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Academic calls for strategic shift from 'promotion spending' to 'capability investment' for sustainable growth.

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Proposal aims to reduce negative influence of social media and online games that shape behaviour or lead to criminal acts, says prime minister.



When children lack emotional validation at home, they may turn to online communities for belonging, even those that normalise cruelty or violence. – **AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN**

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Race against time for teen needing life-saving liver transplant

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STR Phase 4 payment begins today

PUTRAJAYA: A total of 8.8 million recipients of Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) will receive their Phase 4 payments starting today, ahead of the Deepavali celebration.

The Finance Ministry said the government has allocated RM2 billion for this phase, with payment rates of up to RM700, depending on the category.

The amount also includes payments for 200,000 new applicants who have been approved for the Phase 4 payments, which are being disbursed earlier than in mid-November as originally scheduled.

"Compared with Phase 1 in January, the number of Phase 4 recipients has increased by 500,000 individuals and households, from 8.3 million previously, following the Madani government decision to allow new applications and appeals throughout the year," the ministry said in a statement.

It added that the government would continue to keep registration for STR and Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara) 2026 open throughout the year to ensure more Malaysians have the opportunity to benefit from government assistance programmes.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is also finance minister, said in the same statement that the Madani government remains committed to ensuring that assistance through the country's revenue distribution will benefit Malaysians across all levels of society.

"It is hoped that the distribution of STR 2025 Phase 4 would provide some financial relief ahead of the Deepavali celebration."

The data of existing recipients will be automatically integrated into the government database, along with information from relevant agencies, for a review of STR and Sara 2026 eligibility based on the prescribed criteria.

STR applicants can refer to the Frequently Asked Questions section on the official STR portal at bantuantunai.hasil.gov.my.

Payment status and approval checks can also be made through the same link. — Bernama

Plan to ban smartphone use by students under 16

► Proposal aimed at reducing negative influence of social media, online games that shape behaviour, lead to criminal acts: Anwar

■ BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PUTRAJAYA: The government is considering a ban on the use of smartphones by students aged 16 and below as part of sweeping measures to address the rising tide of bullying and violent behaviour in schools.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the proposal, discussed by the Cabinet, is aimed at reducing the negative influence of social media and online games that can shape behaviour and even lead to criminal acts.

"We've seen how social media

and online games can influence behaviour, sometimes even leading to criminal acts.

"So, we will move towards prohibiting the use of smartphones among students aged 16 and below. The proposal is still being studied but many countries have already implemented similar measures," he said after performing Friday prayers at Surau Jannatul Firdaus at the PPAM Seruling Malaysia Civil Servants Housing area.

Anwar said the smartphone ban is among three immediate measures proposed by the Cabinet to strengthen school safety and student wellbeing.

He said another key focus would be on reinforcing value-based and moral education, with the active involvement of parents, teachers and parent-teacher associations.

"Education Minister Fadhilina Sidek will provide further details. I hope principals, teachers and parents would give their full cooperation."

Anwar cautioned school administrators and principals against concealing bullying or disciplinary cases to protect the image of their institutions, warning that such acts amount to covering up wrongdoing.

"Often, headmasters prioritise protecting the school image. While students are fighting and causing trouble, they are more concerned about how the school looks.

"When cases arise, some hide them, supposedly to preserve the school's good name. But protecting the perpetrators is a crime, akin to

covering up wrongdoing."

He said such attitudes not only obstruct justice but also send a dangerous message to students that misconduct can be overlooked in the name of institutional pride.

"If such cases are covered up, it should be considered an offence as they are essentially protecting criminal activity.

"Sometimes, they think bullying cases are minor. I've heard this myself when meeting students during Friday prayers. They say the bullying isn't serious, so it's brushed off.

"But small cases, if ignored, will eventually lead to bigger ones."

Anwar stressed that his remarks were not meant to assign blame but to raise collective awareness about school discipline.

"This is not about accusing anyone. It's about raising shared awareness that even small acts of indiscipline must not be tolerated."

