



Without **fear or favour**

Retiring Chief Justice Tun Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat says responsibilities of judiciary carried out based on law, facts and judicially established principles, regardless of political overtones.

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Tengku Maimun arriving yesterday for the Opening of the Legal Year 2025 event at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre, accompanied by Court of Appeal President Tan Sri Abang Iskandar Abang Hashim (left) and Chief Judge of Sabah and Sarawak Tan Sri Abdul Rahman Sebli. - BERNAMAPIC

Call to lower permissible blood alcohol concentration in drink-driving cases

Expert advocates law to be aligned with WHO recommended standard of 0.05% instead of current 0.08%.

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Keep parks open until midnight to encourage exercise, says specialist

Individuals working irregular hours currently deprived of free facilities to engage in health promoting activities.

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Judiciary made **correct** decisions, says chief justice

► 'Actions guided by no considerations other than law and facts of case within bounds of judicially established principles'

PUTRAJAYA: Chief Justice Tun Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat said she firmly believes that the judiciary under her leadership has made the correct decisions based on the law and facts, regardless of the heated political overtones and undertones that clothed some of the cases before the court.

"This alone should dispel any baseless notion that I have ever been partial to any particular prime minister or any political party," she said in her final speech as chief justice at the Opening of the Legal Year 2025 event yesterday.

Tengku Maimun said her six-year tenure saw four different prime ministers from different political affiliations - Tun Dr Mahathir

Mohamad, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

She said she had carried the burden, image and overall responsibilities of the judiciary for almost six years, adding that she does not envy the next person who would take over from her.

Tengku Maimun will go on mandatory retirement upon turning 66 in July this year. However, she can remain in office for another six months if the Yang-di-Pertuan Agong grants an extension of her tenure, Bernama reported.

She said following her appointment as the first female chief justice of Malaysia, she was determined to fulfil her oath of office in ensuring

the Federal Constitution reigns supreme.

Tengku Maimun said she was guided by no considerations other than the law and the facts of the case within the bounds of judicially established principles.

"I am here to do my job. I never coveted it, but by the Grace of Allah SWT, I was entrusted to lead the judiciary. It is an extremely intimidating position to hold, but upon accepting the appointment, I am fully committed to doing it properly.

"I will not bend or bow to any person no matter how high and mighty, to do what he or she demands of me."

Tengku Maimun said she is looking forward to retirement, believing that she would get to leave the judiciary in a better place than when she and her colleagues had led it.

She said she would also relish the chance to spend more time with her grandchildren and deepen her connection to her faith.

PM sends condolences over China earthquake

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has conveyed his condolences to those affected by the devastating earthquake that struck China's Xizang Autonomous Region.

In a statement shared on Facebook, he expressed Malaysia's solidarity with the government and people of China following the disaster.

"Our thoughts are with the victims, their families and the communities grappling with loss and destruction.

"May they find the strength, courage and support needed to endure and recover during this difficult time."

He also extended Malaysia's support to Nepal, where tremors were also strongly felt, as both nations face the challenges of rebuilding and healing in the aftermath of the calamity.

According to media reports, at least 126 people were killed after the earthquake, with magnitude 7.1, hit Tibet in southern China, near the Nepalese border on Tuesday.

The tremors were also felt in several parts of India, including Bihar, Assam and West Bengal. - Bernama

Review of strategies to tackle online scams

KUALA LUMPUR: The government will review strategies to deal with the issue of online fraud and implement more effective measures, said Communications Deputy Minister Teo Nie Ching.

She said through the national anti-fraud portal and the cooperation of all stakeholders, the government would continue to take decisive action to combat scams.

"Measures such as the shift from SMS (short message service)-based OTP (one-time password), tightening of authentication rules and the establishment of a special line to report financial fraud have yielded positive results.

"However, there is still much more to be done," she said in a post on her Facebook page.

Teo said the issue of online fraud, which is becoming more prevalent, was discussed during her meeting with Finance Deputy Minister Lim Hui Ying on Tuesday. The meeting was also attended by representatives from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission and Bank Negara Malaysia. - Bernama

New monthly tax deduction system

PUTRAJAYA: A new monthly tax deduction system, the e-PCB Plus, will be introduced under one platform through the MyTax portal to replace the existing systems, namely e-PCB, e-Data PCB and eCP39.

The Inland Revenue Board (IRB) said in a statement that this is in line with the implementation of the transition plan towards the e-PCB Plus Phase 1 system on Sept 24 last year.

"Employers are requested to complete the submission of all data and PCB payments for the current month deductions or past year deductions on or before Jan 15."

It said the existing system would only be opened for display purposes to enable employers to review previous information or records.

"Other functions such as charging, calculation and payment will be completely closed. The full implementation of the e-PCB Plus system will be announced before it is officially opened for use by all employers and users."

IRB urged employers who are currently using the e-PCB, e-Data PCB and e-CP39 systems and have not yet registered under the e-PCB Plus system to do so immediately to ensure a smooth transition process. - Bernama



HELPING HAND ... Yayasan Keluarga Malaysia chairman Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob presenting aid to members of a Kampung Bechah Palas family in Pasir Mas, Kelantan yesterday under the 'Program Ziarah Kasih' run by the foundation. - **BERNAMAPIC**

New cybercrime Bill to be tabled in October

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Cyber Security Agency (Nacsa) is in the process of drafting a new cybercrime Bill, that is expected to be tabled during the Third Meeting of the Fourth Session of the 15th Parliament in October, said its CEO Dr Megat Zuhairy Megat Tajuddin.

He said the proposed Bill aims to replace the Computer Crimes Act 1997, which is now considered outdated and less relevant in addressing modern cyber threats.

"A few weeks ago, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim expressed support for the drafting of the new Bill in a post on his Facebook page after chairing the second National Cyber Security Committee meeting for 2024.

"We actually wanted to revise the Computer Crimes Act 1997 but I think it is more relevant if we have a new Act," he told Bernama after participating in a dialogue session titled "Regulating for Resilience: Cybersecurity and Critical Infrastructure Protection" at the

International Regulatory Conference 2025 on Tuesday.

Megat Zuhairy said the new Bill is a key requirement for Malaysia to join the Budapest Convention and the United Nations Convention Against Cybercrime in June, both of which are essential to demonstrate the country's commitment to combating cybercrime domestically and internationally.

In a separate dialogue session at the conference, Megat Zuhairy called for urgent action to address the critical shortage of cyber security professionals, highlighting Anwar's target of achieving 25,000 cybersecurity experts by the end of the year.

He stressed the importance of retaining local talent to meet this ambitious goal.

"The industry should offer higher salaries to Malaysians and not let them go to Singapore or Dubai.

"With a shortage of talent, we are

jeopardising national security in a broader perspective. We need 10,000 talents this year and if the universities manage to produce 3,000 now, half of them would go to other countries like Singapore, Qatar and Dubai, that offer a lot more (salary). We have to take a very drastic approach to get more talents."

He also advocated workplace flexibility to encourage more women to enter and remain in the cybersecurity workforce.

The dialogue session was moderated by Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) chief technical and monitoring officer Che Juhana Che Mat.

The two-day conference hosted by MCMC enables industry leaders, policy makers and global experts from Asean, Australia, United States and Saudi Arabia to hold discussions to strike a balance between innovation and consumer protection while fostering trust and global cooperation. - Bernama

Call to lower allowed alcohol limit for motorists

➤ Expert advocates aligning law with WHO standards to reduce road crashes and fatalities

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia Faculty of Engineering Technology senior lecturer Dr Nurul Hafeezah Sahak has urged authorities to lower Malaysia's legal blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit from 0.08% to align with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommended standard of 0.05%.

She explained that the current limit can still impair a motorist's concentration, perception, speed control and short-term memory, contributing to road crashes.

"This figure exceeds WHO's recommendation, which has been shown to reduce road crashes causing death or injury by 18%, demonstrating the potential for significant improvement in drink driving incidents," she said, adding that an intoxicated driver is 13 times more likely to cause a crash than a sober one.

A National Health and Morbidity Survey revealed a decline in alcohol consumption among Malaysians aged 18 and above, dropping from 12.8% in 2011 to 7% in 2022.

However, Kuala Lumpur recorded a significantly higher rate of 12.1%.

"What is alarming is the survey's findings that over half of the drinkers obtained alcohol

from family members, 65% had their first drink before the age of 14 and 86% have peers who consume alcohol," Nurul Hafeezah added.

She highlighted the financial and human costs of road traffic fatalities, estimating an average cost of RM1.2 million per fatality, RM120,000 for severe injuries and RM12,000 for minor ones, factoring in lost productivity and victim compensation.

"Beyond the financial toll, the human cost is immeasurable, with lives lost and families devastated," she said.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail reported that between January 2021 and September 2024, 149 drink-driving cases involving road crashes were prosecuted under Section 44 of the Road Transport Act 1987.

Convictions for fatal drink-driving incidents carry severe penalties, including 10 to 15 years imprisonment and fines of RM50,000 to RM100,000.

For cases involving injury, offenders face seven to 10 years imprisonment and fines of between RM30,000 and RM50,000.

Nurul Hafeezah recommended adopting effective models such as South Korea's chauffeur services, which have significantly reduced traffic fatalities by providing safe transport for intoxicated motorists.

She also advocated the installation of driver-monitoring technologies such as alcohol ignition interlocks, which measure alcohol levels in the driver's breath and prevent the vehicle from starting if intoxication is detected.

Nurul Hafeezah proposed adopting stricter penalties akin to those in Canada, where life imprisonment is enforced, or those adopted in the UK, which imposes up to 14

years' imprisonment with an unlimited fine, and penalties in Taiwan, where the death penalty is permitted for fatal drink-driving cases.

She pointed out that while e-hailing services provide alternatives for drinkers, designated driver programmes remain limited, with challenges such as cultural norms, high costs and availability in rural areas hindering broader adoption.

"Public awareness campaigns play a critical role in reducing drink-driving incidents. In Western countries, large-scale 'Don't Drink and Drive' campaigns are conducted via radio, television, billboards and school programmes, but such initiatives are rare in Malaysia," she said.

Malaysian Institute of Road Safety Research chairman Prof Dr Wong Shaw Voon stressed that drink driving remains a leading cause of preventable road crashes, with often tragic consequences for drivers, passengers and bystanders.

He highlighted the importance of addressing drink driving to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), particularly SDG 3.6, which aims to halve road crash fatalities, and SDG 11.2, which promotes safe transport systems by 2030.

"Drinking is a personal choice, but it comes with responsibility. Choosing never to drink and drive is a simple decision that can save countless lives," Wong said.

He also called for stricter penalties, 24/7 road surveillance to deter offenders and collaboration between the beverage industry, local authorities and establishments serving alcohol to encourage responsible drinking practices.

Economic zone shows dedication to regional ties

KUALA LUMPUR: The Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) serves as a testament to Malaysia's dedication to regional integration, especially as the country assumes the Asean chairmanship this year, said Transport Minister Anthony Loke.

Speaking at the CGS International Securities Malaysia Sdn Bhd 17th Annual Malaysia Corporate Day on Tuesday, Loke highlighted that Malaysia's 2025 Asean chairmanship theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability" underscores the nation's commitment to strengthening regional ties.

"Asean's collective gross domestic product is projected to surpass US\$6 trillion (RM26.9 trillion) by 2030, and Malaysia is determined to play a leading role in this growth story," he said.

"Projects such as the JS-SEZ exemplify our commitment to regional integration. By fostering innovation and attracting investment, JS-SEZ is set to become a beacon of economic collaboration."

Loke also pointed to initiatives such as the Asean Highway Network and Trans-Asean Gas Pipeline as further evidence of Malaysia's dedication to enhancing regional connectivity and energy security.

"I think one advantage we have in this region is that we have good neighbours around us," he added.

"There are not many parts of the world where people can live harmoniously and peacefully. Although we may be competing, we are always looking for ways to collaborate and work together."

Quoting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong from their joint press conference earlier that day, Loke added that competition is no longer between Asean countries but with the rest of the world.

"We must strengthen ourselves regionally and bolster our position within Asean while increasing business within the region. This is a major growth area and Malaysia is well-positioned to lead this effort, especially as we have just assumed the Asean chairmanship this year," he said.

Loke expressed confidence in the government's ability to elevate the nation's profile and play a leadership role in enhancing regional cooperation and collaboration.

During a fireside chat session at the same event, Loke emphasised that logistics is a key pillar of JS-SEZ, aimed at attracting investment and encouraging the relocation of logistics operations from Singapore to Johor.

"Singapore still holds certain advantages with its airports, ports and trading infrastructure. However, I believe many back-end operations can be relocated to Johor. It makes more sense to have bigger warehouses in Johor," he said. — Bernama

Special tariff for public transport operators

KUALA LUMPUR: The Transport Ministry is proposing a special electricity tariff for the public transport sector to help ease the financial burden on operators.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke explained that current electricity charges for public transport operators are the same as those for businesses, making it financially challenging for the sector to operate sustainably.

"One of the key issues we are addressing at the ministry is advocating a special electricity rate for public transport."

"We are considering a special tariff for operators, both public and private, to encourage the growth of public transport," Loke said.

He emphasised that the current charges are prohibitive and that the proposed special tariff could significantly reduce the financial strain on operators. — Bernama



Nurul Hafeezah said the current limit of 0.08% can still impair concentration, perception, speed control and short-term memory.
— SYED AZAHAR SYED OSMAN / THE SUN

Online systems to streamline criminal case management

PUTRAJAYA: The Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) has introduced two innovative online systems, Modul Daftar Kertas Siasatan (e-Defatir) and Modul e-Representasi (e-Rep) as part of the government's digital transformation initiative.

Attorney-General Datuk Mohd Dusuki Mokhtar explained that the paperless systems aim to improve efficiency in managing criminal cases by enabling seamless tracking from investigation to verdict.

The systems are equipped with automated alerts to prevent procedural delays.

"These systems include alert features that

notify us via email when the time allocated for specific actions is about to lapse or expire.

"They significantly reduce the time and resources required to manage large volumes of criminal cases, allowing prosecutors to focus on substantive aspects of their work," Mohd Dusuki said in his first speech as attorney-general at the opening of the Legal Year 2025 event held at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre yesterday.

Regarding e-Defatir, Mohd Dusuki said as of early December 2024, the system had recorded 455,170 investigation papers and was being used by 10 states, 161 agencies

and 391 deputy public prosecutors.

Plans are underway to expand its use nationwide by the end of the year.

"Meanwhile, e-Rep will replace the manual process for handling representations submitted by lawyers.

"They will receive automatic email notifications and the status of representations can be checked online," he said.

Additionally, the AGC has initiated the Case Decision Reporting system, which allows reports of lower court decisions to be accessed from any device or location. — Bernama



'Open public parks until late to promote healthy lifestyle'

➤ Move would allow those with demanding work schedules to exercise and engage in stress-reducing activities, says specialist

BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: According to a research paper titled "The Growing Threat of Non-Communicable Diseases in Malaysia," the probability of dying from non-communicable diseases is expected to rise to 19.4% this year and 20% by 2030.

The paper, co-authored by Shubash Shander Ganapathy, Chan Yee Mang, Nur Hamizah Nasaruddin, Nazirah Alias, Khaw Wan Fei, Lee Ann Tan and Tham Sin Wan, said the rise is driven by increases in cancer and diabetes deaths, and the high and sustained figures expected in cardiovascular deaths.

Considering this, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia public health medicine specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh has called for public parks to remain open until late at night to cater to the needs of working Malaysians, and address rising health issues caused by lack of exercise.

"Access to public parks for activities such as exercise can reduce stress and lower the risk of heart disease by 33%. It can also decrease the risk of dementia by 30% to 40%.

"For those with demanding work schedules, extending the hours for public parks would provide much-needed opportunities for exercise and relaxation, contributing to better mental and physical health."

Sharifa Ezat said given the high prevalence of non-communicable



Sharifa Ezat said while affluent groups can afford private facilities, those in middle and lower income brackets rely on public parks as an accessible and free option for exercise. - ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

diseases in Malaysia, public parks should be open until at least midnight, and equipped with clean and safe amenities such as toilets and lighting to encourage use.

"While higher-income groups can afford gym memberships or private recreational facilities, those in middle and lower-income brackets, and others with health conditions often rely on public parks as an accessible and free option for exercise.

"Unfortunately, urban development has led to fewer public parks, forcing many Malaysians to travel long distances for recreational spaces."

She said to maintain cleanliness and safety, it is reasonable to introduce nominal fees for park usage or seek corporate sponsorship, with many developed countries having successfully implemented similar models.

Sharifa Ezat also called for improved safety measures such as

CCTV surveillance, adequate lighting, and enforcement to prevent the misuse of parks for illicit activities.

She emphasised that parks in urban and semi-urban areas are particularly suited for extended hours as such spaces are essential for public health, but they must be kept safe and well-maintained.

"It may be costly for the government to manage public parks, but investing in them is akin to investing in people's health.

"Public parks are more than just green spaces. They are vital to our collective health, and by extending their hours, we can foster healthier, happier communities."

Nurse Nor Hidayah Abdul Shamsul, 28, who works shifts, said she only has time to relax or exercise at night.

"Parks are perfect for me because they're free and offer fresh air, but most are already closed by the time I get there.

"Stress management is crucial for nurses, and a simple walk or jog in the park helps clear the mind after a long shift. But with the limited hours, I miss out on this simple method to unwind and stay healthy."

Factory supervisor Farhan Malik, 42, said he works long hours and does not have the energy to work out early in the morning.

"Late-night walks in the park are my only way to stay active.

"I'm at an age when staying physically active is crucial. But between work and family commitments, I can only spare time for exercise late in the evening, but the parks are closed by then."

He added that public parks could play a vital role in encouraging fitness for those in his situation as not everyone can afford gym memberships or private facilities.

"If parks were open longer and equipped with good facilities, many working Malaysians, including myself, would benefit greatly."

RM11m allocated for entrepreneur training initiative

PUTRAJAYA: An allocation of RM11 million has been set aside for the implementation of the Urban Community Economic Empowerment Programme 2025, which is expected to benefit 1,060 participants from the B40 group in urban areas.

Housing and Local Government Deputy Minister Datuk Aiman Athirah Sabu said to ensure the success of the programme, a total of 29 NGOs have been entrusted with the responsibility of training the participants to ensure they receive high-quality entrepreneurship training, enabling them to run their own businesses.

"More than 90 NGOs applied, but only 29 were approved and allocated funding.

"The funded NGOs must ensure that within six months, the training provided to the participants will help increase their income to at least RM750, which is above the RM747 poverty line," she said after the presentation of approval letters for the implementation of the programme yesterday.

Previously known as the Azam Bandar Programme, it is an annual initiative by the Housing and Local Government Ministry that was introduced in 2013, in which participants undergo a week-long entrepreneurship skills and knowledge course, and are provided with necessary equipment and tools to start or expand their chosen business.

To date, a total of RM174 million has been allocated for the programme to train 16,955 entrepreneurs nationwide.

Aiman Athirah said each NGO will be monitored throughout the programme.

She also reminded NGOs not to violate the ministry's regulations and not to repeat mistakes made by other NGOs during the previous programme. - Bernama

Two universities get new vice-chancellors

PUTRAJAYA: The Higher Education Ministry has announced the appointment of Prof Dr Mohd Shafry Mohd Rahim and Prof Dr Yatimah Alias as the new vice-chancellor of Universiti Teknologi Malaysia and Universiti Malaysia Pahang Al-Sultan Abdullah respectively.

In a statement, the ministry said Mohd Shafry's appointment is for two years effective today, while Yatimah's appointment, also for two years, takes effect on Jan 13.

"The ministry is confident that their appointments will empower academic development and research based on the latest technology, and produce globally minded graduates who are industry-ready, competitive, creative and innovative and have a high sense of identity," read the statement.

They received their appointment letters from the Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir at his office on Tuesday. - Bernama

Call for import ban on gold-wrapped products

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysia Gold Association (MGA) has called for the immediate cessation and ban on the import, fabrication and sale of "gold-wrapped silver" and similar gold-wrapped products.

In a statement, MGA said the influx of such products into the country could have a significant impact on the integrity of the country's precious metals market, causing price confusion and affecting real gold demand and the overall dynamics of precious metals.

It added that the products

resemble genuine gold jewellery due to the thickness of the gold coating, making it difficult for purchasers to distinguish them from real gold without professional assessment.

"This misperception creates the risk of financial loss, as buyers may unknowingly purchase these deceptive products under the false belief they are acquiring authentic gold," the association said.

MGA president Datuk Louis Ng urged industry players, manufacturers, importers, retailers, distributors and particularly

enforcement agencies, to formally categorise gold-wrapped silver and similar gold-wrapped products (with non-gold inner cores) as fake gold and prohibited items.

"We hope Malaysian enforcement authorities, including the Customs Department and the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry, will impose stricter regulations to prohibit the sale, trade and exchange of these deceptive products, including on e-commerce platforms," he said.

Ng emphasised that rigorous monitoring and enforcement

are required to safeguard consumer rights.

MGA said after careful consideration and discussions with key industry players, including manufacturers, retailers, pawnbrokers and other stakeholders, it was unanimously decided to reject such products, and fully comply with measures to halt their production, import and sale.

"This commitment ensures manufacturers will not fabricate these products, and retailers will not sell them in Malaysia," it added. - Bernama

'Rising macaque numbers require humane solution'

➤ Use of poison to address issue causes animals harm and poses risks to non-targeted species: Academic

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: A more humane approach than poisoning is needed to manage the growing macaque population in urban areas, said Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Faculty of Science and Marine Environment Assoc Prof Dr Chong Ju Lian.

Commenting on a widely spread video in which a man is seen throwing poisoned ice cream at a troop of macaques after calling them pests that invade homes, she said such action is inhumane, particularly when dealing with human-animal conflicts.

The roughly one-minute video has raised questions online about how to control wildlife that encroach on urban areas.

Chong, who is also Malaysian Nature Society honorary secretary, said poisoning macaques causes them harm and poses risks to non-targeted species.

Killing, poisoning or torturing wild animals is a criminal act under the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010, and violators could face a maximum fine of RM1 million and up to 15 years' jail upon conviction.

"Leaving out poisoned bait could harm the ecosystem. There have been cases in which people accidentally consumed food laced

with rat poison that was meant for wild animals. Poison should never be the solution. It is a painful way for animals to die and anyone resorting to using it to control wildlife numbers shows a lack of compassion."

Universiti Putra Malaysia Wildlife Management senior lecturer Dr Tengku Rinalfi Putra Tengku Azizan said the growing urban macaque population is caused by various factors, with habitat loss being a significant contributor.

"Over the past 70 years, human encroachment has steadily reduced macaque habitats, forcing them to adapt to urban environments. The rise in the macaque population is a result of human activity and their adaptability to urban settings."

He said human behaviour, such as poor food waste disposal and an abundance of leftovers in public spaces, have attracted macaques and worsened the issue.

"As opportunistic feeders, macaques have adapted by relying on human food sources, allowing them to not only survive but thrive despite the challenges. This contributes to escalating conflicts between them and humans."

Chong said a multidisciplinary approach to wildlife control is essential, with stakeholders working together to address

the problem.

"Authorities and NGOs could raise awareness to reduce human-wildlife conflicts and promote peaceful coexistence. This includes not feeding macaques and improving waste management with secure bins."

She urged the public not to take matters into their own hands when faced with human-wildlife conflicts but to contact the authorities.

"The public should report any cruelty towards animals to the Wildlife and National Parks Department, which manages human-wildlife issues through trapping, translocation and contraception."

Malaysian Animal Welfare Association (Mawa) president Mukunnun Sugumaran expressed shock and concern over the poisoning of macaques.

"It was hard to watch the video. When the man threw the food at them, the macaques were excited but unaware that the food would eventually kill them. It is heartbreaking," he said, adding that the culprit, who is an online vendor, used the video to promote a pesticide product.

He said the biggest concern is that the incident could encourage others to misuse poisons to target macaques, other wildlife or even a neighbour's pet that one may not like.

Mawa has lodged a police report against the online vendor and an investigation is underway.

theSun reached out to the department for comment but did not receive a response.



Chong urged the public not to act on their own when faced with human-wildlife conflicts but to contact the authorities. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

Two trailers, 35 tonnes of rice and 14 cattle seized

KOTA BHARU: The General Operations Force here has seized two trailers, 35 tonnes of rice and 14 cattle, estimated to be worth over RM800,000, in two incidents in Pasir Mas and Tanah Merah in Kelantan.

Southeast Brigade commander Datuk Nik Ros Azhan Nik Ab Hamid said in the first incident, his team and a patrol car unit from the Pasir Mas district police headquarters detained a suspicious looking trailer at 9.30am at an illegal jetty in Lubok Gong, Pasir Mas on Tuesday.

"An inspection of the trailer's rear section

uncovered 35,290kg of rice worth RM141,160, suspected to have been smuggled from Thailand.

"A 32-year-old male driver, who failed to produce documents related to the cargo, was detained. Further investigation suggests that the rice was brought in from a neighbouring country through unauthorised routes."

He said the suspect and seized items, comprising the rice and the trailer, valued at about RM560,000, have been handed to the Kelantan Agriculture and Food Security Ministry Padi and Rice Regulatory Division for

further action.

In a separate incident at 3.30pm on Tuesday, a team from the 9th Battalion detained a trailer carrying 14 cattle worth RM136,500 at a roadblock in Lalang Pepuyu.

A 26-year-old male driver presented documents for the cattle but the ear tags on the animals did not match the livestock transfer permit provided.

"The seized items are valued at RM321,500 and have been taken to Taman Bakti Komtak for further action by the Veterinary Department," said Nik Ros Azhan. — Bernama

Ruling on appeal in forgery case delayed

KUALA LUMPUR: The decision on a final appeal by former Sabah Infrastructure Development minister Datuk Peter Anthony, 53, who was convicted of falsifying documents related to a maintenance and service contract at Universiti Malaysia Sabah, has been postponed to Feb 7.

His lawyer Datuk Nicholas E.C. Kow said the date was given by the Court of Appeal deputy registrar through a letter dated Jan 7.

DPP Datuk Wan Shahrudin Wan Ladin confirmed the matter, Bernama reported.

On April 19 last year, Anthony filed an appeal to overturn his conviction, three-year prison sentence and RM50,000 fine, in default of 15 months' jail, imposed by the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court on May 26, 2022.

A previous appeal was dismissed by the High Court on April 18 last year, making this his final appeal at the appellate court.

In his capacity as Asli Jati Sdn Bhd managing director, Anthony is accused of falsifying a letter from the university deputy vice-chancellor's office dated June 9, 2014 by inserting a false statement with the intent to deceive.

He allegedly committed the offence at the Office of the Chief Private Secretary to the Prime Minister at the Perdana Putra Building in Putrajaya between June 13 and Aug 21, 2014.

The charge, under Section 468 of the Penal Code, provides up to seven years' imprisonment and a fine.

