his team must regain confidence for the final stretch of the season and ahead of hosting AS Roma on Sunday.

"We've had a more packed schedule than others, but again, it's not an excuse," Inzaghi said. "If we didn't make it to the (Cup) final, it means we didn't do enough.

"There's one month left, and we have to keep going with confidence. Tonight, Milan deserved it, and it's only right that they're going to the final.

"We'll try to bounce back and give it our all on Sunday against Roma."

As Milan reached the final with a 4-1 aggregate win, coach Sergio Conceicao said he was confident

his team could beat bitter rivals Inter, despite a disappointing season that has them sitting ninth in Serie A, 20 points behind Inter and Napoli.

"I've had the feeling since the game against Atalanta," Conceicao said referring to Sunday's 1-0 league loss.

"The small details are important. I liked the attitude and the tightness of the team in defence and attack.

"The team has quality, but also humility and a desire to win every game."

Milan will play against Bologna or Empoli for this season's only title and their first cup since 2003.

"Our feet are on the ground, we haven't won anything yet," Conceicao added.

"We have to play a final and make a difference at the end of the league to help our image. We have more quality than what we have shown." - Reuters

RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE: Arsenal 2 (Kiwior 3, Trossard 42) Crystal Palace 2 (Eze 27, Mateta 83).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	33	24	7	2	75	31	79
Arsenal	34	18	13	3	63	29	67
Man City	34	18	7	9	66	43	61
Nottm Forest	33	18	6	9	53	39	60
Newcastle	33	18	5	10	62	44	59
Chelsea	33	16	9	8	58	40	57
Aston Villa	34	16	9	9	54	49	57
Bournemouth	33	13	10	10	52	40	49
Fulham	33	13	9	11	48	45	48
Brighton	33	12	12	9	53	53	48
Brentford	33	13	7	13	56	50	46
Crystal Palace	34	11	12	11	43	47	45
Everton	33	8	14	11	34	40	38
Man Utd	33	10	8	15	38	46	38
Wolves	33	11	5	17	48	61	38
Tottenham	33	11	4	18	61	51	37
West Ham	33	9	9	15	37	55	36
Ipswich	33	4	9	20	33	71	21
Leicester	33	4	6	23	27	73	18
Southampton	33	2	5	26	24	78	11

LA LIGA: Athletic Bilbao 1 (L. Williams 5) Las Palmas 0, Celta Vigo 3 (Lopez 45, Iglesias 53, Aspas 87-pen) Villarreal 0, Alaves 1 (Tenaglia 65) Real Sociedad 0, Getafe 0 Real Madrid 1 (Guler 21).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	33	24	4	5	89	32	76
Real Madrid	33	22	6	5	66	31	72
Athletic	32	18	9	5	53	27	63
A. Bilbao	33	16	12	5	50	26	60
Villarreal	32	14	10	8	55	45	52
Real Betis	32	14	9	9	45	40	51
Celta Vigo	33	13	7	13	50	49	46
Mallorca	33	12	8	13	31	38	44
Real Sociedad	33	12	6	15	32	37	42
Rayo Vallecano	32	10	11	11	35	39	41
Osasuna	32	9	14	9	39	46	41
Getafe	33	10	9	14	31	30	39
Espanyol	32	10	9	13	35	41	39
Valencia	33	9	12	12	37	49	39
Sevilla	32	9	10	13	35	43	37
Alaves	33	8	10	15	35	46	34
Girona	32	9	7	16	39	51	34
Las Palmas	33	8	8	17	38	53	32
Leganes	32	6	11	15	29	48	26
Valladolid	32	4	4	24	23	76	19

SERIE A: Cagliari 1 (Piccoli 7) Fiorentina 2 (Gosens 36, Beltran 48), Genoa 0 Lazio 2 (Castellanos 33, Dia 65), Parma 1 (Pellegrino 45+1) Juventus 0, Torino 2 (Adams 39, Dembele 85) Udinese 0.