Move to boost online safety for schoolchildren

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA
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PETALING JAYA: The government is mulling a proposal to raise the minimum age for social media use from 13 to 16, with enforcement tied to official identification such as MyKad, passports or MyDigital IDs, said Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil.

He said the proposal, discussed by the Cabinet yesterday, is among several measures aimed at bolstering online safety and addressing issues affecting students, in line with practices in countries such as Australia and Indonesia.

Fahmi said the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) would hold detailed discussions with social media companies in Singapore next week to finalise the mechanism for implementing the policy.

"We agreed to send a delegation

comprising not only MCMC officials but also representatives from the Commercial Crime Investigation Department, Criminal Investigation Department, other agencies and the Finance Ministry to examine recurring issues concerning these platforms and identify solutions."

He said implementation would be carried out in accordance with existing laws, including the Personal Data Protection Act, which applies to what are considered commercial transactions.

"This means that all commercial transactions conducted by entities, including social media platforms and e-wallet companies, are subject to these laws."

Fahmi said further discussions would be held with Bank Negara Malaysia and other relevant agencies, taking into account the existing e-KYC (electronic know your customer) systems used by several e-wallet apps such as Touch 'n Go and Grab, which verify users using official

government documents such as the MyKad.

"We will examine this aspect carefully and announce a timeline in due course. I want to emphasise that discussions with social media platforms, as decided by the Cabinet are still at the policy stage."

Fahmi added that the Cabinet also discussed a proposal to increase police presence in schools as part of joint efforts with the police to ensure a safer learning environment and strengthen student safety.

He said the Education Ministry would issue guidelines for schools to conduct weekly random spot checks to maintain discipline and security among students.

"A comprehensive study will also be carried out to examine the issues faced by schools, and a special task force will be established to prepare a report that will soon be presented to the Cabinet for further action."

He said the study would also consider the role of parents in

addressing these challenges.

Fahmi said he had also instructed MCMC to take action against social media and e-commerce platforms that allow the sale of unauthorised or counterfeit products.

"The Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry and the Health Ministry, through the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency, have from time to time directed MCMC to remove prohibited items, including drugs."

He stressed the need for stronger cooperation among agencies such as MCMC, police and the Home Ministry to identify products that require enforcement action.

"MCMC has also been directed to study possible measures against e-commerce companies that fail to cooperate, to ensure that they comply with government directives and national laws. If these platforms fail to ensure that users are protected from online harm, action can be taken against them."



Anwar mingling with the Indian community during his walkabout at Little India in Brickfields.
— BERNAMAPIC

Govt providing initiatives worth RM42m for Indian community

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is providing several new initiatives worth RM42.25 million specifically for the benefit of the Indian community, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He added that the initiatives include a free tuition programme and the provision of laptops through the Student Device (Peranti Siswa) initiative.

Anwar said the initiatives, which also cover a school repair programme under the Malaysian Indian Transformation Unit, were shared by him during a casual meeting with Tamil media representatives and social media influencers in Brickfields.

"After today's official programme, I stopped by at Little India to observe the preparations of the Hindu community, which will be celebrating Deepavali on Monday.

"Upon arrival, I had the opportunity to enjoy afternoon tea with Tamil media representatives and social media influencers at Madras Bakery while exchanging views on various current issues," he said in a post on his Facebook page on Thursday.

"May this year's Deepavali be celebrated with joy, gratitude and the spirit of unity," he said. — Bernama

Call for action against gender violence in schools

■ BY T.C. KHOR
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PETALING JAYA: More than 50 civil society groups have urged the government to take decisive action against gender-based violence in schools, calling recent cases a wake-up call for systemic reform and accountability.

In a joint statement, the organisations condemned the incidents as 'devastating violations of human life, dignity and the safety of our schools'.

They expressed 'deep shock, grief and outrage' over the alleged statutory rape of a 15-year-old girl by four schoolboys in Malacca and the killing of a 16-year-old student in another school in Selangor.

"These acts expose deeper societal failures in how our children have been socialised, particularly the normalisation of harmful patriarchal masculinity that has culminated in alleged rape and murder."