Man dies, wife injured in highway crash

ALOR SETAR: A man died while his wife was injured after they were involved in a collision at Km37.5 near the Hutan Kampung toll plaza on the North-South Expressway on Tuesday.

Jitra Fire and Rescue station chief senior assistant fire superintendent Mohd Bustan Karudin said: "The crash involved a trailer and two cars. The driver of one car was in his 50s and died at the scene while his wife, who is also in her 50s, was slightly injured.

"The driver of the other car with two female passengers, all in their 20s, and the trailer driver were unhurt."

Meanwhile in Kuantan, police have identified the driver and his attendant who were killed after their lorry plunged into a ravine at Km42.1 of the Kuala Lumpur-Karak Expressway on Tuesday.

Bentong police chief Supt Zaiham Mohd Kahar said the driver was identified as Norazat Mokhtar, 39, while the attendant was Shamsol Yaakob, 40.

He said the crash occurred when the lorry was on its way from Bukit Kemuning in Klang to Kuantan. — Bernama

Vehicle inspection officers suspended over suspected graft

SHAH ALAM: Six vehicle inspection officers from the Computerised Vehicle Inspection Centre, who are suspected of being involved in a syndicate approving heavy vehicle inspections, have been suspended with immediate effect.

Its CEO Mahmood Razak Bahman said the organisation takes the matter seriously and will not tolerate misconduct.

"If evidence of wrongdoing is found, we will not hesitate to take strict action against staff involved in such activities."

Earlier, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) chief commissioner Tan Sri Azam Baki confirmed the arrest of eight individuals, including the six officers, for suspected involvement in the syndicate.

The officers were released on MACC bail after their statements were recorded while two runners appointed by the officers were remanded until Saturday. — Bernama



A 'Boria' group performing during the launch ceremony. — BERNAMAPIC

Next edition of Pesta Pulau Pinang to be held at new location

GEORGE TOWN: The iconic Pesta Pulau Pinang this year at the Tapak Pesta Sungai Nibong is expected to be the final edition at the site, with subsequent editions held at a new venue.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow said the move was necessitated due to part of the festival site being involved in the development of the Mutiara Light Rail Transit (LRT) Line.

"The 2025 edition will likely mark the last celebration at this historic venue, as part of the Tapak Pesta Sungai Nibong is being incorporated into the Mutiara LRT Line project," Chow said.

"While this signifies progress towards a more developed and efficient Penang, the spirit and

purpose of Pesta Pulau Pinang will remain unchanged. Although the location will change, the essence of the festival as a celebration for Penangites will never fade," he said at the festival launch ceremony on Tuesday night.

The festival was officially launched by Governor Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak and attended by Deputy Chief Minister I Datuk Dr Mohamad Abdul Hamid and State Secretary Datuk Zulkifli Long.

Chow emphasised that Pesta Pulau Pinang is not just about its location, but also embodies the spirit of Penang's society — one that values family, culture, unity and innovation.

Since its inception in 1966, the

festival has evolved into an annual tourism highlight, becoming a source of pride for Penangites. It has grown to attract not only locals but also a diverse range of domestic and international visitors.

In addition, Chow shared that the state government has allocated RM4.5 million for the operation of Pesta Pulau Pinang 2024/2025. The allocation covers the costs of operations, infrastructure maintenance, repairs and various improvements to enhance the experience.

The ongoing festival, themed "Nostalgia Pesta", will run for 44 days and conclude on Feb 2, with an anticipated turnout of 500,000 visitors. — Bernama

'Target of 35m arrivals achievable'

► Visit Malaysia campaign to focus on attracting tourists from China, India, the Middle East and Asean

SELANG: Tourism Malaysia is confident the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM 2026) campaign will attract more than 35 million tourists next year, driving a significant boost to the sector.

Its director-general Datuk Manoharan Periasamy said the campaign offers a prime opportunity for Malaysia to showcase its rich cultural heritage, natural beauty and world-class tourism infrastructure.

"This campaign will strengthen the readiness of the tourism industry, particularly in areas like infrastructure, tour packages and other essential facilities to ensure that Malaysia becomes a top destination for tourists, not just from abroad, but also from within the country," Manoharan said after the VM 2026 launch in Sepang on Tuesday.

He said a key focus for the campaign would be attracting tourists from major markets such as China, India, the Middle East and Asean, all of which benefit from direct flight connections to Malaysia.

"With over 3,100 direct flights operating from these countries to Malaysia, we are well-positioned to market the country as a top tourist destination."

He also highlighted the emphasis on experiential tourism, offering exciting and more personalised tour packages, Bernama reported.

One of the main highlights would be giving tourists the chance to experience Malaysia's cultural diversity and

heritage, including culinary adventures and the opportunity to interact with locals through homestays.

Manoharan said the campaign also aims to encourage Malaysians to explore the country, discovering hidden gems that may not yet be widely known.

"We want to inspire Malaysians to travel within the country. There are so many beautiful and undiscovered places here that deserve attention," he said.

"Tourism operators and attraction owners will play a critical role in this by strengthening collaborations to increase domestic travel."

Manoharan also pointed out that the campaign would further solidify the Malaysia Truly Asia brand, which has been closely associated with the country since its launch in 1998.

"This brand has great influence. Whenever Malaysia is mentioned internationally, the immediate response is 'Truly Asia'."

"To amplify this recognition, we have introduced the new theme 'Surreal Experience', which embodies the unique and unforgettable experiences Malaysia offers."

He said the success of the VM 2026 campaign depends on strong partnerships between all stakeholders, including tourism industry players, airlines, hoteliers and media organisations.

"We aim to form strategic partnerships with these groups to ensure the success of Visit Malaysia 2026."

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Rescuers race to find survivors

➤ More than 400 pulled out of earthquake ruins in Tibet

BEIJING: More than 400 people in Tibet trapped by a deadly earthquake in the foothills of the Himalayas have been rescued, Chinese officials said yesterday, but an unknown number remained unaccounted for in severe cold weather.

The epicentre of Tuesday's magnitude 6.8 quake, one of the region's most powerful tremors in recent years, was located in Tingri in China's Tibet, about 80km north of Mount Everest. It also shook buildings in Nepal, Bhutan and India.

Twenty-four hours after the temblor struck, those trapped under rubble would have endured a night in sub-zero temperatures, adding to the pressure on rescuers looking for survivors in an area the size of Cambodia.

Temperatures in the high-altitude region dropped as low as -18°C overnight. People trapped or those without shelter are at risk of rapid hypothermia and may only be able to live for five to 10 hours even if uninjured, experts say.

At least 126 people were known to have been killed and 188 injured on the Tibetan side, state broadcaster CCTV reported. No deaths have been reported in Nepal or elsewhere.

Chinese authorities have yet to announce



Rescuers assist an injured resident in Shigatse City on Tuesday. — REUTERSPIC

how many people are still missing. In Nepal, an official said the quake destroyed an empty school building in a village near Mount Everest, which straddles the Nepali-Tibetan border.

Jost Kobusch, a German climber, said he was just above the Everest base camp on the Nepali side when the quake struck. His tent shook violently and he said he saw several avalanches crash down, although he was unscathed.

His expedition organising company, Satori

Adventure, said Kobusch had left the base camp and was descending to Namche Bazaar yesterday.

An initial survey showed 3,609 homes had been destroyed in Tibet's Shigatse region, home to 800,000 people, state media reported late on Tuesday, citing local officials.

Over 1,800 emergency rescue personnel and 1,600 soldiers had been dispatched to the region.

Footage broadcast on CCTV showed families huddled in rows of blue and green tents quickly erected by soldiers and aid workers in settlements surrounding the epicentre, where hundreds of aftershocks have been recorded.

State media said over 30,000 people affected by the quake had been relocated.

Home to some 60,000 people, Tingri is Tibet's most populous county on China's border with Nepal and is administered from the city of Shigatse, the seat of the Panchen Lama, an important figure in Tibetan Buddhism.

No damage has been reported to Shigatse's Tashilhunpo monastery, state media reported, which was founded in 1447 by the first Dalai Lama.

The 14th Dalai Lama, along with Japanese Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Taiwan President Lai Ching-te, have expressed condolences to the earthquake's victims.

Southwestern parts of China, Nepal and northern India are often hit by earthquakes caused by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, which are pushing up an ancient sea that is now the Qinghai-Tibetan plateau.

More than 500 aftershocks with magnitudes of up to 4.4 had followed the quake, the China Earthquake Networks Centre said.

Tuesday's quake was the worst in China since a 6.2 magnitude earthquake in 2023 that killed at least 149 people in a remote northwestern region. — Reuters

Thai suspect sought over murder of Cambodian politician

BANGKOK: A Thai court yesterday issued an arrest warrant for a man who shot dead a former Cambodian opposition lawmaker in a brazen attack in Bangkok's crowded old quarter.

Lim Kimya, 74, who had arrived in Thailand just hours earlier, was shot dead on Tuesday by a gunman who fired three shots, said a police officer, who declined to be named because he was not authorised to speak to media.

Lim Kimya, a Cambodian and French citizen, had crossed into Thailand from Cambodia at noon on Tuesday with his wife and brother and travelled to Bangkok by bus.

Police Colonel Sanong Saengmanee, superintendent of the local precinct, said an

arrest warrant had been issued for a 41-year-old motorcycle taxi driver for premeditated murder.

Bangkok police chief General Siam Boonsom said investigations indicate the killer was a hit man.

Lim Kimya was a member of the Cambodia National Rescue Party, the popular opposition that was dissolved by a court ahead of a 2018 election over an alleged treason plot. The CNRP said at the time that the charges against it were fabricated by the ruling Cambodian People's Party.

Surrounded by a pool of blood, Lim Kimya lay on his back, clad in a blue polo shirt and white shorts, as a policeman attempted to revive him,

according to a photo shared by first responders. A small blue suitcase lay nearby.

"Thai authorities should investigate and prosecute those responsible," said Bryony Lau, deputy Asia director at Human Rights Watch.

"The Cambodian government has intimidated, surveilled and harassed former CNRP members — including those living in exile."

Cambodian government spokesperson Pen Bona said the killing was a matter for the authorities of Thailand. He said the Cambodian government was often accused by opposition "extremists" of being behind incidents.

Lim Kimya was not a prominent member of the opposition. — Reuters

Vietnam to reward snitches reporting traffic offences

HANOI: Vietnam is to pay residents who snitch on traffic offenders up to five million dong (RM900) as the Southeast Asian country strives to bring rule-breaking drivers into line on its notoriously chaotic roads.

Since the beginning of the year, authorities have dramatically increased the fines to an almost unaffordable level for the average driver for traffic violations including running a red light and using a mobile phone.

Under the new rules, anyone who reports a verified traffic offence in Vietnam can now collect up to 10% of fines levied, up to a ceiling of five million dong.

The identities of informants will be kept confidential "to ensure their privacy," the law said.

No one has so far been rewarded, according to state media, who cited police.

In a country where the average monthly income is around 7.7 million dong, running a red light with a motorcycle now costs more than six million dong, six times the previous figure.

If a car driver does the same, it will set them back them close to 20 million dong, up from six million dong.

Fines have also doubled for using a mobile phone behind the wheel.

"I was shocked by the fine levels," said Grab rider Nguyen Quoc Phong, who confessed he regularly ran red lights in the capital Hanoi.

"I am scared now. I have started to obey the rules strictly," Phong said, adding that he hated the idea of being filmed and reported to police by a fellow Hanoian.

One police officer in Hanoi said he had seen several drivers break down in tears when handed a fine.

Around 77 million motorcycles and 6.3 million cars rule Vietnam's roads, official statistics showed.

In 2024, road accidents claimed 30 lives a day, while traffic — particularly in major cities — is horrendously slow as drivers move with little regard for traffic lights or road signs and rules. — AFP

Chinese actor found in Myanmar suspected to be trafficking victim

BANGKOK: A Chinese actor who went missing last week near the Thai-Myanmar border has been found in Myanmar and may have been the victim of human trafficking, Thai authorities said on Tuesday.

Wang Xing, 22, was reported missing in northern Thailand's Tak province bordering Myanmar, an area known for large-scale criminal enterprises and human trafficking by organised gangs.

"From initial inquiry, we believe he was a victim of human trafficking," said police Inspector General Thatchai Pitaneelaboot.

He was told there was a casting in Thailand,

but instead was trained to scam other Chinese people, Thatchai said, adding he was not assaulted or abused.

Wang has now been returned to Thailand. The case was widely shared on Chinese social media raising concerns that it could dent Thailand's hospitality and tourism industry, a key driver of Southeast Asia's second-largest economy and for which China is the main source market.

"We have to manage this well so it does not impact Thai tourism," Thai Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra said.

Last year, Thailand welcomed 35.55 million

foreign arrivals with 6.74 million from China.

China's Foreign Ministry said it was in touch with its embassies and would "continue to follow up on the incident".

Border towns in Thailand, Myanmar and Laos have become sites for telecom and other online fraud, according to the United Nations, which says hundreds of thousands of people have been trafficked to work in scam centres.

Most of the trafficking victims were from Southeast Asian countries as well as China, Taiwan and Hong Kong, but others came from as far away as Africa and Latin America, according to the UN. — Reuters

Mahout charged over death of Spanish tourist

BANGKOK: Thai police charged a mahout with negligence yesterday after an elephant killed a Spanish tourist at a sanctuary in southern Thailand last week.

The 23-year-old Spanish woman died after a "panic-stricken" elephant struck her with its trunk at the Koh Yao Elephant Care Centre in Phang Nga province.

Police charged the mahout, an employee of the sanctuary, with negligence and failing to prevent the fatal incident.

"We charged him with negligence causing

death and he will be taken to court today," said local police chief Jaran Bangprasert.

The mahout, identified by local media as a 38-year-old Thai, faces up to 10 years in prison and a fine of 200,000 baht (RM25,637).

Wild elephants have killed 227 people, including tourists, in the past 12 years, according to the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation.

An elephant killed a 49-year-old woman at a national park in Loei province in northern Thailand last month.

While encounters between villagers and wild elephants are common, attacks at sanctuaries remain rare.

Bathing elephants is a popular activity among visitors in Thailand, where about 2,800 elephants are held for tourism purposes across the country, according to World Animal Protection.

However, animal rights groups argue that bathing elephants can cause them distress and some sanctuaries in the country do not allow it. — AFP

Wildfire sparks panicked evacuations in LA suburb

➤ Biden approves federal emergency aid for California

LOS ANGELES: A ferocious wildfire in a Los Angeles suburb devoured buildings and sparked panicked evacuations on Tuesday, as hurricane-force winds tore through the region.

Frightened residents abandoned their cars on one of the only roads in and out of the upscale Pacific Palisades area, fleeing on foot from the 1,200ha blaze engulfing an area packed with multimillion-dollar homes in the Santa Monica Mountains.

Firefighters used bulldozers to push dozens of vehicles – including expensive models such as BMWs, Teslas and Mercedes – to one side, leaving many crumpled and with their alarms blaring.

Los Angeles Fire Department Chief Kristin Crowley said despite the chaotic evacuation, there were no immediate reports of deaths or injuries.

Hundreds of firefighters swarmed the area, attacking the blaze from the ground and the air, while crews worked through steep terrain to cut back vegetation and create firebreaks.

Around 30,000 people were ordered to evacuate the fast-spreading flames, which levelled homes as powerful winds spread embers far and wide.

“We are not out of danger,” said Los Angeles County Fire Chief Anthony Marrone, speaking at an afternoon press conference, adding that the winds are expected to pick up.

Across town, on the northern edge of Los Angeles, another fire broke out in Eaton Canyon, near Pasadena, quickly consuming 81ha on Tuesday night, according to Angeles National Forest officials.

President Joe Biden said he was being frequently briefed on the wildfires and has offered “any federal assistance that is needed”.

The fire erupted midmorning and swelled quickly, taking many residents by surprise.

One man, who gave his name as Gary, told broadcaster KTLA that hot ashes were raining down on his community of Sea Ridge.

“There was smoke in the distance, and I

was assured that it would not come over the hill... Five minutes later, it's coming down the hill,” he said.

“Everyone panicked, that's when everybody made a run and went to go and pack their houses up.”

Evacuee Kelsey Trainor said she saw the fire explode in size as she was fleeing.

“By the time we got to the bottom of the hill, which is about two or three miles, there were flames on both sides of the road, and it became gridlocked,” she said.

“No one knew what to do. Everyone was honking their horns. There's flames all around you.”

“I could see people walking with suitcases, with their dogs, children. An elderly woman was really visibly upset and in tears.”

The fire came as the area was being hit by seasonal Santa Ana winds that forecasters said could develop into the worst windstorm in a decade, with gusts of up to 160kph expected.

California Governor Gavin Newsom said Biden has approved federal aid to help firefighters respond to the conflagration. – AFP



Firefighters respond to the wildfire at the Pacific Palisades area on Tuesday. – AFP/PIIC

Seaplane crashes near tourist hotspot

SYDNEY: A small seaplane ferrying European tourists plunged into the ocean off Western Australia killing three people on board.

The plane crashed on Tuesday evening as it left Rottnest Island, a tourist drawcard famous for its friendly marsupials called quokkas.

As search teams fished the wreckage from the sea yesterday, state Premier Roger Cook confirmed three people had died and four others survived.

Among the victims were a 65-year-old woman from Switzerland, a 60-year-old man from Denmark and the 34-year-old local pilot.

A 63-year-old Swiss man was rescued alongside a 58-year-old Danish woman and an Australian couple in their 60s.

“Three lives were lost when a seaplane crashed moments after takeoff,” Cook said.

“The tragedy unfolded in front of many tourists, including families with children who were on the island for the summer holiday.”

There were reports the plane had clipped a rock jutting out of the ocean as it was taking off.

“Those early reports are not confirmed. At this early stage, what caused the crash remains unknown,” Cook said. – AFP

One body recovered from flooded mine

GUWAHATI: The body of a miner was recovered from a flooded coal mine in a remote district of India's northeastern state of Assam yesterday, two days into the search for nine men trapped below ground.

The mine, which is 91.44m deep and has underground tunnels, is thought to have flooded on Monday morning after miners hit a water source.

The extent of the flooding hampered rescue work on Tuesday, but expert divers entered the mine again early yesterday and were able to retrieve a body, said Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Officials have said the mine is illegal.

“We didn't see the body, it was completely dark inside, we felt a body using our hands, and that's how we were able to recover them,” one of the divers told a news channel after the body had been recovered.

The army has deployed divers, helicopters and engineers to help the rescue efforts in Assam's hilly Dima Hasao district.

“It is difficult to say how long the operation will take, because we have been told there are rat holes in the mine,” said H. P. S. Kandhari, a commandant in the National Disaster Relief Force. – Reuters

GMO mosquitoes solution proposed

SYDNEY: Genetically engineered mosquitoes with toxic semen could be a new weapon against tropical disease, Australian scientists said after trials of the novel pest control method.

The “toxic male technique” aims to breed mosquitoes that express venomous proteins in their semen, killing off females after mating.

Female mosquitoes are targeted because only they bite and drink blood, thereby spreading diseases.

Scientist Sam Beach from Australia's Macquarie University said the method “could work as quickly as pesticides without also harming beneficial species”.

The first proof-of-concept trials used fruit flies, a common laboratory species favoured for its short two-week life cycle.

Female flies that bred with “toxic” males had a reduced lifespan, the scientists found.

The research was described in a paper published by *Nature Communications*. – AFP

Rocket scientist takes over as space agency chief

BENGALURU: India appointed rocket scientist V. Narayanan as the new head of the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro), the government said on Tuesday, a key role as India works to become a space superpower.

Narayanan takes over from S. Somanath, who became chairman in 2022 and has been credited with making the 54-year-old space agency more approachable and opening it up to engage with the next generation.

Former colleagues describe Narayanan, who joined Isro in 1984, as a mild mannered but “strict” scientist with a track record of getting things done.

“The appointment is a surprise because we were expecting an extension for Somanath, but the choice makes sense, given Narayanan's track record,” said a former Isro scientist and

colleague, who did not want to be named because he is not authorised to speak to the media.

Narayanan, who has a doctorate in aerospace engineering, will take charge as Isro sets sights on building its own space station by 2035, and putting an Indian on the moon by 2040.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called on Isro to make India a profitable space superpower, and the agency has responded by looking to work with the private sector.

The Indian government estimates its share of the market is just US\$8 billion (RM36 billion), but it is aiming to increase that to US\$44 billion over the next decade.

The US\$400 billion global commercial space market is expected to be worth US\$1

trillion by 2030.

Somanath and Narayanan did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Narayanan, who has worked on the key rocket launches such as Isro's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and led the centre that designs and develops liquid propulsion systems for the agency, will take over on Jan 14 for a two-year term.

He was also the head of the analysis committee tasked with looking into the failure of *Chandrayaan-2*, where Isro lost contact with a spacecraft it was trying to land on the Moon.

The agency eventually launched the *Chandrayaan-3* mission in 2023, becoming the first country to land on the rugged, unexplored south pole of the moon. – Reuters

Airstrikes kill dozens as US pushes for ceasefire

▶ Hamas demands Israel end war

CAIRO: Israeli military strikes across Gaza killed at least 22 people yesterday, Palestinian medics said, as the US stepped up efforts to overcome sticking points between Israel and Hamas to reach a ceasefire to end the war.

One of the airstrikes killed at least 10 people in a multi-storey house in the Sheikh Radwan neighbourhood of Gaza City yesterday, while another killed five in the nearby Zeitoun suburb, medics said.

In Deir Al-Balah city in central Gaza, where hundreds of thousands of Palestinians are sheltering, an Israeli airstrike killed three other people.

In Jabalia, where the army has operated for more than three weeks, an Israeli airstrike killed four people, medics said.

On Tuesday, Israeli military strikes killed at least 24 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip, medics said, with two airstrikes hitting tent encampments in Mawasi, to the west of the southern city of Khan Younis, killing 18 people. The dead included several women and children.

As Israeli continued its



Men push a block of concrete in a street outside a bombed apartment building in the Bureij camp on Tuesday. – AFP/IC

bombardments, the US, Qatar and Egypt were making the most intensive effort in months to reach a ceasefire, with one source close to the talks saying this was the most serious attempt to reach a deal so far.

The outgoing US administration has called for a final push for a deal before President Joe Biden leaves office, and many in the region view Donald Trump's inauguration on

Jan 20 as an unofficial deadline.

"Things are better than ever before, but there is no deal yet," the source said.

But with the clock ticking, both sides accuse the other of blocking a deal by adhering to conditions that have torpedoed all previous peace efforts for more than a year.

On Tuesday, Hamas stood by its demand that it will only free its remaining hostages if Israel agrees

to end the war and withdraw all its troops from Gaza. Israel says it will not end the war until Hamas is dismantled and all hostages are free. Hamas also said Trump was rash to say there would be "hell to pay" unless the hostages go free by his inauguration.

Hamas official Osama Hamdan said in Algiers: "The US president must make more disciplined and diplomatic statements." – Reuters

Alaska sues over oil and gas leases

WASHINGTON: The US state of Alaska has sued the Biden administration for what it calls violations of a Congressional directive to allow oil and gas development in a portion of the federal Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

Monday's lawsuit in the US District Court in Alaska challenges the federal government's December 2024 decision to offer oil and gas drilling leases in an area known as the coastal plain with restrictions.

The lawsuit said curbs on surface use and occupancy make it "impossible or impracticable to develop" 162,000ha of land the US Interior Department plans to auction this month to oil and gas drillers.

The limits would severely limit future oil exploration and drilling in the refuge, it added.

"Interior's continued and irrational opposition to responsible energy development in the Arctic continues America on a path of energy

dependence instead of using the vast resources we have," Governor Mike Dunleavy said.

Alaska wants the court to set aside the December decision and prohibit the department from issuing leases at the auction.

The department did not immediately respond to a request for comment. A spokesperson for the Bureau of Land Management declined to comment.

When combined with the department's cancellation of leases granted during the waning days of Donald Trump's presidency, Alaska says it will receive just a fraction of the US\$1.1 billion (RM4.9 billion) the Congressional Budget Office estimated it would get in direct lease-related revenues from energy development in the area.

The lawsuit is Alaska's latest legal response to the Biden administration's efforts to protect the 8-million-hectare ANWR for species such as polar bears and caribou.

An October 2023 lawsuit by the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority contested the administration's decision to cancel the seven leases it held. Another state lawsuit in July 2024 sought to recover revenue lost as a result.

Drilling in the ANWR, the largest national wildlife refuge, was off-limits for decades and the subject of fierce political fights between environmentalists and Alaska's political leaders, who have long supported development in the coastal plain.

In 2017, Alaska lawmakers secured that opportunity through a provision in a tax cut Bill passed by Congress. In the final days of Trump's administration, it issued nine 10-year leases for drilling in ANWR.

Under Biden, two lease winners withdrew from their holdings in 2022. In September, the Interior Department cancelled the seven issued to the state industrial development body. – Reuters

Ex-president Carter lies in state

WASHINGTON: The body of late US president Jimmy Carter was transferred on Tuesday in a grand and solemn military ceremony to the US Capitol, where it will lie in state until a national funeral later this week.

Carter, who died on Dec 29 at the age of 100, served a single term from 1977 to 1981 and was widely praised for his post-presidential humanitarian efforts, for which he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2002.

His body arrived at the snow-covered US Capitol, where it will remain until today, after a full day of ceremonial travel that began in his native Georgia.

Having been flown to Washington aboard a presidential US Air Force jet, his flag-draped casket was carried atop a gun carriage in a funeral procession from the US Navy Memorial – an ode to his military service on submarines – to Capitol Hill, tracing the opposite route he took during his inauguration parade.

Hundreds of US service members

accompanied the procession down Pennsylvania Avenue.

Military pallbearers then carried his casket up to the Capitol Rotunda where a short service was held, with Carter's family, members of Congress and other dignitaries in attendance.

Carter is the 13th former US president to lie in state in the Capitol. Abraham Lincoln, assassinated in 1865, was the first.

A state funeral service will be held today at the National Cathedral, an Episcopal church in Washington that also hosted funerals for former presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Ronald Reagan, Gerald Ford and George H.W. Bush.

President Joe Biden declared today as a national day of mourning, with federal government offices to be closed for the day.

He has also ordered flags to half-staff for 30 days as is customary, which means that will be the case during Trump's Jan 20 inauguration. – AFP

UN calls for US\$370m in additional humanitarian aid to Lebanon

NEW YORK: The United Nations joined the Lebanese government on Tuesday to appeal for an additional US\$371.4 million (RM1.7 billion) in humanitarian aid for people displaced by the conflict between Israel and Hezbollah.

The extension builds on an initial aid appeal for US\$426 million

launched in October, as all-out war flared between the two sides and sent hundreds of thousands in Lebanon fleeing their homes.

That appeal raised about US\$250 million, according to the UN.

Following nearly a year of exchanges of cross-border fire initiated by Hezbollah over the war in

Gaza, Israel in September stepped up its bombing campaign and later sent troops into Lebanon.