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter Milan	33	21	8	4	72	32	71
Napoli	33	21	8	4	52	25	71
Atalanta	33	19	7	7	66	30	64
Bologna	33	16	13	5	52	37	60
Juventus	33	15	14	4	49	31	59
Lazio	33	17	8	8	55	43	59
Roma	33	16	9	8	48	32	57
Fiorentina	33	16	8	9	51	33	56
AC Milan	33	14	9	10	51	38	51
Torino	33	10	13	10	38	37	43

ITALIAN CUP (SEMIFINALS, 2ND LEG): Inter Milan 0 AC Milan 3 (Jovic 36, 50, Reijnders 85) - AC Milan win 4-1 on agg.

■ **RELEGATED**

Thumbs up from Jonassen

National singles coach backs Jun Hao as team captain

THE decision to appoint national men's singles shuttler Leong Jun Hao as Malaysia's team captain for the Sudirman Cup 2025 in Xiamen, China, from April 27-May 4, has earned the endorsement of singles' coaching director Kenneth Jonassen.

The Dane described the surprise move as a "clever choice" that reflects the 25-year-old's growing leadership presence on and off the court.

"He's an experienced gentleman and takes care of the responsibility. It's a natural step when you are slightly more senior than some of your colleagues, I think it is a clever choice," he said in a video posted by Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) on Facebook.

In Xiamen, the world No. 26 will shoulder the responsibility as the team captain with national top women's doubles player Pearly Tan.

Doubles coaching director Rexy Mainaky said the trust given to Jun Hao and Pearly to shoulder joint responsibility as team captains could have a positive impact on their respective leadership styles both on and off the court.

"Pearly, who used to be behind the scene, but is now quite active in providing information in the group."

"Jun Hao is also probably the first time he has become a captain and it is something good for him," he told reporters early this week.

While acknowledging that the pressure of performing on the world stage can be daunting, Jonassen also offered a word of advice for the younger and less experienced members of the team.

Jonassen urged them to cherish the moment, trust in their abilities and try to pick up few things from the experienced figures in the team.

"First of all, believe in yourself. You're chosen to be part of this team because you belong here. It's a natural step in your development," he said.

Malaysia will be strengthened by the presence of senior and experienced players namely world No. 2 Goh Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin

Rumsani, 2025 Asian Badminton Championships champions Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik and Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun (men's doubles); Goh Soon Huat-Shevon Lai Jemie and Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei (mixed doubles) as well as Pearly with M. Thinaah (women's doubles).

Other players include Justin Hoh (men's singles); K. Letshanaa (women's singles); Go Pei Kee-Carmen Ting (women's doubles); as well as Hoo Pang Ron-Cheng Su Yin (mixed doubles).

Malaysia, drawn in Group C, will open the campaign against France (April 28) followed by Australia (April 29) and third seed Japan (May 1).

Only the top two teams from each group will qualify for the quarterfinals.

Malaysia's best achievement in the Sudirman Cup is reaching the semifinals three times, namely in the 2009, 2021 and 2023 editions. - Benama

Arif Aiman pledges loyalty to JDT

DESPITE having the potential to make a name for himself abroad, sensational winger Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi remains loyal to local football giants Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT).

The 2024-2025 National Football Awards (ABK) Most Valuable Player (MVP) said he still needs to work hard to become a higher quality player to help the Southern Tigers face greater challenges in the future.

"My challenges in Malaysia or in JDT are enormous. But it's not easy for me to stay in JDT forever and I need to work harder to keep my position."

"Maybe the supporters or the media like to say there are offers from outside (clubs). But as a player, I know how difficult it is for clubs from outside to find players in Malaysia. I think I will stay at JDT forever," he said.

He said this when met after the ABK 2024-2025 ceremony in Kuala Lumpur on

Wednesday night.

Arif Aiman made history when he became the first player to be named MVP for the fourth consecutive time in ABK 2024-2025.