The coalition called for immediate and child-sensitive investigations into the criminal offences and institutional lapses that allowed the alleged attacks to occur.

They urged the Education Ministry to make its findings public, ensure full legal accountability for perpetrators, and provide holistic support for survivors and affected students.

The groups also reminded the public that children in conflict with the law must be treated with dignity under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, but said this should not be used to downplay the seriousness of the offences.

"These rights must never be used to minimise the gravity of gender-based violence or silence victim-survivors. Accountability and rehabilitation must go hand in hand with justice and protection."

They further warned against sensational media reporting, noting that sharing names, images or investigation details without consent violates child protection laws.

The statement was endorsed by the Women's Centre for Change, Women's Aid Organisation, Sisters in Islam, Tanaganita, Suaram, Hakam and Aliran, among others.

The call comes amid renewed concern over school safety following the Zara Qairina bullying case and criticism of the Education Ministry for describing rape as "sexual misconduct" in official documents.

New subject to boost character, says ministry

PUTRAJAYA: The Education Ministry will introduce Character Education as one of the key initiatives under the 2027 school curriculum, aimed at producing students with noble and responsible character.

It said the initiative represents a strategic shift in the national education system to strengthen the development of character and noble values among students in a comprehensive and structured manner.

"At the preschool level, the programme would be implemented in an integrated manner through daily learning activities."

The ministry said at the primary and secondary school levels, a specific time slot of 60 minutes per week would be allocated in the timetable to enable character-building activities to be carried out effectively and consistently.

It added that the initiative emphasises teaching and learning activities that cultivate an appreciation of values, encourage positive behaviour and promote the practice of manners and morals in daily life. — Bernama

'Lack of guidance may leave children morally lost'

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA
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PETALING JAYA: The recent spate of school violence has reignited a sobering question, are parents losing their moral influence over a generation growing up online?

Experts warn that in an age in which social media shapes values as much as family and faith, the absence of parental guidance and open dialogue could leave children morally adrift, blurring the line between empathy and aggression.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Human Ecology Faculty developmental psychology senior lecturer Dr Mohamad Naquiddin Dahamat Azam said today's adolescents are constantly exposed to new moral frameworks through influencers, widely spread content and entertainment.

"Developmentally, adolescents are wired to seek social approval. When they lack emotional validation at home, they may turn to online communities for belonging, even those that normalise cruelty or violence," he said.

The area of the brain responsible for self-control, decision-making and moral reasoning only matures in one's mid-20s, he explained.

"This makes them more

➤ Parents must act as interpreters, not just monitors of digital world: Lecturer

vulnerable to impulsive imitation of behaviours that appear socially rewarding online."

Mohamad Naquiddin said parents must act as interpreters, not just monitors of their children's digital world.

"Restriction without conversation breeds secrecy, whereas engagement builds critical awareness."

"Parents should discuss digital content, question online narratives and model ethical thinking to help teens develop moral autonomy."

He said while no single factor explains acts of youth violence, developmental psychologists often see a mix of moral, emotional and spiritual voids.

"However, it is important not to reduce the issue to spirituality alone. Moral and spiritual guidance must be accompanied by emotional attunement and psychological support," he said.

A child could attend religious classes but still act out violently if he or she feels unloved, unheard or unsafe.

"The goal is to integrate spiritual values with emotional wellbeing,

teaching compassion, forgiveness and accountability as lived experiences, not abstract doctrines."

He said spiritual and religious teachings give children a moral compass beyond fear of punishment or desire for approval.

"When taught through compassion and example, spirituality strengthens emotional regulation and moral resilience, especially during adolescence."

He said children raised with consistent moral and spiritual guidance, and parents who lead with warmth and fairness, tend to develop stronger empathy and self-control.

"In contrast, youths lacking strong moral foundations are more prone to moral disengagement, which research links to higher aggression, bullying and difficulty managing anger or peer pressure."

Mohamad Naquiddin said moral education should begin early, using simple language and consistent reinforcement through praise, correction and storytelling.