After two months of warring, in which Hezbollah's influential chief Hassan Nasrallah and other leaders were killed, a ceasefire deal was reached that went into effect in late November.

"While the cessation of hostilities offers hope, over 125,000 people remain displaced, and hundreds of thousands more face immense challenges rebuilding their lives," said Imran Riza, the UN humanitarian coordinator in Lebanon.

The additional funding "is urgently required to sustain life-saving efforts

and prevent further deterioration of an already dire situation," he said.

The appeal is primarily aimed to assist an estimated one million Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian refugees affected by the conflict, funding a three-month period of emergency efforts through March 2025. – AFP

OpenAI chief denies abuse accusations

SAN FRANCISCO: Open AI CEO Sam Altman denied on Tuesday allegations from his sister Annie Altman, who has filed a complaint accusing him of childhood sexual abuse.

"... Annie has made deeply hurtful and entirely untrue claims about our family, especially Sam," the boss of the California startup said in a letter co-signed by his mother and two brothers.

"Our family loves Annie and is very concerned about her well-being. Caring for a family member who faces mental health challenges is incredibly difficult," they wrote.

The Altman family said that they have tried to help their daughter and sister, covering her expenses and guaranteeing her "monthly financial support, which we expect to continue for the rest of her life".

"Despite this, Annie continues to demand more money from us," they said, pointing out that they have decided to respond publicly following Anne's legal complaint filed on Monday.

"The worst allegation she has made is that she was sexually abused by Sam as a child.

"Her claims have evolved over time. Newly for this lawsuit, they now include allegations of incidents where Sam was over 18.

"All these claims are utterly untrue."

According to the complaint, Annie, who is nine years younger than Altman, alleges the assaults took place from 1997, when she was three, until 2006. – AFP



COMMENT by Dr Muhammad Ammirul Atiqi Mohd Zainuri

Address absenteeism among SPM candidates

ABSENTEEISM among students sitting for the Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) examination is a growing concern in schools nationwide, with a record of 2.7% to 3% absentees for 2023 and 2024.

These numbers are alarming as there have been no actions taken so far to reduce the percentage of absentees among SPM candidates.

SPM is a pivotal milestone in students' academic journeys; it serves as a gateway to higher education and future career opportunities. Despite its importance, schools continue to report significant absentee rates during the examination period.

The removal of the Ujian Penilaian Sekolah Rendah (UPSR) and Pentaksiran Tingkatan Tiga (PT3), for example, has significantly altered the academic trajectory for students. Without these foundational exams, some students may struggle to adapt to the rigour of SPM, leading to disengagement and absenteeism.

The lack of intermediate benchmarks, such as UPSR and PT3, may also contribute to a decline in motivation and preparedness.

Other factors such as financial difficulties may force some of the SPM candidates to prioritise work or family responsibilities over education.

In some cases, parents may be unable to afford transportation or exam-related expenses, discouraging students from attending school, indirectly making them opt out from the SPM exam.

The pressure to excel in SPM can also heighten anxiety and stress levels. Without proper support systems, students may choose to avoid school altogether, viewing absenteeism as an escape from overwhelming expectations.

Furthermore, a lack of interest in studies, often stemming from ineffective teaching methods or non-inclusive curricula, can cause students to disengage and skip school.

Peer pressure also plays a significant role in absenteeism. Students who are part of groups that devalue education or prioritise social activities over academic commitment may adopt similar behaviours.

Family issues such as divorce, illness or caregiving responsibilities can also contribute to absenteeism as students may feel obligated to stay home, leading

them to lose focus on their education.

The emergence of the gig economy also contributes to absenteeism among SPM candidates as the idea of needing an academic certificate to pursue a career in areas like e-hailing, food delivery and content creation is no longer seen as essential.

Absenteeism has far-reaching consequences, not only for students but also for schools and society as a whole. Students who miss classes are likely to fall behind academically, leading to lower grades and decreased opportunities for future careers.

Schools may also face challenges in meeting performance benchmarks, which can impact funding and resources.

To address absenteeism effectively, a multipronged approach is necessary. In light of the abolishment of UPSR and PT3, schools should provide additional support to students. This could include offering bridging programmes to help students transition effectively and supplementary lessons to reinforce foundational knowledge.

Schools and government bodies could provide subsidies for transportation, meals and exam fees to ease the financial burden of needy students and their families.

Introducing counselling services and stress management workshops can help students cope with exam-related anxiety.

Creating a supportive environment encourages open communication about mental health. Adopting interactive and practical teaching strategies can make learning more enjoyable and relevant, helping students stay motivated.

Schools could host workshops to educate parents on the importance of consistent attendance, and provide strategies to support their children's education.

Implementing attendance tracking systems can help schools identify at-risk

"The removal of the UPSR and PT3, for example, has significantly altered the academic trajectory for students. Without these foundational exams, some students may struggle to adapt to the rigour of SPM, leading to disengagement and absenteeism."



The pressure to excel in SPM can also heighten anxiety and stress levels. Without proper support systems, students may choose to avoid school altogether, leading to absenteeism among candidates. — BERNAMAPIC

students early. Engaging with these students through mentorship programmes and home visits can prevent chronic absenteeism.

Another major improvement that relevant agencies could undertake is the reintroduction of an improved version of UPSR and PT3.

Reintroducing the UPSR and PT3 is pivotal in strengthening Malaysia's education system, especially as a foundational exam for SPM.

UPSR and PT3 exams are essential to restore structure and accountability in Malaysia's education system as these exams serve as crucial milestones to gauge students' progress and identify learning gaps early. They motivate consistent effort, provide a clear academic pathway and ensure fair and standardised evaluations across schools.

Furthermore, these assessments promote discipline, time management and preparedness, reducing disengagement and absenteeism while enabling educators and policymakers to monitor educational standards effectively.

By reinstating these examinations, students will be better equipped for SPM and future academic or career challenges.

Strong action needs to be taken to ensure that the absenteeism rate is reduced in the near future. As educators, parents and policymakers, it is our collective responsibility to ensure every SPM candidate has the opportunity to succeed.

By addressing the root causes of this absenteeism and creating a supportive ecosystem for learning, this issue can be mitigated.

The future of our youngsters is in our hands. The government, through the Education Ministry and other relevant agencies, should prioritise addressing this issue to ensure a steady reduction in absenteeism rates over time.

Dr Muhammad Ammirul Atiqi Mohd Zainuri is a senior lecturer at the Department of Electrical, Electronic and Systems Engineering, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

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Remembering Joe Biden's presidency

AS the clock runs down on Joe Biden's presidency, independent analysis has appeared to examine his record of office, achievements and failures.

One way of assessing Biden's impact on the US and the world is through American views on his attempt to run for another term of office.

Rejected by large swathes of the American citizenry as unworthy of being reelected, this judgement was not only because of his cognitive decline visible to all, including the most die-hard Democratic party supporters.

It was also because of his failure to leverage the strengths and enormous resources of the country to build a better future for Americans, which in turn could have had positive ripple effects on the rest of the world.

What Biden will be most remembered for by non-Americans around the world is his handling of the war in Gaza.

Biden: 'I am a Zionist'

In Gaza and its spillover war in Lebanon, a largely innocent population continues to be subjected to the horrors of war beyond anyone's imagination.

Journalists, doctors and nurses, United Nations and neutral NGO workers and volunteers have also been victims of Israel's killing spree, leading UN Human Rights Chief Volker Turk to say in a statement that "this unprecedented level of killing, and injury of civilians is a direct consequence of the failure to comply with fundamental principles of international humanitarian law".

Biden and his secretary of state, Anthony Blinken, have not only been complicit in the illegal and genocidal war in Gaza by providing Israel with unconditional diplomatic and military support for a scorched earth policy. They have also refused to use the clout of the US to bring about a peace settlement.

What the world has seen from Biden and Blinken has been pretence, hypocrisy and double-talk on the world stage to give the impression that they have objected to Israeli

military action aimed at the collective punishment of the Palestinians; besides being strenuously opposed to the atrocities taking place on a daily basis.

The reality has been different. As president, Biden has provided Benjamin Netanyahu with protection and impunity from any international legal punishment. He has also been responsible for channelling enormous amounts of weaponry and military assistance without which Israel would find it impossible to engage in a prolonged war.

It is undoubtedly US influence and pressure that can push Israel to accept a Palestinian state – the primary objective of the Palestinian population and most countries of the world. It is an objective that Biden claims he is in favour of but which his actions indicate otherwise.

According to the Costs of War project at Brown University, the United States provided US\$17.9 billion (RM80.55 billion) in five military aids from October 2023 to October 2024, a record for a single year.

Western media reports on this military assistance have conveniently omitted to point out that most of this military assistance money has gone back to American companies that make weapons and military equipment for the wars which the US and its proxies have instigated and sustained since the last world war.

Not to be forgotten is that a year after the initial Hamas provocative attack and immediately following Israel's horrific rocket attack on a Gaza-strip hospital that killed hundreds of medical staff, patients and visitors, Biden travelled halfway around the world to Tel

Aviv to meet with Netanyahu and reiterate his unwavering support for Israel.

His supplicatory action and words to the world on the hospital attack carnage serve as a reminder of Biden's moral failings and void when it comes to non-American and non-Israeli lives.

"I was deeply saddened and outraged by the explosion of the hospital in Gaza yesterday, and based on what I've seen, it appears as though it was done by the other team, not you."

How history will remember Biden's presidency

As president, Biden has tried to impress on Americans that he is a man of peace, decency, integrity and honour. However, many will know and remember him as a war merchant extraordinaire and a leader woefully deficient in the positive character attributes that his media machine has touted.

There are two other ways to remember Biden, the 46th US president. One is his recent flip-flop after repeatedly pronouncing that he would not stand in the way of his son's conviction on tax and gun charges.

The full and unconditional presidential pardon he granted for federal crimes that Hunter Biden committed between Jan 1, 2014 and Dec 1, 2024 is unprecedented in US judicial history as it covers offences committed well before Biden's term of office began.

It has left an indelible stain on Biden's honour and integrity, and provided critics, including Trump, with ammunition to refute Biden's claim that he has advanced effective and accountable justice and democracy in America.

The other way to remember Biden's place in

history is by relating it to the outpouring of tributes and eulogies from Americans and non-Americans remembering Jimmy Carter following his death.

The influential Arab media leader, *Arab News*, had this commendation: "The Palestinian people have this week lost one of the most outspoken champions of their cause. Jimmy Carter, the 39th president of the US, died on Sunday at the age of 100.

"Carter will be remembered as a man of integrity and courage. His readiness to move away from the more orthodox foreign policy line adopted by both Democrats and Republicans back in the 1970s over the Arab-Israeli conflict triggered fundamental shifts in how the world later approached that conflict, with the plight of the Palestinians as its core.

"Carter's life embodied the American dream while transcending it through his dedication to global service. His one term as president (1977-1981), even though he was often criticised during his tenure, yielded lasting diplomatic triumphs, most notably the Camp David Accords between Israel and Egypt – an achievement that earned him respect as a peacemaker long after he left office.

"His 2002 Nobel Peace Prize recognised his diplomatic achievements and his lifelong dedication to advancing human dignity and peace. Throughout his life, Carter maintained a reputation for integrity that stood as a beacon in American public life.

"His plainspoken manner and modest lifestyle reflected his belief that true greatness lies in serving others. Even as he faced criticism for his political positions, few questioned his sincerity or commitment to his principles."

Biden had the opportunity to leave a similar positive impact on America and the world. Unfortunately, he was not made of the same stuff as Jimmy Carter.

Lim Teck Ghee's Another Take is aimed at demystifying social orthodoxy. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com



"As president, Biden has tried to impress on Americans that he is a man of peace, decency, integrity and honour. However, many will know and remember him as a war merchant extraordinaire and a leader woefully deficient in the positive character attributes that his media machine has touted."

Art of neighbourly communal living

LETTERS
letters@thesundaily.com

IN Malaysia, more than 30% of urban residents live in high-rise buildings, a figure that continues to grow.

Living in a flat, apartment or condominium offers various benefits, including convenience, security and a sense of community. However, it also requires a strong sense of courtesy and responsibility to ensure harmony among neighbours.

As a former chairman of a joint management body (JMB), I have witnessed the importance of neighbourly behaviour and adherence to building rules in creating peaceful, shared living spaces.

High-rise living means sharing common areas such as lobbies, corridors, lifts and recreational facilities like swimming pools, gyms and function rooms. Keeping these spaces clean and free of personal items and treating them with care benefits everyone.

Simple habits like disposing of rubbish properly, avoiding leaving shoes or bicycles in hallways, cleaning up after using facilities and respecting rules, such as booking in advance or adhering to time limits, ensure fairness and harmony.

Shared spaces reflect the collective behaviour of residents, so maintaining them demonstrates respect for the community while creating an environment where everyone feels welcome and valued.

Noise is one of the most common challenges in high-rise living. Sound travels easily through walls and floors, and what seems minor in one unit can disrupt others.

Residents should keep volume levels low, especially during quiet hours. This applies to playing music, watching television or hosting gatherings.

Using carpets or rugs can help minimise noise, and informing neighbours about events in advance shows consideration. Small steps like these can help maintain peace and positive relationships.

Good communication builds stronger communities. Whether through regular meetings, social events or casual conversations, maintaining open dialogue can prevent misunderstandings and foster trust.

If there are issues, residents should address concerns calmly and respectfully to resolve them before they escalate.

Supporting the JMB or residents' association can also play a significant role in maintaining order and promoting a sense of belonging. When everyone feels heard and involved, high-rise living becomes more enjoyable.

Rules exist to safeguard the safety, security and well-being of all residents. Compliance ensures harmony, whether it is parking regulations, pet policies or renovation guidelines. Staying informed about updates, which are often shared through notices or meetings, helps residents avoid conflicts.

The Housing and Local Government Ministry has established regulations for waste management, fire safety and building maintenance. All residents and management bodies are responsible for following these regulations. Compliance not only ensures protection but also preserves the value and quality of the property.

Living in close proximity to others presents an opportunity to create a caring and supportive environment. Small gestures like greeting



By respecting shared spaces, keeping noise to a minimum, using facilities responsibly, fostering good communication, following regulations and showing kindness, residents can contribute to a peaceful and enjoyable living environment. – **THESUN**

neighbours, offering assistance or showing patience can make a big difference.

A strong sense of community provides invaluable comfort and help during emergencies or challenging situations. A simple act of kindness can ripple across the community, creating a more positive atmosphere for everyone.

High-rise living requires balancing personal freedom with communal responsibility. By respecting shared spaces, keeping noise to a minimum, using facilities responsibly, fostering good communication, following regulations and showing kindness, residents can contribute to a

peaceful and enjoyable living environment.

I have seen the transformative impact of these practices in strengthening community bonds and improving the overall quality of life. Together, let us nurture a spirit of unity and respect in our shared living spaces and genuinely embrace the art of neighbourly living.

Syed Azman Syed Ismail
Postgraduate student
Faculty of Education
Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
Former JMB chairman

Trinity Group wins its first Fiabci Malaysia Property Award

KUALA LUMPUR: Trinity Group, a developer in Klang Valley, won the Fiabci Malaysia Property Award 2024 in the "Housing Residential High-Rise" category for its visionary development Trinity Pentamont.

This recognition cements Trinity Pentamont's position as a benchmark of excellence in high-rise living, while solidifying Trinity Group's reputation for developing innovative and luxurious residential spaces.

Situated in the affluent and highly sought-after neighbourhood of Mont Kiara, Trinity Pentamont offers an unparalleled living experience. It soars 41 storeys into the sky and was completed in 2022.

This luxurious high-rise development boasts 330 spacious units, exceeding 2,000 sq ft for most units. Trinity Pentamont – whose name is a portmanteau of "penthouse" and "Mont Kiara" embodies the essence of Penthouse Living for all residents.

"We envisioned a game-changing, high-rise residence that brought together the best aspects of luxury, functionality and community. By combining penthouse-style spaciousness with world-class facilities, Trinity Pentamont fosters an upmarket lifestyle where residents can live, work and socialise seamlessly," said Trinity Group founder and managing director Datuk Neoh Soo Keat.

This is Trinity's first attempt and win in the prestigious annual awards.

Crescendo posts significant rise in Q3 net profit

KUALA LUMPUR: Crescendo Corporation Bhd posted a significant increase in net profit of RM102.99 million for the third quarter ended Oct 31, 2024 (Q3'25), compared to RM17.97 million in the same period last year.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia, the industrial building construction company said the revenue increased to RM231.24 million from RM101.79 million previously.

For the nine months of the financial year ending Jan 31, 2025, the company registered a higher net profit of RM532.86 million, compared to RM35.46 million, while revenue surged to RM1.08 billion versus RM221.24 million previously.

"The surge in net profit and revenue was mainly contributed by the data centre land sales in Nusa Cemerlang Industrial Park," the company noted.

Moving forward, Crescendo expressed optimism about the property market, particularly in Johor, over the next few years noting that the influx of foreign direct investments into Johor is expected to sustain strong demand for industrial properties.

The company also highlighted its intention to monitor market conditions, especially the impact of global economic uncertainty, fluctuating material costs, currency volatility, minimum wage adjustments, and subsidy rationalisation on its operations.

"The group will adopt a prudent approach, leveraging its strategic land bank to develop properties that meet market needs," it said.

Crescendo also emphasised the potential growth in demand for landed properties in strategic areas with strong infrastructure and connectivity, noting its commitment to adapting strategies, product designs, and launch timing to respond effectively to market dynamics. – Bernama

Gagasan Nadi Cergas in deal for Kwasa Damansara project

► Company to build affordable homes with gross development value of over RM1 billion

SHAH ALAM: Construction and property group Gagasan Nadi Cergas Bhd is advancing its commitment to affordable housing in Kwasa Damansara, signing a Development Rights Agreement (DRA) recently for affordable homes worth over RM1 billion in GDV.

In partnership with Kwasa Development (15) Sdn Bhd (KD15), a subsidiary of Kwasa Land Sdn Bhd (Kwasa Land), Gagasan Nadi Cergas via its unit Nadi Emery (KKD2) Sdn Bhd (NESB) signed the DRA to undertake these housing projects within the Kwasa Damansara township.

The DRA requires NESB to pay KD15

RM35.6 million in total for the development rights to design and construct 4,183 units of affordable housing on a 34.9-acre parcel of land.

Kwasa Land will act as the master developer for this project. This marks Gagasan Nadi Cergas' second collaboration with Kwasa Land, following the groundbreaking of another project of 1,669 affordable housing units on Plot R4-1 in Kwasa Damansara last year.

Gagasan Nadi Cergas Bhd group managing director Datuk Wan Azman Wan Kamal said: "The DRA signing marks the continuation of our partnership with Kwasa Land, as we work together to ensure an ample supply of affordable homes in Malaysia, particularly in Selangor, where the population continues to grow rapidly in tandem with the state's robust economy."

He added that boosted by its strategic location and proximity to the two MRT stations within Kwasa Damansara township and the Damansara-Shah Alam Elevated Expressway, the project is bound to be well

received by homebuyers, much like the enthusiastic response to their previous launch of Idaman Kwasa Damansara on Plot R4-1.

Furthermore, he said the market value range of these homes is affordable yet earnings-accretive, supporting the future growth of their rapidly expanding property development segment.

Gagasan Nadi Cergas will fund the entire development through a combination of internally generated funds and bank borrowings.

Currently, the group is also developing approximately 6,000 Rumah Idaman affordable housing units in both Bukit Jelutong and Kwasa Damansara, as well as over 1,000 Idaman Amani affordable housing units in the City of Elmina.

The DRA signed will not only see the group now delivering more than 11,000 affordable homes over the next eight years but also further strengthen its position as a leading property developer in the growing affordable housing market.

Setia Suria offers 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom units ranging from 1,189 sq ft to 1,221 sq ft, priced from RM430,000.



SP Setia launches single-storey houses at Setia Fontaines

PETALING JAYA: SP Setia Bhd recently unveiled its latest phase comprising freehold, single-storey terraced homes named Setia Suria at its verdant and lively 1,961-acre township of Setia Fontaines in Kepala Batas, Penang.

Spanning 49.55 acres and comprising a total of 333 units, Setia Suria will be divided into two sub-phases, with it's a first sub-phase (154 units) launched over a recent weekend, and the second sub-phase (179 units) will be launched targeted in Q1'25.

With a total GDV of RM280 million and due to be completed by December 2026, Setia Suria will comprise spacious 3-bedroom 2-bathroom units that are between 1,189 sq ft to 1,221 sq ft, with an indicative price of RM430,000 onwards.

SP Setia divisional general manager Datuk Muhammad Zaili Muhammad Yusof shared, "Looking at the steady demand of the housing market in Penang, we will continue to launch our

bread-and-butter products namely single-storey terraced homes Setia Suria this year end, and we are confident that the former will perform as well as our previous phases in Setia Fontaines, which are mostly 100% taken up.

"With its modern design, we believe the units will appeal to young couples, young families who are owner-occupiers in Penang, and its nearby catchment areas. All in all, we believe Setia Suria will have good value appreciation potential, capitalising on its mature population," he added.

Setia Suria forms part of the mature, mixed township of Setia Fontaines at Kepala Batas in Penang. Its previous launches since 2018, namely City Centre Business Hub, NusaCinta Phase 1, NusaCinta Phase 2 and Amansara South are all fully sold. Its latest previous launch in 2022, Amansara North (sub-phases) recorded 88% and 70% take-up so far.

Some of its main attractions include the full-

fledged and completed Setia Experience Centre, a 63-acre lake and the 37-acre Penang Heritage Park, among others.

Meanwhile, the freehold township is linked to the Setia Fontaines Link Road and the Setia Fontaines Ring Road.

In terms of connectivity, notable amenities near Setia Fontaines include nearby educational institutions such as Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Mara Penang, Industri Latihan Perindustrian Kepala Batas, Maktab Rendah Sains Mara Kepala Batas, to name a few, with nearby commercial hubs and malls such as Mydin and Sunshine.

Setia Fontaines is also strategically located nearby government offices such as Jabatan Pendaftaran Negara, Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri, Koperasi dan Kepenggunaan, Lembaga Pemasaran Pertanian Persekutuan, Pejabat Daerah Dan Tanah Daerah S.P.



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Berjaya Rail, ST Engineering unit to collaborate on projects in M'sia

PETALING JAYA: Berjaya Rail Sdn Bhd, an integrated rail solutions company, has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with SEEL Electronic & Engineering Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of ST Engineering, to collaborate on turnkey rail projects in Malaysia.



Berjaya Rail, a subsidiary of Berjaya Land Bhd, a company listed on the Main Board of Bursa Malaysia Securities with local and international business presence, has expanded its core business to include rail transport.

Berjaya Rail is focused on delivering integrated rail solutions and harnessing synergistic partnerships to deliver sustainable

rail ecosystems.

Under the MoU, the companies will combine their technical capabilities and innovative solutions to explore opportunities in the Malaysian rail sector. The collaboration will focus on deploying cutting-edge integrated electronic systems that streamline operations, improve safety, and ensure seamless connectivity across rail networks.

Berjaya Land group CEO and Berjaya Rail board member Syed Ali Shahul Hameed shared, "This strategic partnership with ST Engineering aims to harness our combined expertise to deliver world-class rail systems

that optimise operational efficiency and elevate the passenger experience. By integrating innovative and sustainable solutions, we are committed to driving economic value and ensuring cost-effective advancements in the rail industry."

Bernard Chow, head of mobility rail and road, urban solutions, ST Engineering, said: "This MoU highlights our shared interest in advancing Malaysia's rail sector with best-in-class technologies that enhance connectivity and experience for passengers and operational efficiency for operators. We look forward to collaborating with Berjaya Rail on future rail opportunities in the country."

The MoU was signed by Berjaya Rail CEO Farizul Baharom and Chow.

Local economy seen growing 5% this year, propelled by investments

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian economy is expected to maintain a sustainable growth rate of 5% in 2025 from an estimated 4.9% in 2024, supported by a stable labour market condition, conducive fiscal and monetary policies amid lingering external uncertainties, said an economist.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid told Bernama that investment activities are likely to be the main driver for growth as the government is committed to transitioning Malaysia into a developed nation.

In this regard, the government-linked investment companies through the GEAR-up initiative are set to allocate RM120 billion to direct domestic investment over five years.

"The initiative will unlock Malaysia's growth potential through investments in high-growth high-value sectors such as the energy transition, advanced manufacturing, especially in the semiconductor industry, and across all life cycles of firms from startups and venture capital to mid-tier companies," he said.

Mohd Afzanizam said the growing prominence of artificial intelligence has shifted greater focus to the technology sector, positioning it as a key driver for boosting productivity and efficiency in the economy.

He highlighted the development of data centres, driven by significant private sector investment, as a crucial growth catalyst.

"These projects directly benefit industries such as construction, property, energy, water, and other supporting services," he said, adding that Malaysia's semiconductor-related exports are expected to align with sustained global demand in 2025.

Citing World Semiconductor Trade Statistics, Mohd Afzanizam said global semiconductor sales are projected to grow at a robust rate of 11.2% in 2025, after a strong 19% growth last year.

Mohd Afzanizam noted that, beyond technology, increased government development expenditure, with a total allocation of RM86 billion for 2025 would also provide significant support for domestic growth.

He said the Public-Private Partnership Masterplan 2030 aims to enhance project governance and accelerate execution.

"Major infrastructure projects under this initiative including motorways, railways, ports, and airports, are set to drive economic development and connectivity," he added.

Additionally, state-level economic initiatives such as the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone, the Malaysia IC Design Park in Selangor, and the Blue Economy initiative on the East Coast are expected to serve as key growth catalysts.

Mohd Afzanizam identified geopolitics, particularly the ongoing conflict in the Middle East and Ukraine, as the primary concern for 2025, which could significantly impact financial market sentiments and potentially disrupt the supply chain.

He also expressed concerns about the potential United States import tariffs under the new administration, which could exacerbate inflation and compel the Federal Reserve to maintain a restrictive monetary policy stance.

Domestically, he said, a possible reversal of key economic reforms, especially the rationalisation of fuel subsidies, could undermine market confidence.



Liew (second from left) chatting with Bernama chairman Datuk Seri Wong Chun Wai (second from right) and guest panelists South China Morning Post executive managing editor Zuraidah Ibrahim (left) and veteran journalist from Thailand Kavi Chongkittavorn (centre) during a break at the conference yesterday. —BERNAMAPICT

Liew: Asean must unite on GMT implementation

KUALA LUMPUR: There is an urgent need for Asean member states to work towards an agreement not to circumvent the global minimum tax (GMT) as countries begin to adopt the tax, said Deputy Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Liew Chin Tong.

He also urged Asean member states not to enter into a race to the bottom in terms of wages, tax cuts, or tax holidays but instead to uphold environmental standards.

Liew noted that Asean should emerge as a middle-class society over the next two decades and thus become a sizable consumer market, not just as production sites in the old formulation of export-led industrialisation.