The success put the national player in a class of his own when he surpassed the achievements of former national striker Norshahrul Idlan Talaha who won a hattrick in the 2010 to 2012 seasons.

The 22-year-old player also dominated three other categories, namely the Best Midfielder, the Best Goal of the Malaysia League (M-League) 2024-2025 and also the Fans XI (Forward).

Arif Aiman continued to make the Malaysia League this season a stage for him to demonstrate his prowess by scoring 12 goals and 13 assists to help the Southern Tigers lift the Super League,

Charity Shield and FA Cup and advance to the Malaysia Cup final against Sri Pahang FC at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium tomorrow.

Meanwhile, he said he would give everything to help JDT perform their best when they face Sri Pahang in Bukit Jalil, thus completing the triple quadruple this season.

"The performance in the final will not only be for the supporters but for everyone including the coaches, players and my family."

"We all need to prepare for the next match (Malaysia Cup final). God willing, we will give our best," he said. - Bernama



JDT's Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi poses with the MVP award. - BERNAMAPIC

List of 2024/2025 National Football Awards (ABK) winners:

- Best Goalkeeper:** Ahmad Syihan Hazmi Mohamed (JDT)
- Best Defender:** Feroz Baharudin (JDT)
- Best Midfielder:** Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi (JDT)
- Best Forward:** Paulo Josue (Kuala Lumpur City FC)
- Best Coach:** Aidil Sharin Sahak (Kuching City FC)
- Best Foreign Player:** Bergson da Silva (JDT)
- Best Young Player:** Haqimi Azim Rosli (KLC)
- Best MFL Cup Player:** Gabriel Nistelrooy Tamin (JDT2)
- Most Valuable Player (MVP):** Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi (JDT)
- Fair Play Award:** Terengganu FC
- Best Team:** JDT
- Best Goal (Malaysia League 2024-2025):** Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi (JDT)
- MFL Cup Golden Boot:** Gabriel Nistelrooy Tamin (JDT2) - 24 Goals
- Super League Golden Boot:** Bergson da Silva (JDT) - 32 Goals
- Super League Golden Boot (Local):** Paulo Josue (Kuala Lumpur City FC) - 17 Goals
- Best Supporters:** Boys of Straits (JDT)

Malaysia gears up for World Corporate Golf Challenge

OFFERING corporate Malaysia a unique platform to strengthen its internal and external relationships through golf, the prestigious World Corporate Golf Challenge (WCGC) Malaysia 2025 was officially launched on Wednesday in a grand ceremony at the Glenmarie Hotel & Golf Resort Ballroom in Shah Alam, Selangor.

Graced by the presence of the Raja Muda of Selangor and Royal Patron of WCGC Malaysia Tengku Amir Shah, the launch sets the stage for an exciting series where business and sport converge on the greens.

The WCGC Malaysia 2025 will feature four

preliminary legs played at four of the Klang Valley's top golf courses from May to August, culminating at the national final at Kota Permai Golf & Country Club on Sept 25, 2025.

The champions of the national final will represent Malaysia and their companies at the WCGC World Final in Shanghai, China, from October 19-23, 2025, in an environment that fosters sporting talent and, above all, international networking.

"Selangor, with its world-class golf courses, strategic location, and vibrant economy, is the perfect backdrop to welcome corporate leaders from across the nation and around the world,"

WCGC Malaysia advisor Haji Mohd Salim Mohamed Sain said.

"Through this event, we aim to promote tourism, showcase our hospitality, and reinforce Malaysia's status as a destination for high-level business and sporting events in the near future."

Adding to the celebratory mood at the launch event was a proud acknowledgment of Team Malaysia's remarkable third-place finish at the WCGC World Finals in Haikou, China, last year.

The team comprising Lee Robert, Anushka Gayan, Ang Khai Phang, and Kong Tuck Keat were applauded for their outstanding

performance, continuing Malaysia's strong showing on the global stage.