"As children grow, parents should connect moral lessons with

emotions and later guide adolescents towards reasoning and understanding.

"Teenagers need open discussions about moral issues to help them think critically and make ethical choices based on conviction rather than fear of punishment."

He said even toddlers can recognise fairness and kindness, and parents could nurture empathy by asking questions, such as "how would you feel if someone treated you that way?"

"Open and empathetic family communication helps children resolve conflicts through dialogue, fostering perspective-taking and emotional understanding that are vital for moral maturity," he added.

He warned that authoritarian or dismissive parenting could cause children to either obey blindly or rebel impulsively when frustrated.

"They may not learn how to cope with anger, disappointment or rejection in healthy ways, which are vital skills to prevent frustration from turning into aggression."

He said recent tragedies should serve as a collective wake-up call for families, schools and communities.

"Preventing future violence begins at home, but it requires a whole ecosystem that nurtures empathy, emotional education and moral courage."

Doubts cast on plan to introduce 'Character Education'

■ BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: Education experts have questioned the government plan to introduce a new "Character Education" subject by 2027, warning that it risks becoming another layer of bureaucracy that duplicates existing programmes and adds to the burden of students and teachers.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Malaysian Inclusive Development and Advancement Institute deputy director Dr Anuar Ahmad said elements of character development are already embedded in various subjects and school activities.

"For Muslim students, character education is part of Islamic Education. For non-Muslims, it is in Moral Education."

"We also have the Student Character System, *Duta Sahsiyah* programme and uniformed bodies that build discipline and leadership."

"There is no need for another subject. If what we have now is not effective, then improve it."

Anuar said the Education Ministry should focus on strengthening existing mechanisms rather than introducing new, untested initiatives.

"The ministry itself has said the curriculum is already heavy. Adjustments were made in 2023 to reduce the load, so why add more?"

"This would only make things messy and overlapping."

He urged the ministry to empower school counselling programmes and peer support clubs



Fouzi said the introduction of Character Education should be viewed as part of the ministry's long-term curriculum reform rather than as a separate subject. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

as they are vital to student wellbeing, but remain under-resourced.

"One counsellor sometimes handles 500 or 600 students, when the international standard is one to 250. Many schools also have counselling rooms that do not ensure privacy."

"These are the issues that need fixing."

Anuar added that counselling should only be carried out by licensed professionals, not regular

teachers assigned to the role.

"Counselling involves ethics and confidentiality. If untrained teachers give the wrong advice, it could harm students. Teachers are already overloaded. They should not be expected to take on more roles, and students should not be weighed down by more subjects."

National Union of the Teaching Profession secretary-general Fouzi Singon said the introduction of Character Education should be

viewed as part of the ministry's long-term curriculum reform rather than as a separate subject.

"The Education Ministry is reviewing the entire national curriculum. It would be rolled out in phases, starting with preschool in 2026 and Year One in 2027, and would continue gradually until around 2037," he said.

He added that character development would be integrated into the new curriculum framework.

Use tourism budget for investments, urges expert

► 'True recovery means supporting infrastructure, environmental sustainability and equitable growth'

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia must not treat the RM700 million tourism allocation in Budget 2026 as a one-off marketing pot, warned tourism expert Dr Mohamad Zaki Ahmad, adding that real transformation would only come from long-term investments in people, places and policy.

The Universiti Utara Malaysia senior lecturer said the allocation signals strong government commitment to revive the sector, but cautioned that promotion spending alone would not deliver sustainable growth.

"The RM700 million would certainly help accelerate the tourism rebound and support Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) in many ways. It is a positive signal covering culture, promotion and incentives," said Zaki, who is also from the School of Tourism, Hospitality and Event Management.

"But on its own, it is not enough to fully revitalise tourism, especially if we are targeting 47 million visitors and RM329 billion in receipts.

"True recovery means investing in infrastructure, environmental sustainability and equitable growth across all regions, not just the popular ones."

He said the funds should be seen as seed capital for a permanent upgrade of the tourism ecosystem, not as event funding.