"It (Asean) is used to the old export-led industrialisation model in which we help multinationals suppress wages to make us a cheap production destination. It is also used to give tax cuts or tax holidays to multinationals.

"We will have to stand together and tell the multinationals that we need to collect these taxes for the greater good of our people and for Asean to emerge as a middle-class society, which in turn will be a huge market for all, including the multinationals," he said in his opening remarks at the Asean Economic

Member states urged to work towards agreement not to circumvent global minimum tax

Opinion Leaders Conference: Outlook for 2025 here yesterday.

Liew said the GMT was one of the issues the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (Miti) would discuss during Malaysia's Asean chairmanship.

"But the broader objective is to strengthen the supply chain, strengthen ourselves as a middle power as well as Asean as a strong middle-class society which thus becomes a strong consumer market because, for the longest of time, we have to be dependent on export-led industrialisation," he added.

Liew said that if the global supply chain were left to the major powers, it would eventually bifurcate as the United States and China extricate themselves from each other. "It is not in the interest of the rest of the world to see the supply chain bifurcate.

"Therefore, Asean, together with the European Union, the Global South and others, need to do the heavy lifting to ensure that the middle ground or the common

ground is big enough to resist supply chain bifurcation," he said.

In this context, he said, the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone has the potential to create an exciting future and a role model.

The deputy minister added that more Asean-wide joint investment projects or sub-regional cooperation will help to make the Asean supply chain stronger.

Liew said that Asean's non-aligned stance was not born out of a vacuum as it was established precisely because the founders thought that Asean should not be aligned with either side during the Cold War.

"The 2020s is exactly such a moment that we in Asean need to hang together so as not to be hung separately.

"We need to work with each other very closely, and we need to ensure that each Asean member state is economically secure and well-to-do to form a much stronger regional solidarity," he added. — Bernama



Swift Energy unfazed by Petronas cuts

➤ Industrial automation and power systems company cites diversified revenue streams with balanced reliance on oil and gas, edible oils and utilities

■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
sunbiz@thesunday.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Swift Energy Technology Bhd, a provider of industrial automation and power systems, is unfazed by capital expenditure cuts at Petrolim Nasional Bhd (Petronas), thanks to its diversified revenue streams.

CEO Tan Bin Chee said Swift Energy has diversified revenue streams with balanced reliance on oil and gas, edible oils and utilities with clients across various industries and countries.

"Each year, different national oil companies or engineering, procurement, construction, and commissioning (EPCC) players will take turns to be a prominent contributor to our business revenue. This year, it could be Petronas, next year Shell and the year after that Wilmar, for example. In 2021, our edible oil business contributed 39% of our revenue, and this primarily comes from the oil and grains business," he told a press conference after its listing yesterday.

He stressed, "All the national oil

companies are very important customers to us. All the EPCC customers are very important to us, but we are not overly dependent on either one. We don't rely on a single customer to dominate our revenue sources."

Tan said Swift Energy has served many national oil companies over the past 22 years. It has also worked with numerous international EPCC companies from South Korea, Europe and Asean countries. "At the same time, we have major edible oil customers such as IOI and KLK. In Indonesia, we work with Mosin Mask, Sinarmas, and PT Smart. This diversification ensures we are not overly reliant on any single EPCC or national oil company."

Tan highlighted the company's focus on greener energy sources, particularly natural gas. "Our Ex Solar PV systems are designed to provide off-grid power supply requirements for production activities on wellhead platforms specifically built for natural gas production."

Furthermore, Tan said, Swift Energy is negotiating for several Ex



From left: M&A Securities deputy head of corporate finance Danny Wong, Swift Energy Technology independent non-executive directors Yee Kim Mei and Zurul Ain Zulkarnain, executive director and COO Chin Saw Yong, Tan, Mohammad Nizar, independent non-executive director Leong Choong Wah, corporate affairs director Suzana Abu Bakar, and M&A Securities managing director Datuk Bill Tan and head of corporate finance Gary Ting at the listing ceremony.

Solar PV projects. Upon securing them, the company expects these projects to significantly contribute to its order book.

"One project is in Malaysia, and another is in Africa. We continue to see sustained investment in this area. At the same time, both our oil and gas business and utility business have equally supported us in achieving our annual revenue targets," he said.

Swift Energy made its debut as a listed company on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities yesterday.

The company's shares opened at 36

sen, representing a 28.6% premium over its issue price of 28 sen per share, with an opening trading volume of 33.58 million shares.

The company raised RM70.06 million through the public issuance of 250.2 million new ordinary shares at 28 sen each.

Swift Energy has earmarked 40% of the proceed for the expansion of fabrication facilities, storage, office and a new research and development (R&D) centre. Additionally, 3.1% of proceeds, supplemented by internally generated funds and bank borrowings, will be used to acquire machinery, equipment, and

software. The remaining 56.9% of the proceeds will be directed towards establishing the R&D centre, business expansion, repayment of borrowings, working capital, and listing expenses.

Swift Energy chairman Mohammad Nizar Idris said its achievements reflect the trust and strong relationships it has built with clients, with 78% of revenue driven by integrated solutions that enhance operational efficiency, and 22% from value-added services.

M&A Securities Sdn Bhd is the principal adviser, sponsor, underwriter and placement agent for Swift Energy's IPO exercise.

Reservoir Link's associate secures RM20m floating solar farm deal

PETALING JAYA: Reservoir Link Energy Bhd, an energy-related services provider, announced that its 45% owned associate company, Founder Group Ltd, has secured a letter of award worth about RM20 million for the construction of a floating solar farm in Kuala Langat, Selangor.

The solar farm, which is expected to be completed by June, spans about 24 acres and utilises floating photovoltaic technology. It is designed to generate 10.0MWac/15.0MWp of solar power.

The cutting-edge technology, which involves solar panels mounted onto floating platforms in bodies of water, will help reduce land usage while maximising energy generation.

In a statement, the company said the project is expected to significantly contribute to land conservation and preservation of natural habitats reinforcing the group's mission of delivering innovative, eco-friendly energy solutions. It further underscores the group's commitment towards advancing carbon neutrality.

Founder Group will serve as a subcontractor and be responsible for supplying labour, hand tools, materials, and machinery and equipment to support the execution of general conditions preliminaries and consultation.

HSS Engineers and partner clinch solar project in Perak

PETALING JAYA: Engineering and project management consultant HSS Engineers Bhd (HEB) is set to expand its recurring income stream with its second venture in the renewable energy sector by developing a 95MW alternating current large-scale solar photovoltaic plant (LSS plant) in Teluk Intan, Perak.

HEB's wholly owned subsidiary, HEB Energy Sdn Bhd, and its consortium partner Unique Fire Holdings Bhd have accepted a letter of notification from the Energy Commission to undertake the development of the plant.

HEB Energy and Unique Fire will set up a special purpose vehicle to undertake the project, which encompasses financing, design, construction, installation, testing, commissioning, completion, operation, and maintenance of the LSS plant. HEB Energy will own a 40%

equity stake in a special purpose vehicle and Unique Fire the majority 60%. The estimated commercial operation date of the plant is Oct 11, 2027.

The LSS plant is part of the government's fifth LSS bidding exercise, known as *LSS-Peralihan Tenaga SuRia*. The initiative is aimed at supporting Malaysia's goal of achieving 70% renewable energy capacity by 2050, as outlined in the National Energy Transition Roadmap.

HEB executive vice-chairman Tan Sri Kuna Sittampalam (pic) said: "With this second and larger solar power project, we are in a pivotal position to advance as a key player in Malaysia's ambitious renewable energy goals

under NETR, building on our expertise in project management and engineering design. This operation date of the plant is Oct 11, 2027. The LSS plant is part of the government's fifth LSS bidding exercise, known as *LSS-Peralihan Tenaga SuRia*. The initiative is aimed at supporting Malaysia's goal of achieving 70% renewable energy capacity by 2050, as outlined in the National Energy Transition Roadmap.



initiative aligns with the government's commitment to global climate action under the Paris Agreement." He added that they are on the cusp of profound growth in their participation in the renewable energy sector, fuelled by progressive government initiatives, including a RM1 billion allocation for the Green Technology Financing Scheme and RM300 million for the National Energy Transition Fund under Budget 2025.

"Expanding our vertical of recurring and long-term income-based contracts also underscores our

commitment to diversifying sector coverage and revenue streams, catapulting us to substantial growth in the years to come," Kuna said.

The development of the LSS plant, is contingent upon the consortium executing a solar power purchase agreement with a corporate consumer to commit to purchasing solar energy generated by the plant for 21 years.

The project, to be funded via internally generated funds and/or external borrowings, will contribute positively to HEB Group's financial performance from 2027 onwards. It is the second project under HEB Group's recurring and long-term income-based contracts vertical, after the 29.99MW solar photovoltaic plant project in Kuala Muda, Kedah. The vertical provides HEB Group with long-term income and complements its core expertise in engineering and project management consulting.

FMM: Malaysia's economy to post steady growth in 2025

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's economy is poised for steady growth this year, driven by strong domestic demand, robust investment activities and growth in exports and tourism despite potential global uncertainties, according to the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM).

In a statement yesterday, its president Tan Sri Soh Thian Lai noted that in the second quarter and third quarter of 2024, Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) grew at 5.9%

and 5.3%, respectively. He added that the nation's GDP growth is forecast to be between 4.5% and 5% this year.

"However, risks remain, including slower recovery in China, potential shifts in the United States' policy, global commodity price fluctuations and domestic inflation pressures," he said.

Nonetheless, exports are anticipated to continue doing well this year, with key sectors like electrical and electronics, semi-conductors, palm oil, machinery and

chemicals driving this expansion.

On the same note, he said the impact of potential US tariffs on Malaysia's exports is expected to be limited, based on historical data.

"However, inflation is forecast to rise to approximately 3% in 2025, influenced by domestic factors such as an increase in the minimum wage, changes in the Employees Provident Fund contributions for foreign workers, the extension of the Sales and Service Tax and subsidy rational-

isation efforts. "Nevertheless, inflation is expected to remain within the Ministry of Finance's target range of 2-3.5%," he said.

FMM also expects the ringgit to remain firm in 2025, supported by strong domestic demand and an improved tourism sector. "Factors such as the US Federal Reserve rate cuts, labour supply changes and inflation will influence the currency's strength," he said. - Bernama

Iskandar Investment gives thumbs up to Johor-S'pore SEZ

► President/CEO voices deep commitment to business opportunities that will be created

JOHOR BAHRU: Iskandar Investment Bhd (IIB) welcomes the establishment of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), a transformative initiative poised to enhance Johor's position as a leading investment destination in Southeast Asia.

The formal agreement signed yesterday in Putrajaya signals a new chapter of economic growth and cross-border collaboration, bringing substantial opportunities for Iskandar Puteri and the wider region.

"As a key stakeholder in Johor's economic development, IIB is deeply committed to the vast opportunities that the JS-SEZ will create for businesses and communities," said IIB president/CEO Datuk Idzham Mohd Hashim.

With a focus on key economic sectors such as education, the green economy, and transformative industries like energy, he added the JS-SEZ is positioned to drive sustainable growth.

Notably, he said the data centre industry is set for significant expansion, driven by major technology firms, aligning with global trends and positioning Johor as a leader in digital

infrastructure and innovation.

"These initiatives reflect the shared vision of Malaysia and Singapore for sustainability and regional integration. Further enhancing connectivity, the Rapid Transit System (RTS) link, set to be operational by 2026 and capable of transporting 20,000 passengers per hour, demonstrates the significance of seamless cross-border collaboration within Asean," said Idzham.

He also said that sustainability stands as a cornerstone of the collaborative efforts driving the JS-SEZ.

"The realisation of the Asean power dream, enhancing cross-border energy collaboration, is central to its agenda. The signing of two memoranda of understanding (MoUs) on carbon credits and carbon capture and storage, held in conjunction with the JS-SEZ agreement, further reinforces this shared dedication to addressing climate challenges. Complementing these regional efforts, IIB's Net Zero Carbon City initiative aims to foster renewable energy solutions and environmental stewardship in Iskandar Puteri. Together, these initiatives highlight Johor's role as

a hub for innovative and sustainable development," said Idzham.

Facilities like Medini International Convention City (MICC) and Tech Medini exemplify the region's dedication to fostering a business-friendly environment and supporting economic growth. MICC will provide world-class infrastructure for global business engagements, while Tech Medini will serve as a hub for entrepreneurship and skill development, empowering the region's youth and workforce. These initiatives reinforce Iskandar Puteri's position as a competitive destination for investment and innovation, he added.

He said this development aligns closely with the Johor state government's 2025 Budget, which highlights Johor as "The Next Engine of Growth for the Country."

"The inclusion of initiatives such as the JS-SEZ Committee and the Johor Talent Development Council emphasises the commitment to empowering communities and fostering a skilled workforce. These regional ambitions are further reinforced by Malaysia's Asean Chairmanship, serving as a crucial platform to advance regional collaboration and economic resilience," he added.

He said as Malaysia begins its

Asean Chairmanship in 2025, themed "Inclusivity and Sustainability," the nation continues to strengthen its role in advancing regional collaboration and economic resilience.

"These priorities align seamlessly with the shared goals of the JS-SEZ fostering sustainability, innovation, and integration across Asean. This synergy enhances Johor's strategic importance as a leader in driving regional economic and environmental initiatives. Iskandar Puteri stands at the forefront of these efforts, leveraging its unique strengths to attract investments and forge partnerships that will contribute to a resilient and prosperous Asean," he added.

He said IIB remains steadfast in its commitment to working alongside stakeholders, including government entities and international partners, to ensure the success of the JS-SEZ.

"By fostering strategic investments, enhancing infrastructure, and prioritising sustainability, this initiative will position Iskandar Puteri as a benchmark for regional innovation and growth.

"We look forward to the JS-SEZ fulfilling its collective vision for a dynamic and inclusive future, one that promises to transform Iskandar Puteri and Johor into thriving centres of opportunity and innovation," Idzham added.

'New chapter in Malaysia's economic collaborations'

JOHOR BAHRU: The signing of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) agreement on Tuesday marks a new chapter in Malaysia's collaborative efforts to drive regional economic development.

Johor State Investment, Trade, Consumer Affairs, and Human Resources Committee chairman Lee Ting Han said this move aligns with global trends that emphasise economic integration, sustainable development, and high technology.

"This agreement also responds to the global surge in demand for clean technology and the digital economy, positioning Johor as a key player in the increasingly competitive Asean economic landscape.

"It also reflects the strengthening of diplomatic ties between the two strategic regions, enhancing the resilience of the regional supply chain, and creating job opportunities for the local communities," he said when contacted by Bernama.

He added that the agreement leverages the Johor-Singapore advantages such as geography, resources, or existing strengths to attract high-value investments, particularly in sectors like advanced manufacturing, green technology, logistics, finance, tourism, energy, and smart automation.

The state government, according to Lee, is already drafting a development plan for the Special Economic Zone to ensure sustainable and comprehensive growth targets are met.

"We expect investment to increase gradually over the next five to ten years, depending on implementation phases and global investor interest," he said.

In the initial stages, Lee explained the focus would be on developing essential infrastructure such as the Johor-Singapore Rapid Transit System (RTS) and supporting facilities in the JS-SEZ area, in addition to attracting investments in sectors where Johor already has an established ecosystem such as petrochemicals, chemicals, data centres, and medical devices.

"The RTS infrastructure project will accelerate the movement of labour, investors, and tourists between the two regions, boosting Johor's competitiveness as a regional economic hub," he added.

Lee also highlighted that the RTS is one of the first cross-border projects in the region, reflecting Asean's vision to strengthen economic and social integration by developing infrastructure that facilitates trade and cross-border relations.

This, in turn, is expected to positively impact the business sector, investment, and smart city development in both Johor and Singapore.

Overall, Lee said the JS-SEZ establishment is a strategic move to enhance the state's global competitiveness, reducing reliance on traditional economic resources.

"Our goal with JS-SEZ is to ensure inclusive and sustainable economic growth while improving the well-being of the people.

"Johor aspires to become the leading hub for green technology and high technology in Asean, attracting high-quality investments that not only drive the economy but also create value-added job opportunities for the local people," he said.



From left: Pantech Global Bhd deputy group managing director Kong Chiong Lee, Tan, Alliance Bank Malaysia Bhd group chief corporate & institutional banking officer Teoh Chu Lin, Alliance Islamic Bank Bhd CEO Rizal IL-Ehzan Fadil Azim, and corporate finance, Islamic capital markets head/senior vice-president Tee Kok Wah.

Pantech Global appoints Alliance Islamic Bank as underwriter for IPO

KUALA LUMPUR: Manufacturer and exporter of butt weld pipe fittings and welded pipes Pantech Global Bhd has signed an underwriting agreement with Alliance Islamic Bank Bhd (AIS) for its proposed initial public offering (IPO) on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities Bhd.

Pantech Global, through its subsidiaries, manufactures and exports butt weld pipe fittings and stainless steel welded pipes for use in various industries such as oil and gas, petrochemical, chemical, semiconductor, water treatment and shipbuilding which require piping and pipeline systems that can withstand high temperatures, high pressure, corrosive substances and harsh environments.

Pantech Global serves a diverse global market comprising Asia Pacific, the Americas, Europe, and Middle East and North Africa regions. The group's key export destinations include the US, Canada, Mexico, Netherlands, Germany, the UK, Taiwan, and countries in the Asia Pacific region, Türkiye, Egypt, and the United Arab Emirates.

In 2023, the group commanded 66% of Malaysia's export market share for butt weld pipe fittings, and 16% of Malaysia's production market share for stainless steel welded pipes.

"We are excited to take this step toward listing on Bursa Securities' Main Market, which will drive our business growth. This listing will boost our profile as a Malaysian manufacturer

and exporter, strengthening confidence in our expertise, production, and commitment to delivering quality solutions globally," Pantech Global group managing director Adrian Tan said.

Pantech Global's IPO entails the issuance of 262,228,000 new ordinary shares (IPO shares), representing 30.85% of the company's enlarged issued share capital of 850,000,000 shares upon listing (public issue) – 21,250,000 IPO shares will be made available for application by the Malaysian public; 29,750,000 IPO shares will be made available for the eligible directors and employees of Pantech Global, eligible directors and employees of Pantech Group Holdings Bhd.



People holding movie tickets as they walk at the Capital Cinema in Beijing. – REUTERS/SPIC

China 2024 box office revenue plunges

➤ Hopes for post-pandemic uptick dashed but comedies among successes

BEIJING: China's 2024 box office revenue slumped by almost a quarter from the previous year, official data showed, dealing a blow to a limping domestic industry yet to fully recover from the pandemic.

Box office revenue totalled 42.502 billion yuan (RM26.21 billion), according to the China Film Administration.

That is down 22.6% from 54.915 billion yuan in 2023, and 34% lower than the pre-pandemic peak in 2019.

Of that, box office revenue of domestic films totalled 33.439 billion yuan, plunging 27.3% from 46.005 billion yuan in 2023.

Hopes for a post-pandemic uptick in box office revenue for the second year were dashed despite successes including *YOLO*, a comedy on how a reclusive woman reconnected with society through boxing, and *Successor*, another comedy, about how a couple hid their wealth from their son to promote character building.

The slump was caused by a mix of factors – a decline in the number of feature films, competition on online offerings including micro dramas and a slowdown in the world's second-largest economy.

For the whole of 2024, the number of moviegoers in urban theatres totalled 1.01 billion, down from 1.299 billion a year earlier.

A total of 612 feature films were produced last year, down from 792 in 2023.

With the local film industry on a wobbly footing, foreign movies made a comeback.

Hollywood blockbuster *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* and Japanese animated feature *The Boy and the Heron* made their

mark in the top 10, securing the ninth and 10th spots, respectively.

In contrast, the top 10 list of movies by revenue in 2023 was entirely dominated by local titles, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency.

Other foreign successes included *Alien: Romulus*.

The sci-fi horror flick raked in 786 million yuan, making China its biggest global revenue contributor, Xinhua reported.

The decline in Chinese offerings last year reflects ebbing investment and output capacity in an industry still struggling with the aftermath of strict Covid-19 restrictions, which disrupted movie production from 2020 to 2022.

Box office revenue on New Year's Day in 2025 was a little over 200 million yuan.

That was a far cry from the record 1.53 billion yuan during the previous New Year's Day holiday, which was two days longer thanks to a weekend. – Reuters

Samsung warns Q4 profit to miss forecasts

SEOUL: South Korea's Samsung Electronics said yesterday it expected fourth-quarter profits to fall sharply from the previous quarter and miss forecasts as it struggled to meet robust demand for chips used in artificial intelligence servers.

The announcement comes after the world's largest memory-chip maker issued a rare apology in October acknowledging it was facing a "crisis" and that questions had arisen about its "fundamental technological competitiveness and the future of the company".

The company said in a regulatory filing that October-December operating profits were expected to come in at 6.5 trillion won (RM20.26 billion), up 130.5% from a year earlier.

But that is down nearly 30% from 9.18 trillion won in the previous three months and 16% below the average estimate, according to

the Yonhap news agency, which cited its own financial data firm.

Sales were seen increasing 10.7% on-year to approximately 75 trillion won, which was also lower than the previous quarter.

"In light of the preliminary fourth-quarter 2024 results significantly falling short of market expectations, we aim to mitigate confusion among the market and investors until the final results are announced," Samsung's management said in an explanation page.

It noted that Samsung's Device Solutions division, which is in charge of memory and foundry business units, among others, "reported declines in sales and profits due to worsening market conditions, particularly for IT-related products".

"Despite achieving record-high quarterly revenue in the fourth quarter, driven by strong sales of high-capacity products, weak demand

for conventional PC and mobile products weighed on overall performance," it said.

Non-Memory Business performance also declined because of "weak demand from key applications" and "increased R&D spending".

Samsung's consumer electronics division, which includes mobile phones, also experienced a decline owing to "reduced impact from new mobile product launches and intensified competition".

The firm's Seoul-listed shares rose 0.72% yesterday despite the report.

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

The company is expected to release its final earnings report at the end of this month. – AFP

HDFC Bank says Q3 deposit growth outpaces loan growth

MUMBAI: India's HDFC Bank saw quarter-on-quarter deposit growth outpace loan growth in the three months to Dec 31, the country's biggest private lender said.

Deposits rose 4.2% to 24.53 trillion Indian rupees (1.29 trillion), slowing from 5.1% rise in July-September quarter, the Mumbai-based bank said.

Its low-cost current and savings account deposits rose 1.1%, it said.

Gross advances, or loans sanctioned and disbursed, rose 0.9% to 25.43 trillion rupees, slowing from 1.3% sequential growth in the previous quarter.

HDFC Bank has the most assets among all private banks in India.

It merged with its parent HDFC in July 2023, adding a large pool of loans to its portfolio but a much smaller volume of deposits.

After the merger, HDFC Bank's loan-to-deposit ratio rose to around 110%, putting it under pressure to boost deposits or slow loan growth.

Over the past few months, it has offered retail loans for sale to reduce its loan-to-deposit ratio, a key metric for banks to assess their liquidity position.

In the December quarter, HDFC Bank securitised 216 billion rupees of loans "as a strategic initiative", it said.

Overall loan growth for Indian banks moderated for a fifth straight month in November, as lenders continued to rein in unsecured and personal loans after a central bank crackdown on "exuberant" lending.

Separately, HDFC Bank said the Reserve Bank of India had allowed it to acquire a stake of up to 9.5% in Kotak Mahindra Bank, AU Small Finance Bank and Capital Small Finance Bank within a year from the approval date. – Reuters

Apple still barred from selling iPhone 16 in Indonesia: Minister

JAKARTA: Apple still cannot sell its iPhone 16 in Indonesia despite striking a deal to build a local production facility there, as it has not met domestic content rules, Industry Minister Agus Gumiwang Kartasasmita said yesterday.

Last year, Indonesia banned iPhone 16 sales after Apple failed to meet requirements that smartphones sold domestically should comprise at least 35% locally-made parts.

The minister said Apple had struck a deal to build a facility producing its Airtag tracking device on Indonesia's Batam island, close to Singapore, but that still would not count as a locally-made iPhone part.

"There is no basis for the ministry to issue a local content certification as a way for Apple to have the permission to sell iPhone 16 because (the facility) has no direct relations," he said, adding the ministry would only count phone components.

Indonesia's Investment Minister Rosan Roeslani said late on Tuesday the factory would be worth US\$1 billion (RM4.5 billion) and that it would start operations next year.

Agus, who held two days of meetings with Apple's vice-president of global government affairs Nick Ammann, said Apple had proposed "innovative investment" which Indonesia had countered.

Apple has no manufacturing facilities in Indonesia, a country of about 280 million people, but has since 2018 set up application developer academies. – Reuters

WASHINGTON: Tech leaders continue to fall in line around Donald Trump, with Facebook's announcement that it would end its US fact-checking programme the latest victory for the president-elect and his billionaire adviser Elon Musk.

Facebook parent Meta's move into fact-checking came in the wake of Trump's shock election in 2016, which critics said was enabled by rampant disinformation on Facebook and interference by foreign actors, including Russia, on the platform.

The programme has long been criticised by conservatives who found themselves ensnared in its anti-disinformation work.

Its paring down comes days before Trump's inauguration, and after several US tech barons have pushed for a comfortable relationship with the incoming president.

Since the November election, a stream of senior moguls have travelled to meet with Trump at his Florida estate, including Meta boss Mark Zuckerberg as well as Apple CEO Tim Cook and Amazon founder and space tech executive Jeff Bezos.

Amazon and Meta have both announced US\$1 million donations to Trump's inauguration fund, as reportedly has Apple's Cook, in a personal capacity.

Musk, meanwhile, owner of influential social media platform X and the world's richest person, is one of the president-elect's closest advisers.

It is all a far cry from when the Republican saw himself kicked off of Facebook and Twitter for the risk of inciting violence, following the storming of the US Capitol by supporters hoping to reverse the 2020 election results.

Four years later, tech companies are coming off a Joe Biden administration that shook up much of the sector with antitrust investigations – with the free speech, deregulatory outlook pushed by those in Trump's orbit holding fresh appeal.

The fact-checking shake-up is “a decision that advances Zuckerberg's business goals: fact-checking is difficult, expensive and controversial,” Ethan Zuckerman, a public policy professor who recently sued Meta over its algorithm policies, told AFP.

But for those in the right-wing tech sphere, the decision is a course correction.

“For those of us who have been fighting the free speech wars for years, this feels like a major victory and turning point,” investor David Sacks, set to take an artificial intelligence portfolio in Trump's government, said.

He went on to thank the incoming president “for creating



Trump speaking to members of the media at the Mar-a-Lago Club in Palm Beach, Florida. – AFP/IC

Big Tech rolls out red carpet for Trump

► Facebook ends US fact-checking programme in latest victory for president-elect

this political and cultural realignment.”