WCGC MALAYSIA 2025 SCHEDULE

- May 22, 2025** Seri Selangor Golf Club: **RM495** per person
- Jun 24, 2025** Tropicana Golf & Country Resort: **RM595pp**
- Jul 22, 2025** Glenmarie Golf & Country Club: **RM595pp**
- Aug 21, 2025** Templer Park Country Club: **RM495pp**
- Sept 25, 2025** Kota Permai Golf & Country Club: **National Final (by-invitation).**



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SCAN ME

Lethargic Gunners

Arsenal's Bukayo Saka (right) shoots at goal during his team's match against Crystal Palace. - REUTERS/PIC

Arsenal lacked 'energy' in Palace draw, says Arteta as PSG loom large

MIKEL ARTETA admitted Arsenal have to get their "energy" back for the Champions League showdown with Paris Saint-Germain after a lacklustre 2-2 draw against Crystal Palace left Liverpool on the brink of winning the Premier League.

Arteta's side were hoping to warm up for their first Champions League semifinal appearance since 2009 with a victory over Palace at the Emirates Stadium on Wednesday (3am Malaysian time).

But Jakub Kiwior's third-minute header for the Gunners was cancelled out by Eberechi Eze's volley in the 27th minute.

Leandro Trossard's strike put Arsenal back in front three minutes before half-time, only for Palace substitute Jean-Philippe Mateta to loft a brilliant lob over out of position keeper David Raya in the 83rd minute.

Second-placed Arsenal are 12 points adrift of Liverpool, and with only four matches left for the north Londoners, Arne Slot's team will seal the title if they avoid defeat against Tottenham at Anfield on Sunday.

Their title hopes effectively over several weeks ago, Arsenal were already focused on winning the Champions League for the first time.

But the sloppy display against Palace was hardly ideal preparation for the showdown with French champions PSG, who have eliminated Liverpool and Aston Villa en route to the last four.

"I am disappointed with the result and the performance. We did not have the consistency to dominate the game.

"Yes, we were ahead twice, but we didn't grab the game and control it in the way we would normally do because we were below the standards.

"Hopefully the PSG match was not in their minds. We discussed that before (the 4-0 victory at Ipswich, and it wasn't there. We still have six days to prepare for that match.

"We missed some players, and a lot of players that have not trained, were not able to do so today so we were very short.

"We haven't been able to see the games off for many reasons. It's something that we have done much better in the past.

"You have to win a certain amount of games (to win the League). We have only lost

three games - two of them with 10 men - but we have to win many more."

Adding to Arteta's concerns is an injury to Mikel Merino that gave the Spaniard out of the Palace game and could sideline him against PSG.

Merino is a midfielder by trade but has been operating as an effective makeshift striker after Arsenal were hit by injuries to Kai Havertz and Gabriel Jesus.

"We will have to wait and see as they were not able to be in the squad here," said when asked if Merino and defender Ben White would be fit to face PSG.

It was Arsenal's ninth League draw in a match they were leading this season, the most by a team in a single campaign since Tottenham in 2007-08.

The Gunners repeated failure to kill off opponents has resulted in 13 draws from 34 League games, helping put Liverpool within touching distance of a record-equaling 20th English title.

Likely to finish as Premier League runners-up for a third successive season, Arteta's team hope to end their five-year trophy drought in memorable style in the Champions League.

Arteta insisted they were not distracted by the chance to reach the final for the first time since 2006. But he conceded it would be useful for his injury-hit squad to have almost a week off before facing Luis Enrique's men.

"It is nice to have long gap, we need it and we need players back to full strength. We have the most important game of the season in six days. We need to get our energy back."

Crystal Palace will now look ahead to their FA Cup semifinal against Aston Villa on Sunday (12.15am Malaysian time).

"It was an excellent performance," said Palace manager Oliver Glasner. "When you have conceded 10 goals in the last two away games, and go one down very early on, it is a difficult situation.

"But we didn't lose our heads, and we created so many chances. I am very proud of the players and how they performed." - AFP/ The Independent