Zaki called for a strategic shift from "promotion spending" to "capability investment", focusing on infrastructure, human capital, digitalisation, sustainability and branding.

"Short-term campaigns fill hotels. Long-term investments build nations," he said, stressing the need for institutional reform and stronger tourism governance.

He said if managed well, the funds could



Zaki urged the government to adopt a community-led tourism model supported by policy reforms, capacity-building and cultural entrepreneurship clusters. — MASRY CHE ANI/THESUN

improve public amenities, preserve heritage, create jobs and enhance Malaysia's global competitiveness.

He identified several immediate priorities to make Malaysia more competitive internationally, including human capital development, visa facilitation, digital transformation, sustainability and brand positioning.

"We need to simplify visa processes, promote digital safety and branding standards, and invest in green credentials such as sustainability certifications.

"These would help Malaysia appeal to new and emerging travel segments."

Zaki emphasised that the allocation must not stay concentrated at the top levels of ministries and large agencies.

"The most important thing is ensuring the money reaches the ground, such as small operators, local communities and cultural entrepreneurs who form the real backbone of Malaysia's visitor experience."

He urged the government to adopt a community-led tourism model supported by policy reforms, capacity-building and cultural entrepreneurship clusters, with safeguards to prevent fund leakage or misuse.

"Budget 2026 must treat local entrepreneurs as primary investors in Malaysia's image, not secondary beneficiaries," he added.

Looking ahead, Zaki said Malaysia must shift from promotion-driven tourism to an ecosystem-driven model anchored on resilience, digital readiness and inclusivity.

"A strong tourism brand brings visitors, but a strong ecosystem keeps them coming back," he said.

He urged Malaysia to invest in smart destinations, professional workforce development, data-driven management and sustainable governance to secure long-term competitiveness.

"The RM700 million is a solid foundation, but sustainable growth requires continuous investment in infrastructure, talent, digital innovation and community empowerment."

He added that aligning policies and decentralising strategies could help Malaysia emerge as a regional leader in sustainable, experience-based tourism by 2030.

"If Malaysia could shift from short-term campaigns to ecosystem-building, every tourism ringgit would go further and VM2026 would be more than just a slogan."

'Visit Malaysia 2026 requires deeper reforms'

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's tourism budget packs plenty of hype but little horsepower, and without deeper reforms, Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) could end up just another flashy campaign, warned tourism expert Prof Dr Mohd Hafiz Hanafiah.

The Universiti Teknologi Mara Selangor deputy director said while Budget 2026 gives the sector a strong promotional lift, it falls short of delivering lasting change.

"The RM700 million allocation, including RM500 million for VM2026, focuses heavily on marketing and tax breaks instead of long-term transformation," he said.

"It is a good short-term push, but not a game changer. From an economic point of view, it is less than 0.2% of total government spending. This shows that tourism still is not a top fiscal priority."

Hafiz said the budget aims to sustain momentum rather than reshape the industry.

The RM500 million VM2026 campaign targets 35.6 million tourist arrivals and RM147 billion in revenue, with income tax breaks for tour operators and incentives for meetings,

incentives, conventions and exhibitions.

"These are positive moves, but numbers alone do not pay the bills.

"Malaysia has been good at attracting tourists, but not at getting them to spend more. Budget 2026 still rewards volume over value," he said.

He noted that most benefits would flow to established city operators while smaller and rural destinations risk being left behind.

"Secondary destinations need better roads, signage and accessibility. Yet there is no funding for digital booking tools or data systems to help small players.

"Training programmes are too broad. We need specific focus on hospitality, language and service quality before VM2026."

Hafiz also warned that community-based tourism, homestays and rural tourism ventures are often left out.

"Many of them do not qualify for tax incentives because they earn below the taxable level, but they are key to Malaysia's tourism story."

He said the government should

include them in incentive programmes, perhaps through travel vouchers for licensed community operators so that funds circulate locally.

He added that Malaysia still lags behind regional rivals in policy coordination and long-term planning.