Trump has been a harsh critic of Meta and Zuckerberg for years, accusing the company of bias against him and threatening to retaliate once back in office.

When asked by reporters if he believed the fact-check move was a response to his threats against Zuckerberg, Trump responded: “Probably, yeah.”

A rapprochement between Zuckerberg and Trump has been a long time coming: Meta also recently put Trump ally Dana White on its board.

That decision, and the move to slash the fact-checking operations, came after Trump's Federal Communications Commission pick, Brendan Carr, accused Facebook,

Google and Apple of “playing central roles” in a “censorship cartel”.

Sam Altman, CEO at OpenAI, has meanwhile sent his own signals to the incoming administration, telling conservative broadcaster Fox News last month he was confident Trump would keep the United States a leading player in the artificial intelligence sector.

His response to Musk's influence in the incoming administration – which has sparked warnings of conflicts of interest – was also warm.

“It would be profoundly un-American to use political power to hurt your competitors and advantage your own businesses,” Altman said.

“I believe pretty strongly that Elon will do the right thing.”

Brown University political

science professor Wendy Schiller is not surprised that social media companies like Meta are walking away from fact-checking because political parties and social media companies thrive when there is division.

He adds, however, that “the saving grace may be that there are still a number of competitive social media outlets so that no single person or company controls all the flow of information, and that includes government”.

Facebook will be replacing its fact-checking programme with a “community notes” style feature, similar to the one used on Musk's X platform.

Musk quickly signalled his approval, calling the change “cool.”

AFP currently works in 26 languages with Facebook's fact-checking programme, in which Facebook pays to use fact-checks from around 80 organisations globally on its platform, WhatsApp and Instagram. – AFP

US to clear hurdles for civil nuclear tie-up with Indian firms

NEW DELHI: The United States is finalising steps to clear hurdles for civil nuclear partnership with Indian firms, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said, seeking to give fresh momentum to a landmark deal between the two countries.

Washington and New Delhi have been discussing the supply of US nuclear reactors to energy-hungry India since the mid-2000s.

But a longstanding obstacle has been the need to bring Indian liability rules in line with global norms which require the costs of any accident to be channelled to the operator rather than the maker of a nuclear power plant.

The deal was signed by then President George W. Bush in 2007, a major step toward allowing the United States to sell civilian nuclear technology to India.

“United States is now finalising the necessary steps to remove long-standing regulations that have prevented civil nuclear cooperation between India's leading nuclear entities and US companies,” Sullivan said during his visit to New Delhi.

Washington expects the impact of Chinese upstream dams, artificial intelligence, space, military licensing and Chinese economic overcapacity to be discussed while Sullivan is in New Delhi, a US official earlier said.

The two countries agreed in 2019 to build six US nuclear power plants in India.

The South Asian nation's stringent nuclear compensation laws have previously hurt deals with foreign power plant builders, subsequently deferring India's target to add 20,000 MW of nuclear power from 2020 to 2030. – Reuters

WuXi Biologics to sell Ireland facility to Merck

DUBLIN: China's WuXi Biologics said it will sell its vaccine facility in Ireland to Merck for about US\$500 million (RM2.2 billion).

WuXi had previously said it was planning to sell some of its operations as the company, along with other Chinese firms, has been at the centre of new US laws aimed at restricting their businesses in the United States due to national security concerns.

The bill, called the Biosecure Act, which was passed by the US House of Representatives in September, is designed to keep Americans' personal health and genetic information from foreign adversaries and to push local pharmaceutical and biotech companies to reduce their reliance on China for everything from drug ingredient manufacturing to early research.

WuXi AppTec had said in December its subsidiaries had signed a deal with US-based private equity firm Altaris LLC for the sale of its cell and gene therapy manufacturing unit, WuXi Advanced Therapies, for an undisclosed sum. – Reuters

AI-influenced shopping boosts online holiday sales

SAN FRANCISCO: Artificial intelligence-powered chatbots helped consumers purchase and return products during the 2024 holiday season, boosting online sales in the United States by nearly 4% year-over-year, according to a report by Salesforce.

Retailers turned to nifty conversational customer services – or chatbots – among others such as targeted promotions, product recommendations and loyalty programmes, to influence customers

hunting for trending products and best bargains.

Online sales rose to US\$282 billion (RM1.2 billion) in the United States between Nov 1 and Dec 31 from US\$272 billion a year ago, ahead of Salesforce's forecast of 2% growth, even as discounts were tempered.

Shoppers used AI-based chatbot services 42% more than a year ago, according to Salesforce, which analysed data from 1.6 trillion page views on its platform.

AI influenced-sales rose to US\$229

billion of global online sales between Nov 1 and Dec 31 from US\$199 billion in 2023, the report said.

However, a high rate of product returns by customers at 28%, compared with 20% in 2023 was a “significant concern” and could reduce the overall profit margins for retailers, said Caila Schwartz, director of Consumer Insights at Salesforce.

“Retailers who have embraced AI and agents are already seeing the benefits, but these tools will be even more critical in the new year as

retailers aim to minimise revenue losses on returns and re-engage with shoppers,” Schwartz added.

Orders placed through smartphones peaked on Christmas day, as customers set out to do some last-minute shopping, with 79% of all orders being placed through mobile devices during the holiday season, the report said.

Apart from AI, retailers used social media sites such as TikTok Shop and Instagram to help generate interest, with social media driving 14% of all traffic to e-commerce sites. – Reuters



UK firms lose momentum, cut staff in December

➤ Slump in corporate morale after govt's budget rumbles on

LONDON: British business activity growth slowed to a crawl in December and employers cut staffing at the fastest rate in almost four years as a slump in corporate morale after the government's budget rumbled on, a survey showed.

The final headline UK S&P Composite Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) inched down to 50.4 from 50.5 in November, its lowest since October 2023. A preliminary reading for December had also been 50.5.

The survey is barely above the 50 dividing line between growth and contraction and adds to a run of lacklustre economic indicators since Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves announced the biggest tax rises since 1993 in October.

The British Chambers of Commerce reported that confidence fell to its lowest since just after former prime minister Liz Truss' "mini-budget" in 2022 while concern about tax rises was the highest since at least 2017.

Britain's economy stagnated in the three months to September and the Bank of England

(BoE) has estimated that it will flatline again in the fourth.

While the central bank thinks higher public spending will temporarily boost growth this year, a big question for its policymakers as they consider how quickly to cut interest rates is whether Reeves' tax rises lead mostly to lower employment, higher prices or reduced profits and investment.

Investors are pricing in just two quarter-point rate cuts by the BoE in 2025 as inflation pressures remain sticky.

"A post-budget slump in business optimism persisted in December, with output growth expectations for the year ahead unchanged from November's 23-month low," said Tim Moore, economics director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

Elliott Jordan-Doak, senior economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics, said PMI data over the fourth quarter was consistent with economic growth of 0.1%-0.3%, slightly stronger than the BoE's forecast but still a weak level of momentum for the economy as it starts 2025.

"The drop in the PMI now looks more driven by a genuine deterioration in growth rather than the usual over-reaction to uncertainty."

The PMI showed businesses shed jobs at the fastest rate since January 2021, during a Covid-19 lockdown.

Companies that had cut staffing in December overwhelmingly cited rising costs, in particular due to Reeves' increase in employer social insurance contributions from April.

The PMI's gauge of future output fell to its lowest level since December 2022 while costs faced by businesses increased at the fastest pace since April.

"Nearly one-in-four survey respondents saw an overall decline in their payroll numbers. Excluding the pandemic, this represented the steepest pace of job shedding for more than 15 years," Moore said.

The BCC survey of nearly 5,000 businesses showed that 55% of firms planned to raise prices, up from 39% the quarter before, while 24% intended to cut investment, up from 18% previously.

A separate survey by the Federation of Small Businesses showed that 67% of respondents planned to recruit fewer staff and 32% intended to reduce headcount. – Reuters

German inflation rises more than expected

BERLIN: German inflation rose more than forecast to 2.9% in December, preliminary data from the federal statistics office showed.

Analysts polled by Reuters had forecast a reading of 2.6% in December, after a year-on-year increase in consumer prices of 2.4% in November, based on data harmonised to compare with other European Union countries.

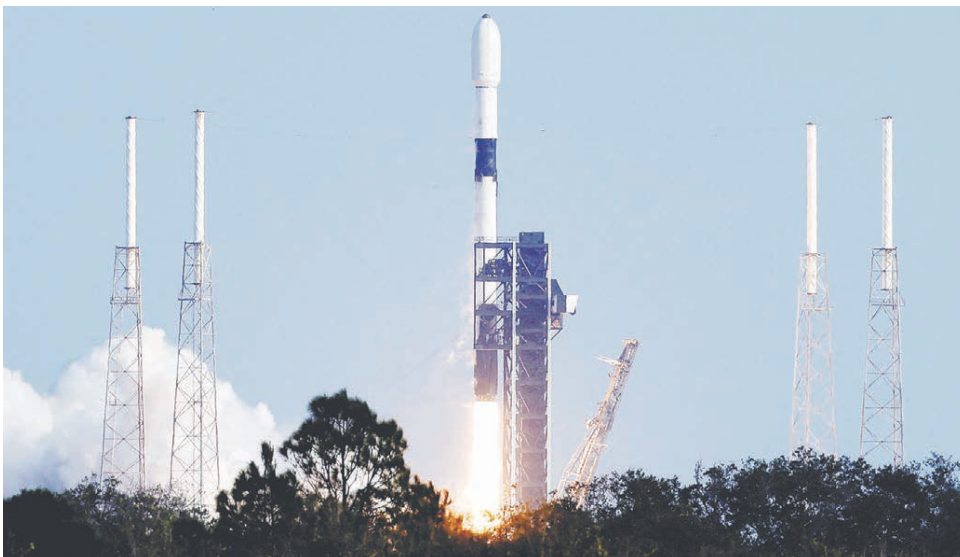
Core inflation, which excludes volatile food and energy prices, went up to 3.1% from 3% in November.

Energy prices fell by 1.7% compared with the previous year, while food prices rose by 2% year-on-year in December, data from the statistics office showed.

Economists pay close attention to national inflation data, as Germany publishes its figures just before the euro zone inflation data release.

Euro zone inflation is expected to rise to 2.4% in December from 2.2% in November.

The European Central Bank expects inflation to settle at its 2% target this year after hitting double digits in the wake of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. – Reuters



A SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket lifting off from the Cape Canaveral Space Force Station with a payload of Starlink satellites in Cape Canaveral, Florida. – REUTERS/PIC

Eurozone investor morale at lowest in over a year

FRANKFURT: Investor morale in the eurozone fell in January to its lowest in more than a year, a survey showed, with Germany remaining a continued drag on the bloc.

The Sentix index for the eurozone dropped to -17.7 in January from -17.5 in December.

That is the lowest level since November 2023, though it was not as bad as the -18 forecast by analysts polled by Reuters.

"In the eurozone, the economic engine is threatening to freeze up for the long-term," the survey said, adding that Germany's recessionary economy "is hanging on to the eurozone like a lead weight".

The survey of 1,121 investors from Jan 2 to Jan 4 showed expectations slightly improved to -5.0 in January from -5.8 points last month.

But that gain was outweighed by the worsening view of the current situation, which sagged to -29.5 in January from -28.5 in December. That is the lowest level since October 2022.

The survey also found that Germany – Europe's largest economy and one facing federal elections next month – appears to be in recession and is unlikely to emerge from it any time soon. – Reuters

Musk offers secure services to Italy

MILAN: Elon Musk said he was ready to provide Italy with secure communication services after Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni denied that the issue had come up during a weekend visit to the United States.

Meloni has developed a strong relationship with Musk, a close ally of incoming US President Donald Trump, and Rome is evaluating potential supply accords with the tech billionaire's Starlink business, part of his SpaceX company.

However, Meloni's office denied any agreement had been reached on the supply of new services and dismissed attempts to link the issue to her surprise visit to meet Trump at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida last Saturday.

"The prime minister's office categorically denies, considering it ridiculous, that SpaceX was a topic during the meeting with US

President-elect Donald Trump," Meloni's office said in a note.

"Contacts with SpaceX are part of regular discussions that state departments have with companies, in this instance those that provide protected connections such as data encryption."

Bloomberg News reported earlier that Italy's discussions with SpaceX, "which had stalled until recently, appeared to move forward" after Meloni's meeting with Trump.

Musk was happy to promote his services. He said in a post on X that he was "ready to provide Italy the most secure and advanced connectivity!".

Musk's aerospace business SpaceX owns Starlink, a telecommunications provider that relies on a network of low Earth orbit satellites.

Starlink has been offering its services in Italy

since 2021, but its business in the euro zone's third-largest economy is modest, with a customer base of around 50,000.

Italy is considering using Starlink services to boost Internet penetration in remote areas in response to slow progress in public-funded fibre rollout programmes.

Deputy Prime Minister Matteo Salvini urged the government to accelerate efforts to do a deal with Musk "to guarantee connectivity and modernise all of Italy".

"A potential accord would not be a danger but an opportunity," the League party leader said.

In October, the Foreign Ministry said Italy was also evaluating using Starlink systems to enhance communications for Italian diplomats and defence officials operating in risky areas across the Mediterranean. – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: JANUARY 8

Bursa Trade Statistic

08 JAN 2025

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Inter-Pacific Research

Participation

Retail (20.43%) Net (in RM mil.)	Institution (40.83%) Net (in RM mil.)	Foreign (38.74%) Net (in RM mil.)
+46.11	+65.36	-111.47
Bought (in RM mil.) 647.55	Bought (in RM mil.) 1280.91	Bought (in RM mil.) 1128.41
Sold (in RM mil.) 601.44	Sold (in RM mil.) 1215.55	Sold (in RM mil.) 1239.89

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



Need Some Ideas?

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

IPacOnline @ipaconline1972 Inter-Pacific Securities @IPac_TV

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

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

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

Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,430.30 -116.00
FBMKLCI	1,614.83 -14.96
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	539.03 -5.86
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	173.34 -1.85
CONSTRUCTION	328.93 -0.68
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,898.30 -138.00
ENERGY	851.86 -6.86
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	532.72 -5.40
HEALTH CARE	2,277.14 -64.70
TRANSPORTATION	1,052.28 -5.61
PROPERTY	1,138.04 -5.52
PLANTATION	7,555.93 -52.80
FBMSHA	12,427.00 -126.00
FBMACE	5,378.17 -87.80
TECHNOLOGY	64.45 -1.37

TURNOVER: 3.586 bil VALUE: RM3,056 bil

FBM KLCI closes at intraday low on profit-taking

THE FBM KLCI reversed Tuesday's gains to close lower yesterday as investors took profit amid the negative performance of regional peers.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI fell 14.96 points or 0.92% to end at its intraday low of 1,614.83 from Tuesday's close of 1,629.79.

The benchmark index opened 0.87 of-a-point easier at 1,628.92 and hit an intraday high of 1,631.15 during the early morning session.

Decliners trounced advancers 827 to 285 on the broader market, while 497 counters were unchanged, 761 untraded, and 10 others suspended.

Turnover narrowed to 3.59 billion units valued at RM3.06 billion against Tuesday's 3.91 billion units valued at RM3.29 billion.

UOB Kay Hian Wealth Advisors head of investment research Mohd Sedek Jantan noted that major Asian indices followed Wall Street's downturn performance, driven by the ripple effects of a broad-based selloff in US Treasuries.

He said investors remained cautious, with many refraining from taking significant positions ahead of key US employment data due later this week. Adding to the uncertainty is whether incoming President Donald Trump will shift towards a looser tariff policy.

Among the heavyweights, Petronas Gas added six sen to RM17.82 and YTL Power gained one sen to RM4.51, while Tenaga Nasional and Press Metal were flat at RM14.32 and RM4.79 respectively.

For active stocks, ACE Market debutant Swift Energy increased 11.5 sen to 39.5 sen, UEM Sunrise went up four sen to RM1.14, while Dagang NeXchange and Bumi Armada slid one sen each to 41.5 sen and 67.5 sen respectively. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
SET	0.395	0.115	41.07	3,328,245
HSI-PWB1	0.130	0.005	4.00	1,540,100
HSI-CYY	0.065	-0.020	-23.53	895,929
VELOCITY	0.080	-	-	764,737
HSI-CWAZ	0.040	-0.015	-27.27	581,368
GAMUDA	5.190	-0.010	-0.19	523,348
MYEG	0.960	-0.020	-2.04	462,580
99SMART-CP	0.070	-0.005	-6.67	453,725
UEMS	1.140	0.040	3.64	373,367
TOPGLOV	1.240	-0.080	-6.06	373,264
JCY	0.540	-0.030	-5.26	366,272
HSI-PWB4	0.075	-	-	365,730
YTLPOWER-C64	0.080	0.005	6.67	346,403
SUPERMX	1.170	-0.050	-4.10	336,477
HSI-CWAM	0.010	-0.005	-33.33	303,325
GAMUDA-C2R	0.260	-0.005	-1.89	296,047
TENCENT-C43	0.160	0.010	6.67	251,681
YTL	2.680	-0.050	-1.83	248,626
EKOVEST	0.365	-0.005	-1.35	247,602
VINVEST	0.075	-	-	243,144



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
F&N	27.000	0.420	741
UTDPLT	31.380	0.420	6,067
NPC	2.900	0.300	394
DLADY	31.200	0.200	81
KESM	4.080	0.190	3,574
HSI-PWBS	1.180	0.170	1
AJI	15.260	0.160	221
HSI-PWBX	0.995	0.150	200
AIRPORT	10.780	0.140	17,798
EG	2.680	0.130	56,692
SET	0.395	0.115	3,328,245
SUNCON-C11	1.150	0.110	420
CHINTEK	8.300	0.100	11
HSTECH-H13	0.700	0.100	512
SBAGAN	5.490	0.100	433
WARISAN	1.500	0.090	1,003
WASCO	1.270	0.070	44,102
EG-WD	0.920	0.065	67,551
ARKA	1.650	0.060	12
PETGAS	17.820	0.060	2,309

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
SAPNRG-WA	0.015	200.00	70,045
HSI-HZL	0.025	150.00	201
MALAKOFC58	0.115	64.29	1,300
YONGTAL-PA	0.055	57.14	7
FBMKLCI-HA1	0.045	50.00	31,875
SUNCON-C23	0.015	50.00	2,525
SET	0.395	41.07	3,328,245
UM-C89	0.035	40.00	1,100
UEMS-CIL	0.070	40.00	152,572
AIM-WA	0.020	33.33	2,100
MTRONIC	0.020	33.33	1,407
TWL-LA	0.020	33.33	7,000
UEMS-CIG	0.040	33.33	28,345
MSC-CR	0.065	30.00	7,850
HIL-WB	0.250	25.00	153
HSI-PWBG	0.075	25.00	43,803
LIONIND-WA	0.025	25.00	13
UEMS-CIM	0.100	25.00	23,300
UEMS-C11	0.110	22.22	29,278
AEON-C31	0.030	20.00	4,380

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	42,528.36	-178.20	-0.42
S&P 500 [US]	5,909.03	-66.35	-1.11
NASDAQ [US]	19,489.68	-375.30	-1.89
NYSE [US]	19,213.88	-47.54	-0.25
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,017.00	+5.18	+0.10
FTSE 100 [UK]	8,254.81	+9.53	+0.12
DAX [GER]	20,386.76	+46.19	+0.23
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	39,981.06	-102.24	-0.26
TOPIX [JPN]	2,770.00	-16.57	-0.59
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	19,279.84	-167.74	-0.86
CSI 300 [CHN]	3,789.22	-6.89	-0.18
SH SE COM [CHN]	3,230.17	+0.52	+0.02
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	2,521.05	+28.95	+1.16
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	181.97	+0.64	+0.35
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,349.15	+64.05	+0.77
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,599.41	+56.52	+0.66
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	78,194.44	-4.67	-0.01
FBM KLCI	1,614.83	-14.96	-0.92
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	3,879.26	+51.09	+1.33
WTI [US\$/BBL.]	75.26	+1.01	+1.36
BRENT [US\$/BBL.]	77.84	+0.79	+1.03
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	2,666.50	+1.10	+0.04
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	30.75	+0.06	+0.21
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	954.81	+4.01	+0.42
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	421.35	+1.80	+0.43
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	9,003.00	0.00	0.00
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	458.75	+0.75	+0.16
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	543.50	+1.00	+0.18
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	41.80	+0.55	+1.33
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	11,210.00	-167.00	-1.47
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	186.80	+1.30	+0.70

As at 5pm, Jan 8

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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AirAsia Move partners Antom to simplify payment methods

KUALA LUMPUR: AirAsia Move has signed a partnership agreement with Antom as part of its continuous efforts to transform travel, including seamless payment experiences on the app.

Under the agreement, AirAsia Move will work closely with Antom, Ant International's merchant payment and digitisation services provider, and 2C2P, a Singapore-based global payments platform and a subsidiary of Antom.

This collaboration is set to integrate Antom and 2C2P's advanced payment solutions into AirAsia Move's platform, including payment orchestration and acquiring for both cards and local payment methods.

These technologies will empower AirAsia Move to streamline payment methods, reduce cross-border transaction costs, and operational expenses, and broaden its consumer base while providing customers with a wider range of preferred payment options.

Capital A CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes lauded the partnership as a significant step forward for the broader Capital A ecosystem.

"This collaboration with Antom and 2C2P benefits AirAsia Move and strengthens our ecosystem by enhancing payment capabilities across our businesses."

The partnership between AirAsia Move, Antom, and 2C2P builds on a strategic collaboration announced in March between Capital A and Ant International, focusing on integrating payment methods, providing acquiring services, enhancing digital marketing and sponsorships, and expanding access to sustainable finance to support MSMEs in transitioning to a low-carbon economy.

Ringgit ends lower as positive US data boosts greenback

THE ringgit retreated from Tuesday's gains to close lower against the US dollar yesterday, as positive data from the US prompted investors to return to the greenback.

At 6pm, the ringgit slid to 4.5000/5050 against the greenback from Monday's close of 4.4850/4900.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid told Bernama that the ringgit was mostly flat against the greenback with USD/MYR ranges between RM4.4885 and RM4.5005.

"Positive data points in the US last night, such as Job Openings and ISM Index for the non-manufacturing sector, have bolstered the case for a gradual monetary easing by the US Federal Reserve."

"As such, markets will observe incoming information such as the Federal Open Market Committee minutes and the labour market data in December. The Nonfarm Payroll statistics will be released on Friday with consensus pencilling in for 154,000 jobs creation in December, lower than 227,000 in November," he said.

Meanwhile, the ringgit closed higher against other currencies. It climbed against the Japanese yen to 2.8449/8482 from Tuesday's close of 2.8458/8492, advanced against the British pound to 5.6020/6083 from 5.6341/6403 and rose vis-a-vis the euro to 4.6431/6483 from 4.6756/6808.

The local note also traded higher against Asean currencies. It climbed against the Thai baht to 12.9949/13.0168 from 13.0045/0258 at the previous close and was higher vis-a-vis the Indonesian rupiah at 277.5/278.0 compared with 277.7/278.2.

The ringgit appreciated marginally versus the Singapore dollar to 3.2919/2958 from 3.2983/3022 and also against the Philippine peso to 7.70/7.72 from 7.71/7.72 on Tuesday. — Bernama

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.5670	4.4310	4.4210
1 Australian Dollar	2.8640	2.7470	2.7310
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3470	3.2480	3.2400
1 Canadian Dollar	3.1780	3.0910	3.0790
1 Euro	4.7330	4.5780	4.5580
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.5860	2.4880	2.4720
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3470	3.2480	3.2400
1 Sterling Pound	5.7090	5.5260	5.5060
1 Swiss Franc	5.0600	4.8430	4.8280
100 UAE Dirham	125.8100	119.2600	119.0600
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.8220	3.5720	3.3720
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.7600	60.1000	N/A
100 Danish Krone	65.0300	59.8200	59.6200
100 Hongkong Dollar	59.3700	56.4000	56.2000
100 Indian Rupee	5.4100	5.0800	4.8800
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0293	0.0265	0.0215
100 Japanese Yen	2.8960	2.8020	2.7920
100 New Taiwan Dollar	15.0000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	41.4100	38.0600	37.8600
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.6700	1.5600	1.3600
100 Philippine Peso	7.9600	7.5000	7.3000
100 Qatar Riyal	126.6500	120.2400	120.0400
100 Saudi Riyal	122.9800	116.7400	116.5400
100 South Africa Rand	25.3300	22.8700	22.6700
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.5900	1.4600	1.2600
100 Swedish Krona	42.4200	38.6200	38.4200
100 Thai Baht	13.8000	12.2300	11.8300

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Top Glove Corporation Bhd

Market Perform. Target price: RM1.30



Source: Kenanga Research

TOP GLOVE is optimistic of a strong sequential rebound in earnings recovery in Q2'25 due to the absence of high-priced inventory, a slight increase in ASP, and favourable forex. However, it expects flattish volume sale in the months of Jan and Feb 2025 due to the frontloading effects of US customers purchasing from Chinese glove makers before the 50% tariff imposition effective Jan 2025 compared to a 8%-10% M-o-M growth in Nov and Dec 2024. Thereafter, the group expects order shipments from the US customers to accelerate from end-Feb 2025.

The company noted that a more pronounced effects of rising ASP will only be felt after Feb 2025 due to the frontloading effects of US customers purchasing from Chinese glove makers. We conservatively assume ASP of US\$20/1,000 pieces in our earnings model. It is optimistic that ASPs are expected to inch up gradually by 3% each month from Nov 2024 onwards. However, due to the lag effect, ASP increases will only be felt gradually starting from Dec 2024. Typically, ASP for the US market is higher by US\$1.00/1,000 pieces compared to the rest of the world. Currently, the ASP is at US\$19-20/1,000 pieces compared to Europe at US\$17-18/1,000 pieces. We conservatively assumed ASP of US\$20/1,000 pieces in our earnings model.

It has seen more enquiries from its US customers. The group highlighted that its exports to the US are continuing to show improvement which rose 21% QoQ in Q1'25. US sales accounted for 18% of total group volume sales, above the 15% mix for FY24, but still below the pre-pandemic average of 20-30%.

MARKET PERFORM with RM1.30 TP. — Kenanga Research, Jan 8

PIE Industrial Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM7.50



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

PAN International Electronics (PIE) Industrial Bhd, a subsidiary of Hon Hai/Foxconn Technology Group, is a full-service Electronics Manufacturing Services (EMS) provider with vertically integrated capabilities. Its service offerings span wire and cable production, assembly, and harnessing; mould and die fabrication; PCB assembly; precision machining; plastic injection moulding; metal stamping; and cleanroom assembly and testing.

2024 marked a pivotal year for PIE as it entered the switches and server market, creating a new growth avenue and furthering its potential in AI servers. The group is also expanding capacity to meet the demands of its supercomputer client. We expect the servers and supercomputer segments to be key growth drivers, contributing 55-60% of revenue in 2025-27.