"Thailand and Indonesia have been far more aggressive and coordinated. Thailand's long-stay digital nomad visas and Indonesia's infrastructure push across its cultural islands have strengthened their tourism ecosystems.

"Malaysia has strong branding and good air connectivity, but our policies remain scattered across ministries. There is no single, integrated game plan."

Overall, Hafiz said Budget 2026 boosts Malaysia's tourism visibility but does not move the needle on transformation.

"The focus on marketing makes Malaysia more visible and price-competitive, but without better coordination between the Tourism Ministry, Malaysia Airports and the Finance Ministry, the gains would not last."

— BY KIRTINEE RAMESH

S'pore licence holders glad after Budi95 application opens

JOHOR BAHRU: Malaysians holding Singapore driving licences have expressed relief following the opening of applications for the Budi Madani RON95 (Budi95) fuel subsidy initiative, which enables them to enjoy the same benefits.

Bus driver Mohd Nasir Mokhtar, 44, said he has had no issues accessing the application link through the Road Transport Department website.

He said the mechanism introduced by the government has also made it easier for them to submit applications.

However, he advised other applicants to check all details carefully and ensure the information provided is accurate before clicking the "submit" button.

"I managed to access the website to apply and the process went smoothly. My friends also helped me with the application," said Mohd Nasir, who has been working as a bus driver in Singapore for more than two years.

Mohd Hizwan Jaafar, 35, said the application system was user friendly and easy to understand.

"I hope my application would be approved soon so that I could enjoy the benefits without having to wait too long," he said, adding that he has worked as a bus driver for six years.

Mohamad Yusof, 38, who has been in the same profession for 10 years, said the measures introduced by the government would help ensure no eligible applicant is left out.

"This initiative is good and efficient. With it, eligible citizens could benefit from the subsidy."

On Wednesday, Transport Minister Anthony Loke reportedly said the Transport Ministry, through the department, has opened a special portal, starting on Thursday, to facilitate applications for Budi95 among Malaysians holding a Singapore driving licence.

He said the initiative is aimed at assisting Malaysians working in Singapore who are required to hold the republic's driving licence for employment purposes, particularly those in the service sector, such as bus drivers, support service drivers and operational staff.

The application website can be accessed at budi95leseng.jpj.gov.my/ while eligibility status can be checked after 14 days through the official portal www.budi95.gov.my. — Bernama

S'wak lauds extension of fuel subsidy to water transport users

KUCHING: The Sarawak government has expressed appreciation to the federal government for its swift action and approval to extend the Budi Madani RON95 (Budi95) subsidy initiative to individuals who rely solely on water transport for their daily commute and livelihood.

Sarawak Transport (Maritime and Riverine) Deputy Minister Datuk Henry Harry Jinep said this extension is significant for communities that depend on river transport to access essential government services and nearby townships.

"This approval provides much-needed relief to low-income families, enabling them to allocate more of their income towards other essential daily needs."

Henry urged individuals who have yet to register for Budi95 eligibility to do so at the nearest resident or district office.

"This would ensure all those who depend on water transport for their daily needs are not left out and could fully benefit from Budi95."

The Finance Ministry on Monday announced that the eligibility for Budi95 has been expanded to include registered boat users in Sarawak while the monthly fuel allocation for full-time e-hailing drivers has been raised to 600 litres.

The ministry said the list was submitted by the Sarawak Transport Ministry in collaboration with resident and district offices across the state. — Bernama

Police refute claims of kidnap bid in Limbang

LIMBANG: Police have dismissed widely shared social media claims alleging an attempted kidnapping at a local primary school in Limbang, describing them as false and baseless.

Limbang district police chief Supt Parum Niot said no reports or incidents related to any kidnapping attempt had been received.

"The information circulating on social media about an alleged abduction of a pupil at a primary school here is untrue," he said in a statement yesterday.

Parum urged the public not to engage in speculation that could cause unnecessary alarm, adding that police have strengthened security monitoring at all schools and are maintaining continuous preventive measures to ensure the safety of students and staff.