PIE has benefited from global trade tensions, achieving a 26% earnings CAGR over 2019-23. With escalating US-China tensions, we expect the trend of production shifts to Southeast Asia, including Malaysia, to continue.

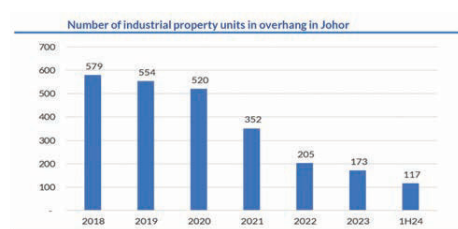
PIE's sustainability principles align with the Economic, Environmental, Social, and Governance pillars to meet the objectives set out. Its 4 sustainability focus areas are: 1) Creating value through innovation, 2) Corporate governance, 3) Human capital development, 4) Environmental friendly awareness.

Following the recent completion of its Plant 6 (280k sf) in Penang, PIE has expanded its total built-up area to 1m sf (from 730k sf), and now PIE is set to expand Plant 5 (P5) within the same vicinity. The expansion will increase P5's built-up area from 100k sf to 185k sf by Q3'25 to support rising order volumes from an existing customer in the supercomputer space.

BUY with RM7.50 TP. — Maybank Investment Bank, Jan 8

Construction

Overweight



Source: Nopic

WE view the latest signing of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) as positive for the construction sector, as a key goal is to attract 100 projects in the first 10 years, that are on sectors like aerospace, electronics and tourism. Malaysia will establish an infrastructure support fund related to the JS-SEZ while Singapore will design funding support to facilitate Singapore companies' expansion in the JS-SEZ.

In our view, infrastructure support which relates to contractors would cover road connectivity as the JS-SEZ is spread across nine flagship areas: Johor Bahru (JB) City Centre, Iskandar Puteri, Tanjung Pelepas-Tanjung Bin, Pasir Gudang, Senai-Skudai, Sedenak, Forest City, Pengerang Integrated Petroleum Complex and Desaru. A key contractor involved in road-related projects in Johor is Kimlun Corp (KICB MK, NR) via the upgrade of Senai-Desaru Expressway from Jambatan Sungai Johor to Sungai Semenchu.

Priority sectors under the JS-SEZ that may benefit contractors include logistics, electrical and electronics and manufacturing — amidst the need to construct industrial buildings such as logistic hubs and factories. Data from the National Property Information Centre (Nopic) shows that the overhang in industrial buildings has been on a downturn.

We envisage contractors such as SCGB and IJM to be at the forefront of such related industrial opportunities. SCGB has clinched MYR3.9bn worth of data centre (DC) jobs in Johor, which could put it in a strategic position to aim for other industrial buildings, namely warehouses and semiconductor manufacturing jobs. Meanwhile, IJM only has started building DCs in Iskandar Puteri and Gelang Patah in Johor but we are reassured by its presence in building semiconductor facilities in Penang and warehousing logistic hubs in Selangor, which could make IJM a good fit. — RHB Research, Jan 8



the Sun **LYFE**

THURSDAY | JAN 9, 2025

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Paint it right

Colours enhance mood of living spaces – P22



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How colour spectrum can affect mood

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

THE colours surrounding us do more than just please the eye as they can dramatically influence our emotions, behaviour and even physical well-being. As we spend more time at home than ever before, the colours splashed on our walls have become increasingly important in shaping our daily experiences.

Research shows the human brain is able to react to different colours in distinct ways and are able to trigger the release of various hormones that affect the mood and energy levels. While individual responses can vary based on personal experiences and cultural backgrounds, certain colours consistently evoke specific emotional responses.

Breaking down colour spectrum

🌀 Blue: Productivity booster

Often called the most productive colour, blue promotes focus and mental clarity depending on the intensity of the shade. Light blue walls can make a room feel spacious and serene. It is ideal for home offices or study areas. Meanwhile, darker shades of blues add sophistication, maintaining a calm atmosphere. However, too much blue can feel cold or sterile if not balanced with warmer elements.

🌀 Green: Nature's neutral

Green represents balance and harmony, making it an excellent choice for any room where relaxation is key. Studies show green can reduce eye strain and stress levels, making it ideal for bedrooms or reading nooks. Its association with nature makes it particularly effective in urban homes seeking a connection to the outdoors.

🌀 Yellow: Happiness maker

Yellow stimulates serotonin production, the body's natural mood lifter. Right for kitchens and dining areas, yellow promotes optimism and social interaction. However, bright shades of yellow can increase anxiety and fatigue when overused. Softer, buttery tones offer benefits without overwhelming the senses.

🌀 Red: Energy amplifier

Red increases heart rate and energy levels, making it a powerful accent colour. While a red dining room can stimulate appetite and conversation, too much red in a bedroom might interfere with sleep. The fluctuation in how the colour is able to dramatically change one's mood means red has to be used strategically, particularly in spaces meant to encourage activity or passion.

🌀 Purple: Creative catalyst

Associated with luxury and creativity, purple can transform a space into an inspiring sanctuary. Light lavender promotes relaxation while deeper shades of purples add drama and sophistication. It is particularly effective in meditation rooms or creative spaces.

🌀 White: Clean slate

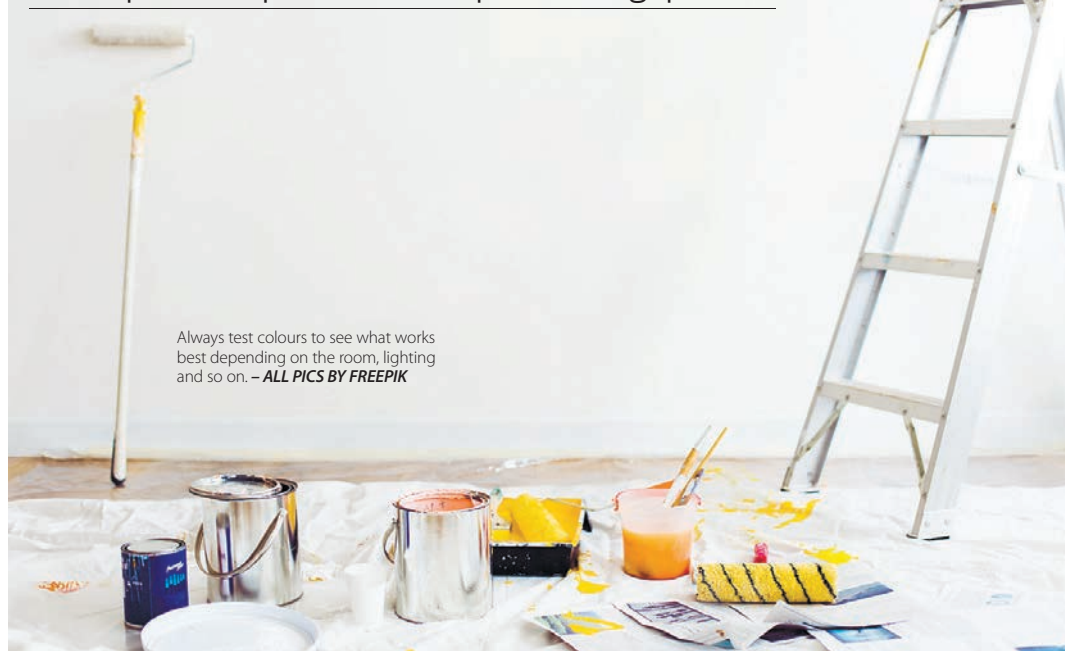
The most common colour in households, white is a neutral colour and it reflects light. When used as wall paint, white makes spaces feel larger and cleaner. They can promote mental clarity but might feel stark without texture or warm accents. Modern designers often use white as a canvas for colourful furniture and artwork.

Practical applications for every room

Choose colours based on the room's primary purpose. For living rooms which often become a hub for family gatherings, warm tones such as soft terracotta or sage green encourage conversation and comfort. For formal living rooms, sophisticated navy or elegant greens create an impressive atmosphere.

In bedrooms, opt for sleep-friendly colours such as soft blues for better sleep quality, gentle greens for stress reduction, muted purples for relaxation and warm beiges for

➤ Wall paints shape emotional impact of living spaces



Always test colours to see what works best depending on the room, lighting and so on. – ALL PICS BY FREEPIK



Certain tones can promote focus and mental clarity.

🌀 Test before committing

Paint large swatches on different walls and observe them throughout the day as lighting changes.

🌀 All about flow

Choose colours that transition smoothly from room to room for a cohesive feel.

🌀 Factor in existing elements

Consider the room's furniture, flooring and fixtures when selecting wall colours.

🌀 Use 60-30-10 rule

Apply the main colour to 60% of the room, a secondary colour to 30% and an accent colour to 10%.

Beyond these tips, keep in mind personal preference plays a more crucial role in how colours affect each individual person's mood. The colour psychology is more of a valuable guideline rather than a universal guideline as everyone is different and there is no one glove that fits us all.

comfort. Productivity-enhancing colours that work well in the home office include light blue, pale green, soft yellow and the standard white.

Meanwhile for the kitchen, appetite-friendly colours are usually warm yellows, soft oranges and light greens.

Choosing colours

🌀 Consider natural light

Northern-facing rooms benefit from warmer colours to counteract cool light while southern-facing rooms can handle cooler tones.



Warm colours are able to create an inviting atmosphere.

BY THASHINE SELVAKUMARAN

STRESS and fatigue have become common companions for many. Long hours at the desk, continuous screen time and the pressures of balancing work and personal life can take a toll on physical and mental health. Regular massages have evolved from being a luxury to an essential part of self-care. They not only relieve muscle tension but also improve circulation, reduce anxiety and enhance overall well-being.

In Malaysia, a growing number of massage centres provide the getaway for people to unwind and recharge. Among the most notable are Qi Odyssey, Urban Retreat Spa and Thai Odyssey, each offering unique therapeutic experiences.

Qi Odyssey

This spa stands out for its unique blend of modern wellness practices and ancient Chinese healing techniques. It focuses on harnessing the body's energy to promote healing and restore balance. Central to its philosophy is the concept of *Qi*, the life force that flows through every person.

Its treatments are designed to help clients reconnect with their energy and achieve a sense of peace and relaxation. One of the spa's most popular offerings is reflexology, a treatment that targets specific pressure points in the feet to promote overall health. Reflexology is beneficial for those who spend long hours standing or walking as it helps relieve foot pain and improve circulation.

In addition to reflexology, Qi Odyssey offers acupressure massages, which apply pressure to specific points on the body to relieve tension and pain. These treatments are ideal for people who suffer from chronic aches and pains or need a gentle but effective way to unwind.



Thai traditional massage.



Qi Odyssey Berjaya Times Square's tea and waiting lounge.

Massage escapes

Discover relaxation across these blissful retreats

Its serene environment, coupled with expert therapists, ensures every visitor leaves feeling rejuvenated and refreshed. There are three Qi Odyssey outlets in the Klang Valley.

Urban Retreat Spa

For those looking for a more luxurious experience, Urban Retreat Spa is a good destination. With three outlets in the Klang Valley, this spa offers a wide range of treatments designed to pamper the body and soul. It is well-known for its emphasis on creating a calm and peaceful environment, making it an ideal spot for anyone looking to escape the hustle and bustle of city life.

Its signature treatments include aromatherapy massage and Swedish massage. The aromatherapy massage is beneficial for those seeking relaxation and emotional balance as it

combines gentle massage techniques with the therapeutic properties of essential oils. It is ideal for individuals dealing with stress, anxiety or fatigue. Meanwhile, the Swedish massage offers a gentler approach, using long, flowing strokes to promote relaxation and improve circulation.

Another popular treatment at this spa is the aromatherapy massage, in which essential oils are used to enhance the healing benefits of the massage. This treatment is ideal for those who are not only seeking physical relief but also emotional balance as the calming scents help reduce anxiety and stress.

The spa also offers specialised treatments such as the hot stone massage, in which heated stones are placed on specific parts of the body to promote relaxation and relieve deep-seated muscle tension. Combined with the skill of its experienced therapists, this treatment can transport clients to a state of complete relaxation.

Thai Odyssey

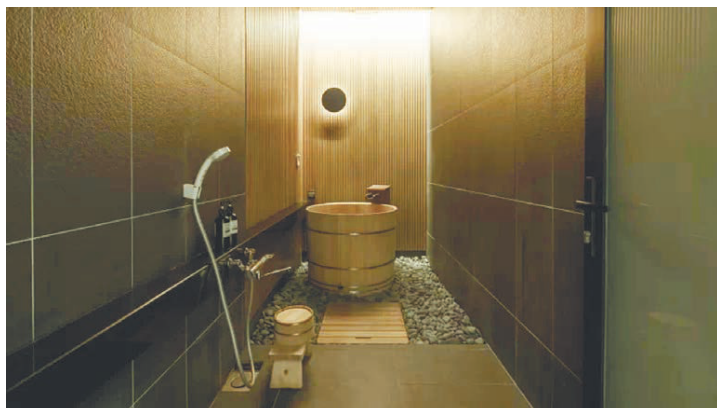
If you are looking for an authentic Thai massage experience, this is a go-



Thai Odyssey's couple room for Thai aromatherapy massage.



Qi Odyssey Berjaya Times Square's half body massage lounge.



Traditional Japanese bathing culture at Urban Retreat Spa.

to spot in Malaysia. With 45 locations across the country, Thai Odyssey brings the best of Thailand's ancient massage traditions to Malaysia. Its unique therapy, involving stretching, acupressure and rhythmic compressions, relieves tension and improve flexibility.

Unlike typical massages, Thai massage is done without oils and the recipient remains fully clothed. The therapists use their hands, elbows, knees and feet to apply firm pressure and guide the body into different stretches. It is an invigorating experience that helps release deep-seated tension and improve range of motion. Its traditional Thai massage is ideal for people who lead sedentary lifestyles or suffer from stiffness and poor posture.

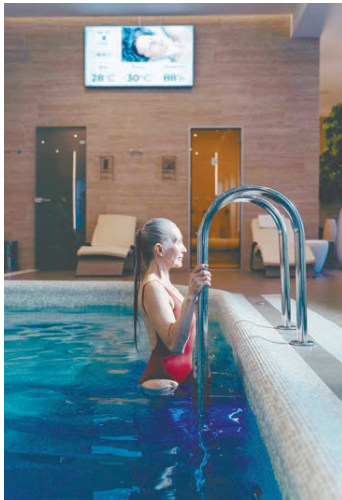
Another popular option at Thai Odyssey is the Thai herbal compress massage, in which warm, steamed herbal pouches are used to soothe sore muscles and invigorate the body.

The herbs used in the compress, such as lemongrass and turmeric, have natural healing properties that help relieve pain, inflammation and stress.

Thai Odyssey also offers a range of other services, such as foot reflexology, aromatherapy massage and facial treatments, all of which combine traditional Thai healing methods with modern wellness techniques. Its tranquil ambience, skilled therapists and affordable prices make it a top choice for many Malaysians and tourists alike.

Each location brings its own unique approach to healing and wellness, ensuring no matter where you choose to go, you will leave feeling revitalised.

In every situation where stress is almost unavoidable, taking time for a regular massage is an investment in your health and happiness. The right massage can work wonders for your body and mind.



Swimming pool walking can work your muscles better than land-based exercises. – **PEXELSPIC**

Water-based workouts ideal for those with joint problems

DO you suffer from acute discomfort or pain when attempting light exercises? Are issues with joints affecting your ability to work out? Then consider water-based exercises as an option. This is ideal especially if you live in a residence with access to a swimming pool.

Such ailments are no longer confined to senior citizens. Younger folk are also susceptible with those who engage in strenuous sports being more at risk. The popularity of indoor football (or futsal) on hard court surfaces has seen an increase in injuries as the impact on joints is significant, especially if the participant is overweight.

When recovering from joint pains and aches, you should not place too much stress on the affected areas. Hence water-based exercises are highly recommended as being in a swimming pool greatly reduces the pressure on joints.

Water is significantly more dense than air, making exercises performed in the former more demanding compared to those done on land. The increased resistance when walking in water enables you to work your muscles more effectively than with land-based exercises. It also helps you burn additional calories, which can contribute to weight loss.

One of the simplest exercises is water walking – a low-impact cardiovascular activity. Being gentle on bones and joints, it is a safer option for individuals with conditions like arthritis, osteoporosis or fibromyalgia.

To begin, try walking in water that reaches about your waist level. Concentrate on maintaining proper form by keeping your:

- ➔ Core and back muscles engaged
- ➔ Back straight and lengthened
- ➔ Shoulders back
- ➔ Chin up, with your head facing straight ahead
- ➔ Ears aligned over your shoulders

Also ensure that you:

- ➔ Keep your torso upright without leaning too far forward or to either side
- ➔ Walk with long strides
- ➔ Press into your heel first before rolling your weight onto your toes
- ➔ Swing your arms as you walk

Once you have mastered water-walking, you can move into deeper water. Begin by walking slowly and then gradually increase your speed. – **R. BALA**

Choosing between curtains, blinds for your home

➔ Set the mood by controlling light, ventilation

■ BY **R.BALA**

IT is not just about letting light in but a question of aesthetics. Windows are a key feature in any living space. Hence home dwellers need to give careful consideration to the type of fittings they attach to a window. These fittings control light and ventilation of a space as well as have a major impact on the decor.

The most popular types of window fittings include fabric curtains, which hang vertically from a rod, and blinds, which are made-to-measure as per window size and are available as roller, Venetian and Roman blinds.

Here are some tips on how to choose between curtains and blinds:

➔ Window size

Curtains are best suited to larger rooms. They give spaces such as living rooms a cosy ambience. Curtains in bedrooms also enhance the feeling of snugness, though be wary if the room is too small. Usually curtains are best suited to the master bedroom, which should be the largest. Thick curtains also prevent noise pollution from disturbing the inhabitants' snooze time.

➔ Dampness factor

Curtains are usually made from thick fabrics and will retain moisture if placed in wet areas such as bathrooms. They are unsuitable in



Blinds are made-to-measure as per window size. – **123RFPIC**

kitchens as well as they will absorb odours. Blinds, preferably made from plastic or steel, work best in these areas.

➔ Design cues

Blinds generally work well in spaces designated for study or work. They impart neatness and a sense of order to an area where inhabitants require focus. With more people working remotely, carefully chosen blinds can give a work space a more professional feel.

Curtains do allow for a plethora of choices. The endless fabric designs mean home owners can match their aesthetics with other furnishings in the room.

➔ Easy maintenance

Curtains can be taken down and dumped in the washing machine. Blinds will need to be wiped down, one slat at a time. Both will require maintenance to avoid them becoming dust traps – so it really depends on the home owner's preference.

How math could make moving sofas effortless

WHO has not struggled to haul a sofa through a tight corner or a cramped stairwell? This seemingly trivial conundrum presents one of the most fascinating mathematical problems of our time. Now a South Korean mathematician claims to have solved this mystery.

Many viewers will have recognised

themselves in Episode 16 of Season 5 of the hit TV show *Friends*, when Ross, Rachel and Chandler struggle to squeeze a sofa through the stairwell of their apartment building. After many unsuccessful attempts, the three friends reluctantly decide to cut the sofa in half – a radical decision that could have been avoided, according to mathematician Jineon Baek.

The researcher from Yonsei University, South Korea, claimed to have solved the famous "moving sofa problem" – a mathematical conundrum first formulated in 1966 by Austrian-Canadian mathematician Leo Moser, to find the largest sofa size that could fit around a corner of a given width. Baek based his work on the Gerver sofa model, developed in 1992 by Rutgers University professor Joseph Gerver. This theoretical form, with its elaborate design, combines a U-shaped front, a flat back with rounded edges and armrests with straight front faces. The strange shape makes for the largest possible area that could move around a right-angled corner of a hallway with a unit width of one.

After numerous calculations, Baek determined that the maximum surface area of a Gerver sofa is 2.2195 square units. Beyond this size, a sofa would no longer be able to get past a right-angled corner in a narrow corridor, as he explains in a detailed, over 100-page paper published on the ArXiv platform. In other words, to avoid getting stuck, it is best to opt for a horseshoe-shaped sofa.

Baek's work is not yet complete, however. His solution must now be scrutinised by other mathematicians to confirm its validity. If his conclusions are given the thumbs-up, they will put an end to an enigma that has fascinated mathematicians for almost 60 years.

Although this discovery may seem highly theoretical, it could have concrete applications. For example, designers could draw inspiration from this research to design sofas specially adapted to these kinds of constraints. And that could make moving house a whole lot easier. – **ETX Studio**



A mathematician claims to have solved the famous 'moving sofa problem'. – **123RFPIC**

I'm Still Here, Brazil's hope for Oscars glory, focuses on the country's military dictatorship years (1965-1985) but is also very much a film about the present, said lead actress Fernanda Torres said.

The movie, which won for best screenplay at the 2024 Venice film festival, has been proven popular with Brazilian audiences and scores a lofty 90% on the *Rotten Tomatoes* review aggregation website.

The Oscar nominations will be announced on Jan 17. *I'm Still Here* is on the shortlist to compete in the Best International Film category. It is also nominated in the Best Actress in a Drama and Best Foreign Language Film categories at the Golden Globes, winning the former.

The movie is based on the true story of Rubens Paiva, a leftist politician who disappeared under the dictatorship he opposed.

It looks at the fight his wife Eunice Paiva who waged to find out what happened to him after he was abducted by regime agents in 1971.

Brazil's military dictatorship was responsible for the deaths and disappearances of more than 400 people, according to the National Truth Commission that investigated its rights violations.

With *I'm Still Here*, director Walter Salles makes a return after a decade-long absence and the critical success of his 1998 film *Central Station* as well as 2004's *The Motorcycle Diaries*.

Torres's own mother, 95-year-old Oscar nominee Fernanda Montenegro, makes an appearance at the end of the film portraying an elderly Eunice.

Here is what Salles and Torres said about the film in a joint interview as Hollywood's awards season kicks into high gear:

Past and present

Salles: When we started the project in 2016, we thought it would be an opportunity to look at the past to understand where we come from. But given the far right's rise in Brazil, from 2017, we realised the film also works to understand the present.

Torres: It is a film about the present. We had a president (Jair Bolsonaro, between 2019 and 2022) who praised a regime torturer and



Torres picked up the Golden Globe award for Best Actress in a Drama for *I'm Still Here*. – AFP/PIK

Powerful tale of political struggle

➤ *I'm Still Here*, ode to Brazil's resistance

believed the military saved Brazil from communism. Whoever sees the film thinks 'This is wrong, there was no reason to persecute this family'.

Reception abroad

Salles: In international festivals we got similar reactions as in Brazil because we are not the only country seeing how fragile democracy is, or living or having lived through the trauma of having an extreme

right wing.

Sean Penn saw the film the day of Donald Trump's election and when he presented it in Los Angeles, he said Eunice's smile was an example of resistance for what's coming in the US.

Torres: We live in a volatile world, where new technologies are changing social relationships. In moments like these, we see an uptick in a desire for an

authoritarian government to bring back order.

Through the perspective of this family, the film shows what that means in a country with a violent government that suspends civil rights.

Flashbacks

Salles (on the 1970s setting): These were memories of my teenage years. My girlfriend around age 13 or 14 was friends with one of Paiva's daughters so I spent a lot of time with them.

In their house, it was another world, with free political

discussion, where you could talk about censored books and records – where you dreamed of a more inclusive country.

But, I also discovered a violence I did not know about. The day Rubens was abducted, never to be seen again, left a stark impression when everything changed for everybody who was in that microcosm. Whatever innocence we had we lost that day.

Oscars nomination

Salles: Awards work to bring more people in to see movies, so I am happy in that sense. – AFP



Old fashioned fans can help keep temperatures down without hefty energy bills.

– FREEPIK/PIK

Tips on beating heat wave

■ BY R.BALA

EXTREME heat followed by heavy downpours. That seems to be the pattern for local weather these days and many Malaysians are sweating buckets, even when at home. Not everyone can afford the energy bills that come with air-conditioners constantly on full blast. Climate change will ensure that such heatwaves will be very much part of our existence for years to come.

So how can heat-stroked Malaysians find some cool comfort in their own homes? Here are a few options:

➤ Propellor power

Instead of racking high electricity bills with non-stop usage of air-conditioners, why not have a few old school stand fans circulating the air inside your homes? There are a huge variety available online including large industrial units

that can really help cool overheated houses. Many of them also offer a retro "steam punk" aesthetic, adding to the cool factor.

➤ Blinds and curtains can help keep it cool

As simple as it may sound, the right coloured blinds or curtains can immensely reduce heat inside your home, especially in rooms or spaces with direct sunlight. Just having them down during the hottest times of the day can reduce temperatures by a few notches, and it costs next to nothing in maintenance or energy bills once installed.

➤ Live close to greenery

Without a doubt the best long-term solution would be to buy a home in an area nestled in lush greenery. A hillside covered in natural splendour would provide respite all year round from the heat. With cool morning mists

offering almost highland-type relief from the swelter found in many inner city areas, potential property purchasers are seriously mulling options slightly further away from congested city centres, where the prices are also incidentally, more affordable.

The baking hot weather have left many willing to trade overcrowded suburbs for an area where lush greenery is the main attraction. A garden or green lifestyle appeals across age spans with both young and old buyers certainly mulling the daily comforts of a home nestled in nature. Many of these buyers are also looking for more than just a few metres of jogging track or miniscule garden lots, knowing full well that properties with access to proper outdoor amenities will appreciate greatly in the future.

BY S.TAMARAI CHELVI

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Nostalgic Bollywood music

► Singer Udit Narayan thrills movie fans with evergreen Hindi tunes from 1990s

FAMOUS Bollywood singer Udit Narayan mesmerised a 3,000-strong crowd at his concert at Mega Star Arena KL recently.

An award-winning performer of more than 25,000 songs in various Indian languages, Udit was the playback singer for Shah Rukh Khan (SRK), Aamir Khan, Salman Khan and Hrithik Roshan in the 1990s and 2000s.

The Dec 28, 2024 concert began at 7.30pm with local singers such as Kilafairy and Syamel performing Udit's songs before he took the stage at close to 9pm to the audience's delight.

The singer arrived on stage in style via a platform raised from below, appearing in a shiny gold blazer and maroon outfit amid a colourful light show.

Despite his grand entry, Udit's opening song *Papa Kehte Hain* - from *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak*, which starred Aamir Khan - regrettably did not meet the crowd's high energy.

His choice of a slow song - one not very well known in Malaysia (though it made him famous in India) - was a bit of a letdown, considering he could have picked any dance track from SRK's movies.

However, he quickly captured the hearts of the audience with his next song, the fast-paced *Rukh Jaa Dil Deewane* from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, which made up for the slow opening number. Then, the singer crooned romantic ballads like *Pehla Nasha*, receiving thunderous applause. His soulful

voice and impeccable delivery were absolute treats for fans.

Cinematic journey

For the first hour, Udit sang tunes mostly from Aamir Khan's movies, such as *Tinak Tin Tana (Mann)*, and performed duets with singers Deepa Narayan (his wife) and Sana Arora.

Most impressively, he reenacted the movie heroes' dance moves for each song.

In between, Udit interacted in English, praising Malaysia as a beautiful country. He asked the audience if they were enjoying the show and received a resounding "yes".

The singer shared some light moments in Hindi, thanked the audience for keeping him in their hearts over the years and spoke a few words in Malay, such as "Apa khabar?"

Near the end, Udit



Udit singing *Papa Kehte Hain*.



Udit gives a warm, respectful gesture to the audience.

made the smooth transition from the Aamir Khan movies to the SRK ones.

Udit, whose career spans four decades, sang crowd favourites from the movies *Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Ghum* and *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.

He also belted out *Jaadu Teri Nazar (Darr)*, even mimicking SRK's famous stutter of "K...K... Kiran" from the start of the song.

Every time he sang a SRK tune, the crowd predictably erupted in applause and cheers.

The audience were on their feet for *Mere Mehbooba Mere Sanam (Duplicate)*, *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai, Dil To Pagal Hai* and *Bole Chudiyian (Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Ghum)*. But we wished Udit sang fan favourites like *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* in full instead of inserting it into a medley with other songs.

For *Mein Yahaan Hoon* (I am here) from the movie *Veer Zaara*, Udit kept gesturing towards his heart as if to say that "I am here in your hearts".

Language was no barrier for the

multilingual Udit, as he even sang a song in Tamil titled *Sahana Saral* (from the movie *Stavaji: The Boss*, starring Rajinikanth).

Udit's last song of the night *Om Shanti Om* had the audience with their hands up in the air and swaying to the rhythm.

Concluding the concert, the down-to-earth singer thanked his musicians. Then he simply told the audience, "Sudah habis," and left the stage with a smile.

Still the king at 69

Dubbed as the "King of Melody", 69-year-old Udit displayed tremendous versatility on stage, easily tackling different musical styles and movie soundtracks.

His golden voice transported the audience back to the 1990s, when his songs topped the music charts. Despite the passing of decades, Udit's performance feels remarkably fresh, clearly satisfying concertgoers who came for an unforgettable experience.

69-year-old Udit's charm and showmanship show no sign of fading.



Udit displaying tremendous versatility on stage.



theSun Classified

THURSDAY | JAN 9, 2025

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Requirement:

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- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply, training will be provided.
- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing
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322 Notices

PERISYIHARAN JUALAN
DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG
PERMOHONAN UNTUK PERLAKSANAAN NO. PA-38-1186-11/2024

Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 256 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965

Dan
Dalam perkara mengenai Gadaihan Persewaan No. 07985C2021000801 bertarikh : 20/12/2021 ke atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipanggil di bawah Geran No. Hakmilik: 29264, Lot 2764, Mukim Bandar Tanjung Bunggah, Daerah Timur Laut, Pulau Pinang

Dan
Dalam perkara mengenai Atrian 83 Kaedah-Kaedah Mahkamah, 2012

ANTARA
Public Islamic Bank Berhad (No. Syarikat: 6463-H) ...PLAINTIF

DAN
Yeoh Ai Nee (No. Kad Pengenalan: 810722075016) ...DEFENDAN

Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya di Pulau Pinang mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Pembelian bertarikh 3 Julai 2024 dan 9 Disember 2024, adalah dengan ini dipeliharakan bahawa Timbalan Pendaftar/Pendoping Kanan Pendaftar Pusat Operasi Kelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA
LELONG AWAM
Pada Hari Rabu, 5 Februari 2025, Pada Jam 11:00 pagi,
SECARA ELEKTRONIK DI LAMAN WEB e-LELONG, PUSAT OPERASI e-LELONG, KOMPLEKS MAHKAMAH KUANTAN, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

NOTA: Bakal pembeli adalah dinasihatkan agar membuat carian Hakmilik secara rasmi di Pejabat Tanah dan Memeriksa semua tumpukan, babasan serta memesal pasti dengan tepat hartanah tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari https://lelong.hakmilik.gov.my/bidderweb

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:

No. Hakmilik	:	Geran No. Hakmilik: 29264
No. Lot	:	Lot 2764
Mukim/Daerah/Negeri	:	Bandar Tanjung Bunggah / Timur Laut / Pulau Pinang
Pegangan	:	Hakmilik Kekal
No. Petak/No. Tingkat/No. Bangunan	:	591 / 2 / M18C
Keluasan Tanah	:	4415.000000000 kaki persegi / 410.1530000000 meter persegi
Pemilik Berdaftar	:	Yeoh Ai Nee
Syarat Nyata	:	(FIRST CHARGE) The Land comprised in this title (a) shall not be affected by any provision of the National Land Code limiting the compensation payable on the exercise by the State Authority of a right of access or use conferred by Chapter 3 of Part Three of the Code or on the creation of a Land Administrator's right of way; and (b) subject to the implied condition that land is liable to be re-leased if it is abandoned for more than three years shall revert to the State only if the proprietor for the time being dies without heirs, and the title shall confer the absolute right to all forest produce and all oil, mineral and other natural deposits on or below the surface of the land (including the right to prospect or extract any such produce or deposit and removal it beyond the boundaries of the land)

Sekatan Kepingatan
Bebanan / Lain-Lain : Charge: To Public Bank Berhad vide presentation No. 07985C2021000801 dated on 12 January 2022

Kawasan Rizab :
Kawast :
LOKAS DAN PERHAL HARTAHAN:
Hartanah tersebut adalah Single storey semi-detached house yang berlatam pos di No. 10-14, Jalan Osman Bin Abd Rahman, 11200, Tanjung Bunggah, Pulau Pinang.

HARGA RIZAB:
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "sepertimana sedia ada" bertakrif kepada satu harga ruzab harga ruzab sebanyak RM 1,200,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: SATU JUTA DUA RATUS ENAM PULUH RIBU SARAJAJA) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang ditampirkan. Pembida yang berniat hendaklah memendeposikan 10% daripada harga ruzab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama PUBLIC BANK BERHAD 1 HARI BEKELAJA sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Bagi harga bidaan hendaklah dibayar oleh pembeli yang berjaya kepada PUBLIC BANK BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (20) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk butiran selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan:-

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Alamat : NO. 27, 1ST & 2ND FLOOR
JALAN MAJU JAYA
PUSAT PERNIAGAAN MAJU JAYA, 14000, PG, MY

No. Telefon : 04-5398855
No. Faks : 04-5398855
No. Rujukan : WCMN(M)/PBB-HL/2024-125/AN(RS/I)

322 Notices

IN THE MATTERS OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF TENUIS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. (Company No. 56393-U) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP) NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

At an Extraordinary General Meeting of the members of TENUIS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. duly convened at 55, Irving Road, 10400 Georgetown, Penang on 31st December, 2024 the following Special Resolution was duly passed:

"That the Company be wound up voluntarily and that Mr. Lai Woi Hean, Chartered Accountant of No. 65, Irving Road, 10400 Georgetown, Penang be appointed liquidator for the purpose of such winding up."

Dated this 09th day of January, 2025.

DR. ONG TAT LIEN
Chairman

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF TENUIS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. (Company No. 56393-U) NOTICE OF CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the abovementioned Company, which is being wound up voluntarily, are required on or before 9th February, 2025 to send in their names and addresses and the particulars of their debts or claims and their names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the liquidator of the said Company, and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator or by their solicitors or personally to come in and prove the said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice, or in default thereof, they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made by the said debts or claims are proved.

Dated this 9th day of January, 2025.

LAI WOI HEAN
Liquidator
65, Irving Road,
10400 Georgetown, Penang.

322 Notices

PERISYIHARAN JUALAN
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Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 256 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965

Dan
Dalam perkara mengenai Gadaihan Persewaan No. 07985C2021000801 bertarikh : 20/12/2021 ke atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipanggil di bawah Hakmilik: Strata No. Hakmilik: GRN 153832/M18C/28/959, Lot 17378, Mukim 12, Daerah Barat Daya, Pulau Pinang

ANTARA
Public Islamic Bank Berhad (No. Syarikat: 14328-V) ...PLAINTIF

DAN
Sharifah Kareena Bt Syed Amruruddin (No. Kad Pengenalan: 800516075376) ...DEFENDAN

Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaya di Pulau Pinang mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Pembelian bertarikh 19 April 2023 dan 9 Disember 2024, adalah dengan ini dipeliharakan bahawa Timbalan Pendaftar/Pendoping Kanan Pendaftar Pusat Operasi Kelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA
LELONG AWAM
Pada Hari Rabu, 5 Februari 2025, Pada Jam 11:00 pagi,
SECARA ELEKTRONIK DI LAMAN WEB e-LELONG, PUSAT OPERASI e-LELONG, KOMPLEKS MAHKAMAH KUANTAN, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

NOTA: Bakal pembeli adalah dinasihatkan agar membuat carian Hakmilik secara rasmi di Pejabat Tanah dan Memeriksa semua tumpukan, babasan serta memesal pasti dengan tepat hartanah tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari https://lelong.hakmilik.gov.my/bidderweb

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:

No. Hakmilik	:	Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik: GRN 153832/ M18C/28/959
No. Lot	:	Lot 17378
Mukim/Daerah/Negeri	:	12 / Barat Daya / Pulau Pinang
Pegangan	:	Hakmilik Kekal
No. Petak/No. Tingkat/No. Bangunan	:	959 / 2 / M18C
Keluasan Tanah	:	2551.000000000 kaki persegi / 237.0000000000 meter persegi
Pemilik Berdaftar	:	Sharifah Kareena Bt Syed Amruruddin
Syarat Nyata	:	Perak ini hendaklah dipungut untuk tujuan suite pemilikan sahaja.
Sekatan Kepingatan	:	Tiada
Bebanan / Lain-Lain	:	Charge to Public Islamic Bank Berhad vide presentation No. 07985C2021000801 dated 5 January 2021

Kawasan Rizab :
Kawast :
LOKAS DAN PERHAL HARTAHAN:
Hartanah tersebut adalah A unit of duplex penthouse service apartment yang berlatam pos di No. 1C-26-1, Jalan Mayang Padi 3, E11 Heights-E11 3, 11950, Bayan Lepas, Pulau Pinang.

HARGA RIZAB:
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "sepertimana sedia ada" bertakrif kepada satu harga ruzab sebanyak RM 802,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: LAPAN RATUS DUA RIBU SARAJAJA) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang ditampirkan. Pembida yang berniat hendaklah memendeposikan 10% daripada harga ruzab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama PUBLIC ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD 1 HARI BEKELAJA sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Bagi harga bidaan hendaklah dibayar oleh pembeli yang berjaya kepada PUBLIC ISLAMIC BANK BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (20) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk butiran selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan:-

Firma Guaman : WONG-CHOI & MOHD NOR
Alamat : NO. 27, 1ST & 2ND FLOOR
JALAN MAJU JAYA
PUSAT PERNIAGAAN MAJU JAYA, 14000, PG, MY

No. Telefon : 04-5398855
No. Faks : 04-5398855
No. Rujukan : WCMN(M)/PBB-HL/2022-437/SK(SA/R(S/I))

BRIEFS

Woods, McIlroy's indoor league tees off

AFTER a one-year delay, the new tech-infused indoor golf league created by Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy finally launched yesterday in Florida under bright lights in primetime, ushering in what organisers hope is a new chapter for the sport. Unlike the genteel atmosphere reserved for typical golf events, TGL made a rollicking debut complete with strobe lights, smoke machines, enthusiastic player introductions and a DJ that helped to keep the mood elevated. "Considering this was just a dream conjured up, Rory and I were talking about it; it's hard to believe that dream came into reality and we are able to take golf into another stratosphere, really," Woods said during the TV broadcast. "It's not traditional golf, yes, but it is golf and that's the main thing and providing a different type of atmosphere."

Horner provides update on Max's future

CHRISTIAN HORNER thinks that Max Verstappen has 'always been crystal clear' with the team when discussing his future, insisting that the Dutchman won't be going anywhere, despite revealing that talks with Mercedes took place in 2024. "Max has always been crystal clear with the team," Horner told *Motorsport.com* when asked about the speculation. "His commitment has been unwavering. He enjoys the people that he trusts and the people that he works with and enjoys very much being a part of this team. Of course, with the talent that he has, I'm sure he's on every team principal's Christmas wish list. That's inevitable. But, as long as we can continue to provide him with a competitive car and an environment that he enjoys racing in, I don't see any desire for him to be anywhere else."

322 Notices

DI BAWAH AKTA SYARIKAT 2016 DAN DI BAWAH PERKARA TENUIS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. (No Syarikat 56393-U) (PEMBUBARAN SECARA SUKARELA OLEH AHLI-AHLI)

NOTIS RESOLUSI

Meysuarat khas bagi ahli-ahli TENUIS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. yang diadakan pada 31hb Disember, 2024 di 65, Irving Road, 10400 Georgetown, Penang di mana Resolusi Khas berikut telah diumumkan:-

"Bahawa Syarikat akan dibubarkan secara sukarela dan Enik Lai Woi Hean, Akuntan Bertauliah dengan alamat, No. 65, Irving Road, 10400 Georgetown, Penang dilantik sebagai penelestin untuk tujuan pembubaran sedemikian."

Bertarikh pada 9hb Januari, 2025.

DR. ONG TAT LIEN
Pengerusi

DI BAWAH AKTA SYARIKAT 2016 DAN DI BAWAH PERKARA TENUIS CHEMICAL INDUSTRIES SDN. BHD. (No Syarikat 56393-U) (PEMBUBARAN SECARA SUKARELA OLEH AHLI-AHLI)

NOTIS KEPADA PEMITUTANG

NOTIS DENGAN INI DIMAKLUMKAN bahawa Pemitutang bagi Syarikat di atas yang sedang dibubarkan secara sukarela, diperluaskan pada atau sebelum 9hb Februari, 2025 untuk mengemukakan nama dan alamat mereka termasuk butiran mengenai hutang atau tuntutan mereka dan nama dan alamat peguam mereka (jika ada) kepada penelestin Syarikat tersebut, dan, jika dikehendaki oleh pihak mereka atau secara peribadi untuk datang dan membuktikan hutang atau tuntutan tersebut pada masa dan tempat seperti yang dinyatakan dalam notis sedemikian, atau secara lalai daripadanya, mereka akan dikecualikan daripada mendapat apa-apa pengedaran yang dibekal sebelum hutang atau tuntutan itu dibuktikan.

Bertarikh pada 9hb Januari, 2025.

LAI WOI HEAN
Penelestin
65, Irving Road,
10400 Georgetown, Penang.

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF ALFANBO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SDN. BHD. (Registration No.: 201401032335 (1108619-K) (As Member's Voluntary Winding-Up))

At a General Meeting of the Company duly convened and held at Wilton Garden, 2nd Floor, 60, 62 & 64 Jalan SS 2/21, Damansara Jaya, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan on 23rd December, 2024, the following Special Resolutions were duly passed:

1. THAT, the company will be liquidated by way of member's voluntary winding up.

2. THAT, Mr. Lam Lee San and Ms. Lee Yeong Ching both of Novnic Corporate Services Sdn. Bhd., Wilton Garden, 2nd Floor, 60, 62 & 64 Jalan SS 2/21, Damansara Jaya, 47400 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan be appointed as Joint and Several Liquidators to act for the purpose of winding-up the Company's affairs and distributing its assets.

3. THAT, the said Liquidators be authorised to distribute amongst the member in specie or kind, the whole or any part of the assets of the Company and may, for such purpose, set such value as they deem fair upon any property to be distributed as aforesaid and may determine how such distribution shall be carried out as between the members.

Dated this 9th day of January, 2025.

Lam Lee San (P)
Lee Yeong Ching (P)
Liquidators

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF ALFANBO PROPERTY MANAGEMENT SDN. BHD. (Registration No.: 201401032335 (1108619-K) (As Member's Voluntary Winding-Up))

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the above Company are required to send in their names and addresses and the particulars of their debts or claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any), to the undersigned (the Liquidators of the said Company) on or before the specified date and time above will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made.

Dated this 9th day of January, 2025.

Lam Lee San (P)
Lee Yeong Ching (P)
Liquidators
11600 George Town,
Penang, Malaysia



Alcaraz starring at Grand Slam final frontier

THERE is little doubt Carlos Alcaraz is one of the brightest stars of his generation with Grand Slam success on all three surfaces but the Spaniard will arrive at the Australian Open looking to conquer the final frontier of his young career.

Should he lift the Norman Brookes Challenge Cup at Melbourne Park later this month, the 21-year-old French Open and Wimbledon champion will become the youngest man to complete a career Grand Slam – the feat of winning all four major titles.

Victory would put the 2022 US Open champion in the elite company of Fred Perry, Don Budge, Rod Laver, Roy Emerson, Andre Agassi, Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Novak Djokovic, cementing his status as a modern great.

Alcaraz has not gone beyond the quarterfinals in his three previous visits to Melbourne, but that has not stopped the world No. 3 from dreaming of glory in the Jan. 12-26 event.

"I have it in mind to get a tattoo of a kangaroo," Alcaraz told Spanish outlet *Marca* recently, referring to the tradition of immortalising his major triumphs on his skin. "The goal is to complete the Grand Slam in Melbourne."

"Every player wants to be in the final, to go as far as they can during tournaments. This year, I've played great tournaments and really bad tournaments," said Alcaraz, who responded to his critics by winning the China Open, beating Sinner in the final.

"My goal at the end is to be there all the time,

to at least reach the semifinals and final to give myself the chance to win tournaments.

"I have to work. I'm still super young, so I have or I hope to have many years to get there. Let's see in 2025, I hope to be a better player and (show) more consistency."

Federer, who watched Alcaraz live for the first time during his triumphant Wimbledon defence shortly after his Roland Garros victory, believes the Spaniard has what it takes to capture the one major title that has eluded him so far.

"He will win an Australian Open, the question is when," said Federer. "He's had the most incredible career already."

"It's fantastic that he's already got four Grand Slams without talking about all the other stuff that he's achieved. Fantastic effort." – Reuters

Five men to watch Down Under

NOVAK DJOKOVIC is targeting an 11th Australian Open title and record 25th Grand Slam crown but faces an uphill battle against Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz. Here are five potential winners of the first Grand Slam of the year, which begins on Sunday:

Novak Djokovic

He may be 37 but the Serb can never be written off on Melbourne Park's blue hardcourts, where he has enjoyed enormous success. Ranked seven in the world, Djokovic won Olympic gold in 2024 but failed to collect a major for the first time since 2017, leaving his bid to better Margaret Court's all-time 24 Slam titles unfulfilled. Beaten in the Melbourne semifinals last year by eventual champion Sinner, he has enlisted the help of long-time rival Andy Murray as coach to try and help him achieve the feat. Should he do so, it will be his 100th career title, just the third man in the Open era to reach the milestone behind Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103).

Jannik Sinner

The Italian won his maiden Grand Slam title in Australia last year, beating Daniil Medvedev in the final, and went on to establish himself as the undisputed world No. 1. He won eight titles in 2024, including his second major at the US Open while making the semis at Roland Garros and Wimbledon. But the 23-year-old's season was rocked by doping accusations that he denies. He is still waiting for the outcome of a World Anti-Doping Agency appeal against his initial exoneration for twice testing positive for traces of the steroid clostebol in March.

Carlos Alcaraz

Still just 21, the Spaniard already owns four Grand Slam titles – including the French Open and Wimbledon last year – since bursting on the scene with victory at the US Open in 2022. Already the youngest man to claim majors on all three surfaces – clay, hard and grass – he will surpass compatriot Rafael Nadal as the youngest to complete a career Grand Slam should he triumph in Australia. Alcaraz, who has never lost a Grand Slam final, finished an injury-marred 2024 as the world No. 3 after winning four titles to take his career tally to 16.

Alexander Zverev

The German has been pursuing a Grand Slam breakthrough for nearly a decade, finishing runner-up at the French Open in 2024 and the US Open in 2020 but unable to take the final step. After suffering an ankle injury in the semifinal of Roland Garros in 2022, his return to the top was slow. In that time, Sinner and Alcaraz took up the mantle of Grand Slam kings. But the 27-year-old heads into the new season with renewed vigour after ending 2024 as world number two, winning more matches than anyone bar Sinner. A two-time semifinalist in Australia, including last year when he lost to Daniil Medvedev, Zverev knows he needs to win majors.

Daniil Medvedev

The feisty Russian failed to win a title last year, but has often done well at the opening Grand Slam of the year, reaching three of the last four finals. He was outplayed by Djokovic in 2021 before a heart-wrenching defeat to Rafael Nadal a year later, then imploded against Sinner in 2024, crashing in five sets after being two up. With Sinner and Alcaraz starting to dominate, the 28-year-old admitted in the off-season that he must "reinvent" himself, reducing his error-count and becoming more aggressive. The 2021 US Open champion is currently world No. 5 and will begin his bid for a second major title after a low-key build-up.

Point to prove

Djokovic fired up to prove mettle against young brigade at Australian Open

NOVAK DJOKOVIC returns to the scene of his greatest triumphs this week at the Australian Open, adamant he is ready and able to see off the challenge from Jannik Sinner and Carlos Alcaraz in his pursuit of a record 25th Grand Slam crown.

Chinks in the armour of the 37-year-old former world No. 1 were exposed last year when he failed to clinch a major title for the first time since 2017, although he did win Olympic gold.

The Serb's fallibility was again on show when he was bundled out of the Brisbane International last week in the quarterfinals by American Reilly Opelka.

But with fellow great Rafael Nadal joining Roger Federer in retirement, Djokovic is fired up to prove he still has what it takes against the young brigade.

Djokovic has brought in former rival Andy Murray as coach in an eye-catching move that he hopes will give him a winning edge.

"The way I'm feeling, I still think that I can go strong for years to come," said Djokovic, now ranked seven in the world.

"I still love this sport and I still love competing. I'm ready to compete, whatever it takes, however many hours it takes with the youngsters."

Few would bet against Djokovic on the blue hardcourts of Melbourne Park, where he has long been a dominant force, winning a record 10 titles.

Another would give him 25 major crowns to move him clear of Margaret Court as the outright leader.

Djokovic's stamina and skill will be put to the ultimate test against world No. 1 and defending champion Sinner, just 23, and Alcaraz, already a four-time Slam winner at 21.

While Djokovic warmed up in Brisbane, Italy's Sinner

and Spaniard Alcaraz opted against any competitive action with exhibition matches in Melbourne this week their main preparation.

Sinner won his maiden Slam in Australia last year, battling back from two sets down to beat Russia's Daniil Medvedev.

It lit the fuse to a sensational season where he became the first player since Federer in 2005 to go the year without a defeat in straight sets.

He made the semis at Roland Garros and Wimbledon, won the US Open and ATP Finals, and surged to the top of the rankings.

Alcaraz won Wimbledon and the French Open last season to cement his status as the future of the game, along with Sinner.

According to reports in Spain, Alcaraz has switched to a heavier racquet in the off-season to generate more speed with his forehand on the Melbourne Park surface.

"Everything is an extra weapon to counteract the game of rivals such as Jannik Sinner and Alexander Zverev, among others," said his coach Samuel Lopez. – AFP



Jannik Sinner. – AFP/ICC



Sinner hopes to let racket do the talking

DEFENDING champion Jannik Sinner should be riding the crest of a wave as he prepares for the Australian Open as the dominant force in men's tennis, but instead returns to the scene of his maiden Grand Slam title under a cloud.

On the court, the 23-year-old Italian has opened a gap to his rivals, ending last year as the clear world No. 1 after a remarkable season in which he won eight titles and lost only six of the 79 matches he contested.

He crowned 2024 with the ATP Finals title and also led Italy to a successive Davis Cup crown.

Sinner gives the impression of a player with all the answers against whoever he comes up against, but the off-court questions he is likely to face about the doping case that surfaced in August might be harder to shrug off.

He was cleared of any wrongdoing after failing two drug tests in March – an independent tribunal convened by the International Tennis Integrity Agency (Itia) accepting that the anabolic agent clostebol had inadvertently entered his system from a member of his support team through massages.

Sinner, who has always maintained his innocence, was docked the 400 ranking points and prize money he earned for reaching the semifinals at Indian Wells where the tests were carried out, but escaped a ban, raising eyebrows among some in the tennis community who cried double standards.

Sinner will attempt to continue to let his racket do the talking but with the world's glare on the year's first Grand Slam, the saga is unlikely to fade into

the background.

The two-time Grand Slam champion spent Christmas in the snow in northern Italy, conceding it was a tough time after the death of his aunt at the end of last year.

He has quickly warmed to the task of defending his Australian Open title since landing in Melbourne though, looking sharp in an exhibition match win over Australian Alexei Popyrin on Rod Laver Arena yesterday.

"Coming back here as the reigning champion feels good, it's a different sensation, but I'm genuinely looking forward to it. Let's see how I can perform," Sinner said after that win.

"In my mind, I know how much work we have put in, which hopefully will give me confidence and we will see how it goes." – Reuters

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF THIM AGENCIES (SELANGOR) SDN. BHD. (198901013574)(190884-H) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

At a General Meeting of the Members of the Company duly convened and held at 26-22-26, Prima Midah Heights Condo, Jalan Midah 8, Taman Midah, Cheras, 56000 Kuala Lumpur on 1 January 2025, the following Special Resolutions were duly passed:-

1) That the Company be liquidated by way of members' voluntary winding up; and

2) That Ms. Lam Seang Ling of Room 401-A, Bangunan Loke Yew, No. 4, Jalan Mahkamah Persukuatan, 50050 Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed as Liquidator to act for the purpose of winding-up the company's affairs and distributing its assets.

Dated this 9th day of January 2025

Leo Ah Noi Director

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF THIM AGENCIES (SELANGOR) SDN. BHD. (198901013574)(190884-H) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the creditors of the above-named Company, which is being voluntarily wound-up, are required on or before 10 February 2025, to send in their names and addresses and the particulars of their debts and claims and the names and addresses of their solicitors (if any) to the undersigned, the Liquidator of the said Company and if so required by notice in writing from the said Liquidator, are by their solicitors or personally to come to prove the said debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefit of any distribution made before such debts are proved.

Lam Seang Ling Liquidator Room 401-A, Bangunan Loke Yew, No. 4, Jalan Mahkamah Persukuatan, 50050 Kuala Lumpur.

Dated: 9 January 2025

BY SAM TURNER

PAUL SCHOLES says Sir Jim Ratcliffe has done "nothing positive" during his first year at Manchester United.

Despite suffering one of the worst seasons in their recent history, United made the mid-season decision to raise matchday ticket prices to £66 (RM363) per game in the Premier League, with no concessions for children or pensioners, a move which enraged some fans.

The club insist the hike would only affect a small number of fans as 97% of tickets have already been sold but the remainder and resold tickets will be subject to the increase.

The move, alongside a campaign which sees United loitering in the lower reaches of the Premier League, has seen Ratcliffe's popularity among fans plummet after just a year in charge.

Scholes slammed the price increase in the latest episode of *The Overlap* and questioned how Ratcliffe had the gall to increase prices to watch the worst United side in decades.

Slot keeps options open in January transfer window

BY RICHARD JOLLY

ARNE SLOT has said that Liverpool are keeping an eye open for a chance to strengthen in the transfer window and shrugged off the scrutiny on his side by saying that if he spent his time looking at social media, he would have no life.

The Dutchman ignored top scorer Mohamed Salah's jibe at former Liverpool vice-captain Jamie Carragher to concentrate on his team.

Salah posted that Carragher was "obsessed" with him after the pundit's latest discussion on his contract.

And he confirmed that the Premier League leaders will look for opportunities in the winter window, even as he is content with the squad who have also gone top of the Champions League and reached the semifinals of the Carabao Cup.

Slot has excelled with only one addition to his squad in the summer transfer window, in Federico Chiesa, who has often been injured.

But he pointed to the signing of goalkeeper Giorgi Mamardashvili, who was loaned back to Valencia for the season, to illustrate that Liverpool often look to the future.

He said: "It would be a bit weird if I said during the summer break that we're very happy with the team and then I told you something different now."

"You always look at the market, this club has always done that. We did that with the goalkeeper we don't even have at the moment."

"If there's a chance in the market then this club always tries to bring that chance in but the team is in a good place."

Meanwhile, Slot said he is far too busy for the online debate about the club following the 2-2 draw with Manchester United, explaining: "I am not focused on social media post and what is being said about us."

"If you do that as Liverpool manager you have no life as this is one of the biggest clubs in the world and there are always things being said about us." – The Independent

'Everything is still negative'

Scholes tears into Ineos over Man Utd impact

"If you think of Manchester, there are so many deprived areas and Sir Jim Ratcliffe himself is from Failsworth, which is a deprived area... £66 for a ticket is ridiculous," former United midfielder Scholes told *The Overlap Fan Debate*.

"If you take one kid with you, that's £120 (RM660), if you take a family, you're looking at £300-400 (RM1,650-RM2,200) – it's not right."

"They (Ineos Group) have been in charge (of Manchester United) for nearly a year now and everything is still negative. I can't think of something positive that they've done for the football club."

Around 250 members of staff have been

made redundant over the past 12 months and Sir Alex Ferguson's ambassadorial role is ending among ongoing cost-cutting measures introduced by Ineos.

On the field, United have not won for five games under new boss Ruben Amorim – ending a run of four consecutive defeats with a 2-2 draw at League leaders Liverpool on Sunday.

United are currently languishing in 13th place in the Premier League, only seven points above the relegation zone.

Scholes said: "Things are getting worse on the football pitch so couldn't they have just said that they'd do cheaper tickets – couldn't they just give

us something positive?"

"How can you ask Manchester United fans to pay more money with what's on the football pitch?"

"Where do these owners get the front to put ticket prices up for what we're watching?"

"For the value, we're probably having our worst ever Premier League season and they've got the cheek to put the prices up."

"There is nothing positive happening with that football club. The team look bang average. They're not doing anything for fans."

"If we've got Sir Jim Ratcliffe, compared to all these American owners, who's been a United fan since growing up in an area in Manchester, he's still hiking prices up. It just shows that they don't care." – The Independent

SIDENETTING

Neymar hints at reunion with Messi, Suarez

BRAZILIAN forward Neymar said reuniting with his former Barcelona teammates Lionel Messi and Luis Suarez at Inter Miami is an interesting prospect and did not rule out a move to the United States as his Al-Hilal contract winds down. Once one of football's most feared forwards, Neymar struck up a lethal partnership with Messi and Suarez to lead Barcelona to a historic treble before his record £200 million (RM1.1b) move to Paris St Germain in 2017. "Obviously, playing again with Messi and Suarez would be incredible. They are my friends, we still speak to each other," Neymar told CNN. "It would be interesting to revive this trio. I'm happy at Al-Hilal, I'm happy in Saudi Arabia, but who knows. Football is full of surprises." Neymar has played only seven times for Al-Hilal since moving from PSG for a reported fee of £75m (RM413m) in 2023, with injuries keeping the Brazilian sidelined for long periods. His contract is up in June.

Zirkzee, Antony wanted on loan

MANCHESTER UNITED forwards Joshua Zirkzee and Antony are attracting interest from European clubs who want to take them on loan. But United are keen to keep Zirkzee, who is a target for Juventus, despite a traumatic time for the summer signing when supporters first cheered his substitution and then booed the Dutchman as he went off in last Monday's 2-0 defeat to Newcastle. However, Zirkzee's name was sung by supporters in Sunday's 2-2 draw at Liverpool, when he came off

the bench. Meanwhile, Real Betis are one of several clubs who hope to borrow Antony for the second half of the season. The £85m (RM468m) winger, the second most expensive signing in United's history, has not started a League game this season and has only played 84 minutes of top-flight football, spread over six substitute appearances.

New interest for Rashford

AC MILAN are interested in taking Marcus Rashford on loan as they look to offer him a route out of Manchester

United. The Serie A club's interest is not advanced at this stage but United are aware that Rashford is wanted at San Siro. The 27-year-old said last month he was "ready for a new challenge" after spending his entire career at Old Trafford and falling out of favour under new head coach Ruben Amorim. Rashford was excluded from the matchday squad for four games before he was an unused substitute for last Monday's defeat to Newcastle and then ill for Sunday's trip to Liverpool. He has spurned interest from three Saudi Arabian clubs as he looks to play in a major league and to try and regain his place in the England squad.

Son to stay at Spurs

SON HEUNG MIN is set to stay at Tottenham beyond this season after the club triggered an extension option in his contract. The South Korean's deal was due to expire at the end of this campaign after a decade at the north London club. But Spurs have activated an extension to their captain's deal, keeping him under contract until the conclusion of the 2025/26 season and ensuring that he can not depart on a free transfer this summer. The 32-year-old joined Tottenham from Bayer Leverkusen and will soon surpass Martin Chivers as their fourth all-time leading goalscorer. He was appointed skipper after the departure of Hugo Lloris last season and scored 17 times in the Premier League in Ange Postecoglou's first campaign in charge.

Still hope for Gunners to hunt down Liverpool: Carragher

SKY SPORTS pundit Jamie Carragher believes Arsenal "aren't playing like champions right now" and "need to get their season up and running pretty quickly" if they are to deny Liverpool a second Premier League title.

The Gunners currently lie second in the table following their controversial 1-1 draw away at Brighton on Saturday, six points adrift of Arne Slot's Liverpool, having played a game more.

Speaking on on *Monday Night Football* ahead of last night's Carabao Cup match against Newcastle, the former Liverpool and England

centrehalf insisted Mikel Arteta's side will have gained heart from Manchester United denying the League leaders all three points at Anfield on Sunday.

But the former defender insisted that the London club must capitalise by producing a run to the end of the campaign reminiscent of last year's second half of the season.

Asked if Arsenal were League winners in waiting, Carragher answered: "Right now, from what I've seen, no, but what I would say is that there was a big improvement from Arsenal at a

similar stage to this last season.

"In the second half of the season, out of 18 games, I think they won 16, drew one and lost one and I think they could have to go on a similar sort of run."

"They've shown they are capable before, but they would need to get their season up and running pretty quickly."

"It was probably a little bonus what happened for them at Anfield (Liverpool drawing with Manchester United) as I think there would have been a huge lack of belief if

Liverpool had been eight points clear with a game in hand.

"It's really the points difference as such, more the fact they aren't playing like champions right now so that needs to change eventually and I think that will as they are obviously a top team."

"It's just whether they have given themselves too much to do if Liverpool do win that game in hand in a month's time against Everton."

"They (Arsenal) are not as good as they've shown last season or the year before, but we know they've got it in them." – The Independent



Musk wants to buy Liverpool?

Billionaire's father confirms interest but refuses further comment fearing owners would 'raise the price'

ELON MUSK father, Errol, confirmed that his son does want to buy Liverpool but would not comment further for fear that the club's current owners would "raise the price". Musk is currently helping President-elect Donald Trump prepare for a second stint in the White House, alongside running X (formerly known as Twitter), Tesla and SpaceX, but reports that he could venture

into sport have been substantiated. Following headlines in British tabloids that Musk, valued as the world's richest man, plans to buy the Merseyside team, his dad was pressed over the potential of those plans being put into fruition.

"Does your son want to buy Liverpool football club?" A *Times Radio* host asked Errol Musk, who chuckled and replied: "I can't comment on that, they'll raise the price. Oh yes, (he has expressed a desire), but that doesn't mean he's buying it."

When quizzed further on whether the club was "in Elon's sights", his father explained that there is an emotional attachment to the city that would drive any possible purchase.

"He would like to yes, obviously," he said. "Anybody would like to - so would I! His grandmother was born in Liverpool, and we have relatives in Liverpool."

"We were fortunate to know quite a lot of the Beatles because they grew up with some of my family. So, we are attached to Liverpool."

Musk has been keen to increase his global influence and has recently delved into UK politics.

Purchasing such a storied British institution like Liverpool would

undoubtedly give Musk more of a spotlight in Europe, with plenty of speculation over whether Fenway Sports Group (FSG) are willing to sell the club.

In 2023, FSG sold a minority stake in Liverpool to the US private equity firm Dynasty Equity, but reiterated their commitment to the club and played down suggestions that the group were looking to sell up.

FSG's president, Mike Gordon, said at the time: "Our long-term commitment to Liverpool remains as strong as ever."

"We have always said that if there is an investment partner that is right for Liverpool then we would pursue the opportunity to help ensure the club's long-term financial resiliency and future growth."

"We look forward to building upon the longstanding relationship with Dynasty to further strengthen the club's financial position and sustain our ambitions for continued success on and off the pitch."

But what if, and that's a big if, Musk put his money where he mouth is and purchased the famous old club.

Daily Star Sport has asked the man himself, well sort of, about what would happen if the billionaire became the latest Premier League owner.

Musk's AI programme, *Grok*, outlined what Liverpool - or Liverpool X's given his

track record when it comes to names - would look like under his stewardship.

"Musk is known for his significant investments in technology and infrastructure," the programme responded. "He might focus on enhancing Anfield Stadium with cutting-edge technology, potentially making it one of the most advanced football venues in the world."

"There's speculation about Tesla becoming a main sponsor, which would align with his business interests and could also mean integrating innovative tech solutions into the club's operations, from training facilities to fan experiences." - Express Newspapers



Elon Musk. - REUTERS/PIC

Tie still alive, says Howe

NEWCASTLE UNITED manager Eddie Howe urged caution despite a 2-0 victory at Arsenal yesterday, putting his in-form side within touching distance of a place in the League Cup final.

Goals by Alexander Isak and Anthony Gordon either side of halftime in north London gave Newcastle a seventh successive win in all competitions and put them in the driving seat for the second leg at St. James' Park in February.

On all eight occasions since 1987-88 that an away team held a two-goal lead from the first leg, that team went on to reach the final and Arsenal have a mountain to climb if they are to keep alive their hopes of a third League Cup triumph.

Howe also took Newcastle to the League Cup final in 2023 but they fell short of a first trophy since 1955 as they were beaten by Manchester United at Wembley.

The delirious Toon Army celebrated

at the final whistle but Howe said there was still plenty of work left to set up a final against Liverpool or Tottenham Hotspur.

"Today is another big step forward when you look at the recent run we've had away from home," Howe told *Sky Sports* after his side's seventh successive win in all competitions.

"We played with real confidence and belief but in terms of the tie it's still very much alive and finely balanced and we have a really tough home leg to come."

Howe admitted his side were creaking in the second half as Arsenal desperately sought a way back, but said he was proud of the way his team defended.

"There was a lot of fatigue in the second half," he said. "We started off on the front foot but then we fatigued and then it was about our mentality to defend. We knew what was at stake and the players put their bodies on the line."

- Reuters

TOTO SPORTS TOTO RESULTS
DRAW NO: 5908/2025 DATE: 08/01/2025 (WED)
STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.
 190901000099 (84295)

TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

4D
 1st Prize **1913**
 2nd Prize **6874**
 3rd Prize **3362**

Special	Consolation
3160 3476	5044 5530
0571 1714	3409 7637
5693 6502	6853 1262
2536 7550	1133 4654
6706 6334	2274 5209

4D JACKPOT
 Jackpot 1 **RM 10,239,194.57**

1913 6874	6874 1913
1913 3362	3362 1913
6874 3362	3362 6874

Jackpot 2 **RM 706,394.89**
 Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D Zodiac

1st Prize **1913** +

2nd Prize **6874** +

3rd Prize **3362** + **HORSE**

4th Prize **Special Prize** +

5th Prize **Consolation Prize** +

6th Prize **Any 4D drawn number**

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

5D
 1ST **8 3 3 8 6**
 4TH **3 3 8 6**

2ND **0 6 7 0 0** 5TH **3 8 6**
 3RD **3 6 5 6 5** 6TH **8 6**

6D
 1ST **2 0 9 2 2 9**

2ND **2 0 9 2 2** or **0 9 2 2 9**
 3RD **2 0 9 2** or **9 2 2 9**
 4TH **2 0 9** or **2 2 9**
 5TH **2 0** or **2 9**

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SUPREME 7/30 **1 2 18 19 35 46**
 Jackpot **RM 75,455,152.83**

POWER 7/30 **15 17 20 24 36 44**
 Jackpot **RM 5,971,628.36**

STAR 7/30 **1 9 21 27 29 39 + 24**
 Jackpot 1 **RM 2,392,664.42**
 Jackpot 2 **RM 212,401.40**

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WINNING NUMBERS
 PAYMENT GUARANTEED IN FULL **da ma cai**

Draw Dates: 08/01/25 (Wed) Draw No: 5855/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

1-3D SUPER1+3D

1st Prize **3823**
 2nd Prize **2768**
 3rd Prize **4281**

Starters	Consolation
1952 9617	2342 0598
8756 2501	7928 4644
4167 3090	0776 5754
2982 8089	6162 4176
8966 0227	5938 3228

1-3D Jackpot
 Jackpot 1 **RM4,628,383.30**

3823 + 2768	2768 + 3823
3823 + 4281	4281 + 3823
2768 + 4281	4281 + 2768

Jackpot 2 **RM103,169.20**
 Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

3-3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
943 823 + HORSE		RM80,000.00
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
702 768 + GOAT		RM1,075,904.60
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
804 281 + BOAR		RM1,571,506.00

Starters	Consolation
221 952 409 617	732 342 960 598
658 756 502 501	527 928 034 644
024 167 883 090	920 776 535 754
572 982 218 089	226 162 784 174
028 966 190 227	185 938 593 228

3D

1st Prize **823** 2nd Prize **768** 3rd Prize **281**

3D Jackpot
 Jackpot **RM651,050.40**

823 + 768 + 281	768 + 281 + 823
823 + 281 + 768	281 + 823 + 768
768 + 823 + 281	281 + 768 + 823

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

1+3D Jackpot 2 RM279,566.50 won on 5/1/2025!

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MALAYSIA OPEN 2025

RESULTS (round of 32)

Women's singles	
Goh Jin Wei	vs Malvika Bansod (IND)
15-21, 16-21	
Men's doubles	
Junaidi Arif	vs Kim Won Ho (KOR)
Roy King Yap	Seo Seung Jae
17-21, 11-21	
Ong Yew Sin	vs Fajar Alfian (INA)
Teo Ee Yi	Muhammad Rian
15-21, 21-17, 21-13	
Women's doubles	
Jia Yi Fan (CHN)	vs Go Pei Kee
Zhang Shu Xian	Teoh Mei Xing
21-17, 21-10	
Mixed doubles	
Goh Soon Huat	vs Presley Smith (USA)
Shevon Lai	Jennie Gai
21-15, 21-19	

*All results at press time

RESULTS

ENGLISH LEAGUE CUP (Semifinal, 1st leg): Arsenal 0 Newcastle 2 (Isak 38, Gordon 51).

COPA DEL REY (Round of 32): CD Eldense 0 Valencia 2 (Canos 9, Lopez 39).

Ivan Mamut returns to Terengganu

THE Turtles Squad fans' dream to see their import striker, Ivan Mamut, back in action is set to come true after the player arrived in Terengganu on Monday.

Terengganu Football Club (TFC) chief executive officer Mohd Sabri Abas said that Mamut finally returned to TFC after a long break due to an Achilles tendon injury in his left leg during pre-season training.

However, he said that the tall Croatian-born player still needs to undergo health examinations and rehabilitation treatments with TFC's medical staff in Gong Badak.

"Mamut had to take an extended break for almost a year for surgery and treatment overseas due to the injury to his left leg. He was also granted permission to undergo his recuperation period in Croatia for more comfort.

"Alhamdulillah, Mamut's arrival yesterday brought relief and good news to the football fans of Terengganu who have long missed seeing him on the field," he said when contacted via WhatsApp yesterday.

Mohd Sabri said that Mamut's presence is hoped to help sharpen the attacking line of the Turtles Squad as they prepare for the Malaysia Cup semifinal match and the remaining matches in the Super League.

"Mamut's return will strengthen TFC's attacking lineup alongside our two other import players. We hope he recovers quickly and can play in the Malaysia Cup semifinal match against Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) at the Gong Badak Stadium on Jan 17," he added. — Bernama

DROP SHOT

Axelsen stunned at Malaysia Open

TWO-TIME Malaysia Open champion, Viktor Axelsen of Denmark suffered a shocking first round exit in the Super 1000 tournament on Monday. Fourth seed Axelsen admitted that he was not physically strong to play in the season opener held in Axiata Arena before suffering one of the tournament's major upsets to unseeded Lee Cheuk Yiu of Hong Kong, 17-21 13-21 in 38-minutes. "I think I am just unlucky with my injuries. I feel very good coming back from vacation. Unfortunately I got injured during practice, that's all and there's nothing much to say," he said in a post-match interview on Monday. Meanwhile, a delighted Cheuk Yiu said his second victory in eight matches over Axelsen had definitely boosted his confidence in the Super 1000 tourney. The world No. 21 is slated to take on Taiwanese player Chi Yu Jen in the second round today.



National mixed doubles Goh Soon Huat (right) and Shevon Lai in action against USA's Presley Smith-Jennie Gai (not pictured) yesterday. — BERNAMAPIC

Light at end of tunnel

Three pairs lift gloom on opening day for MO2025

WHILE many local shuttlers stumbled on the opening day of Malaysia Open 2025, three pairs including national top mixed doubles duo Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei and men's doubles Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun stood out to march to the second round.

In the season opener held in Axiata Arena, Bukit Jalil, here, Tang Jie-Ee Wei did not have much problems to dismantle Wu Hsuan-Yi-Yang Chu Yun of Taiwan, 21-8, 21-9 in just 27-minutes and became the first Malaysians to triumph in the first round of Super 1000 tourney.

Despite the initial setbacks of their compatriots, Ee Wei said they stayed focused and were unaffected by the results of other matches.

"We did not think much and just want Malaysian representatives to win, more so on homeground," she told reporters at the mixed zone.

Tang Jie-Ee Wei will have to earn a quarterfinals spot against another Taiwanese pair, Ming Che Lu-Hung En-Tzu, who denied an all Malaysian affair after a rubber set win over up and coming duo Hoo Pang Ron-Cheng Su Yin, 28-26, 14-21, 24-22.

Meanwhile, Wei Chong-Kai Wun needed 37-minutes to secure a second round spot through straight set win over Kenya Mitsuhashi-Hiroki Okamura of Japan, 21-12, 21-17.

Despite committing several errors in the match, Kai Wun was relieved that they eventually prevailed to the second round meeting with eighth seeds of Taiwan Lee Jhe-Huei-Yang Po-Hsuan, who disposed

Soon Huat-Shevon unsatisfied

PROFESSIONAL mixed doubles duo Goh Soon Huat-Shevon Lai clinched their spot in the second round of the 2025 Malaysia Open after defeating the American pair Presley Smith-Jennie Gai yesterday. The fourth-seeded pair had no trouble securing the win, taking the match in straight sets, 21-15, 21-19, in just 36 minutes. Despite the victory, Shevon said she and her partner were not satisfied with their performance, highlighting that many unforced errors were made during the game. "I think it's an honour that we won the first game for Malaysia. Of course, in the first match, we struggled to find the rhythm, and it wasn't that perfect... but my partner played very well and she was very composed. I think a lot of work needs to be done for the next game," she said. Meanwhile, Soon Huat hoped to stay focused in a bid to see off S. Karunakaran-A. Variyath of India in the second round today. "We have to prepare well and stay focused to take it step by step. We target to at

least reach the quarterfinal," he added.

Contractors on standby at Axiata Arena: PSM

TEN personnel from the Malaysia Stadium Corporation (PSM) and contractors have been assigned to be on standby throughout the 2025 Malaysia Open to ensure that the roof leak incident at Axiata Arena yesterday does not recur. PSM, in a statement, said that the Public Works Department (JKR) and the contractors are also cooperating to carry out the necessary repairs, which are currently underway. "PSM has identified the problematic areas and expedited the required repair works," it said. PSM also apologised to all parties, especially the organisers and badminton fans, for the roof leak incident that disrupted the opening matches of the tournament, which had to be temporarily halted. The incident saw water dripping from the roof, wetting the surface of the courts, prompting the organisers to temporarily cover the wet areas with cloth.

Magnum Corporation Sdn Bhd (8272-D)

Winning Results

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Draw No: 145/25 Date: 08/01/2025

4D Classic

1st Prize	4480
2nd Prize	8418
3rd Prize	7095

SPECIAL	6664 9502	7028 0982
	1679 5007	0635 6322
	2815 0724	9095 9602
	9524 3256	0785 1590
	8163 3078	7021 9994

4D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 RM7,341,391.65

4480 + 8418	4480 + 7095
8418 + 4480	8418 + 7095
7095 + 4480	7095 + 8418

Jackpot 2 RM157,992.34

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Jackpot 1 - Group 1 + Golden Number

Jackpot 2 RM262,279.45 **PARTIALLY WON**

Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

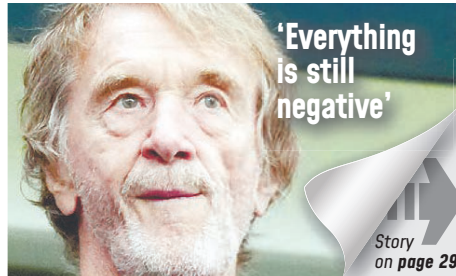
GROUP 1	8 0 1 8 9 5
GROUP 2	8 0 1 8 9 OR 0 1 8 9 5
GROUP 3	8 0 1 8 OR 1 8 9 5
GROUP 4	8 0 1 OR 8 9 5
GROUP 5	8 0 OR 8 9 5
	OR 1 8
GOLDEN NUMBER	0 4

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SCAN ME



Magpies stun Gunners

Arteta bemoans Arsenal missed chances against 'super efficient' Newcastle

MIKEL ARTETA said Arsenal's 2-0 defeat to Newcastle in the first leg of their Carabao Cup semifinal did not reflect his team's performance as he hinted the ball used for the game at the Emirates Stadium hindered his players.

The Gunners were guilty of missing a host of chances as their hopes of reaching the final at Wembley in March were made to feel

distant after an excellent display by Eddie Howe's side.

Alexander Isak and Anthony Gordon were the goalscorers, their finishing casting a stark light over the profligacy of the home side.

"It's not the result that reflects the story of the game but the reality is that they were super efficient with the chances they had, and we weren't," said Arteta.

"We were unlucky in moments,

you need that certain luck for the ball to bounce and you need that intuition as well. We're going to have to generate more."

The Carabao Cup has a different match ball to the one used in the Premier League, something Arteta felt was significant when he was asked to review his team's wayward finishing.

"We kicked a lot of balls over the bar," he said. "It's tricky. This ball flies

a lot. It's just different to the Premier League ball and we have to adapt to that. It flies different, the grip is very different as well."

Kai Havertz and Jurrien Timber both wasted excellent chances for Arsenal, heading off target from close range with the goal gaping, while Gabriel Martinelli struck a post and Gabriel was denied by Martin Dubravka.

Ultimately Newcastle's finishing

proved the difference, particularly Isak's instinctive strike to break the deadlock.

"He was involved in both goals unfortunately, the two times that he had the ball in the box," said Arteta of the striker who has repeatedly been linked with his team.

"That's what you have when you have the real quality up front. They can make the difference." - The Independent



National men's doubles players Teo Ee Yi (left) and Ong Yew Sin in action against Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto (not pictured) in the Round of 32 of the 2025 Malaysian Open at the Axiata Arena in Bukit Jalil. - BERNAMAPIC

Yew Sin-Ee Yi into second round, bitter blow for Jin Wei

PROFESSIONAL men's doubles pair Ong Yew Sin-Teo Ee Yi bounced back from a rough start to stun Indonesia's Fajar Alfian-Muhammad Rian Ardianto in the opening round of the Malaysia Open 2025 yesterday.

The unseeded duo found themselves trailing in the opening match 15-21 against the fourth seeds, but they refused to back down to drag the game into the rubber set with a 21-17 win.

The world No. 24 pair picked up where they left off and raised their tempo to secure a dominant 21-13 victory in the final set and booked a place in the second round of the Super 1000 tourney, much to the delight of the home fans at the Axiata Arena.

Commenting about the match yesterday, Yew Sin said even though they managed to send Fajar-Muhammad Rian packing, they chose to keep a low profile and focus on the next game.

"Both of us really wanted to win and achieve a better outcome because our previous results weren't good," he told reporters in the mixed zone.

The duo had endured a series of poor results leading up to the 2025 season opener, crashing out in the first round three times in a row, starting with the Arctic Open 2024, Denmark Open 2024 and China Masters 2024.

Earlier, for the first time in her career, professional women's singles shuttler

Goh Jin Wei endured the sting of the opening round exit, going down to Indian shuttler Malvika Bansod.

Jin Wei could not match Malvika's performance from the outset and eventually went down 15-21, 16-21 in 45 minutes at the Axiata Arena in Bukit Jalil.

The 24-year-old was then rushed to seek medical treatment immediately after the match due to a cramp in her stomach.

When she returned to address the media in the mixed zone, the two-time former world junior champion admitted that a weak mindset was the reason for her loss yesterday.

"I didn't perform well during the match just now. I also experienced some cramping, but that's normal for me, it just worsened after the match," she said.

The two-time world junior champion, who made her Malaysia Open debut in 2017, had never previously exited in the first round while her best performance came in the 2018 edition, where she reached the quarterfinals before falling to Taiwan's Tai Tzu Ying, 15-21, 15-21.

Meanwhile, national men's doubles duo Yap Roy King-Wan Arif Wan Junaidi had a disappointing debut, bowing out to South Korea's Kim Won Ho-Seo Sung Jae, 17-21, 11-21 in 45 minutes.

Wan Arif admitted their opponents' consistency was a key factor in their defeat. - Bernama