He also warned that spreading false information capable of disrupting public order is a serious offence, with stern action possible under Section 505 of the Penal Code, which carries up to two years' imprisonment, a fine or both; Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, which carries a maximum fine of RM50,000 or up to one year's imprisonment, or both; and the Sedition Act 1948 if the false information incites racial, religious or anti-government sentiments.

"The police will continue to monitor and take appropriate action against any individual found spreading fake news," he added, urging the public to verify information through official police channels before believing or sharing it. — Bernama

KLAH staff held over migrant smuggling scheme

PUTRAJAYA: A Malaysian woman suspected of facilitating the entry of foreigners into the country through a special lane at the immigration counter at KL International Airport (KLIA) Terminal 2 was arrested on Oct 15.

In a statement yesterday, the Border Control and Protection Agency said preliminary investigations revealed that the suspect, a lounge supervisor with Kuala Lumpur Airport Hotel Sdn Bhd (KLAH), had attempted to bring six Indonesian passengers through immigration using a special lane facility slip, allowing them to enter Malaysia without proper clearance.

"It is understood that the 34-year-old woman received payment for each passenger she successfully brought in. The activity is believed to have been carried out without her employer's knowledge and while she was on leave," the statement said.

According to the agency, further investigations revealed the involvement of several other individuals, including employees of KLAH and FTCo Consultancy Sdn Bhd, who are believed to have used the same *modus operandi* to facilitate the entry of foreigners.

"The activity is suspected to have been going on for more than a year, involving individuals from Indonesia, China, Vanuatu, Cambodia and Laos," the statement read.

The woman was arrested under Section 26A of the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (Act 670) and is currently being remanded at the Aeropolis Lock-up for further investigation.

Meanwhile, six Indonesian nationals were also arrested and sent to the Putrajaya Immigration Detention Depot. — Bernama

Teen with cancer struggling to raise treatment funds

► Family of sixteen-year-old afflicted since childhood still short of RM100,000 for life-saving operation in India

■ BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: Sixteen-year-old Meera Bernadette, who has battled a rare liver cancer since childhood, is racing against time to raise RM300,000 for a life-saving liver transplant in India after her condition progressed to end-stage liver disease.

Her mother, Mariamma Govindan, 50, said Meera was first diagnosed with hepatoblastoma at the age of six and has since undergone three major liver surgeries and multiple rounds of chemotherapy.

"When she was first admitted to University Malaya Medical Centre, doctors confirmed she had liver cancer. She went through chemotherapy and surgery to remove 75% of her liver," she said.

Meera's condition worsened in 2023 when bile began leaking into her lungs, forcing doctors to remove part of her right lung and repair her diaphragm.

A follow-up surgery in 2024 to reconstruct the bile ducts failed after 16 hours.

"Now her liver is irreparably damaged. She's 16 but weighs only 28kg. Doctors said

her case is too complex to be done locally, so the transplant has to be done in India."

The procedure and post-operative care at Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in New Delhi are estimated to cost RM300,000, covering pre-surgical conditioning, hospitalisation, three months of recovery and medication.

Mariamma said the amount represents more than just the surgery, it includes treatment, recovery and living expenses abroad during her daughter's fragile recovery period.

"The doctors advised that Meera needs to be in New Delhi at least two weeks before the operation for conditioning and nutritional support, as she is severely underweight. The package includes hospitalisation, medication and follow-up monitoring to prevent infection or organ rejection."

The family had quietly borne the financial burden for nearly a decade before turning to public fundraising.

Their savings were depleted by hospital admissions, medication and treatments not subsidised by the government.

"We've already spent everything we had over the past 10 years on her treatment. So far, about RM200,000 has been raised through public donations, but we still need another RM100,000 before she can proceed with the transplant."

"All the earlier surgeries, chemotherapies, medications and hospital stays were paid out of pocket."

"We never asked anyone for help before, but this time, the scale and urgency are beyond what our family can manage."

Despite the hardship, Mariamma said her daughter's resilience keeps her going.

"Every time I see her smile despite the pain, I remind myself not to give up. She has spent more of her life in hospital wards than at home, but she still stays positive. As a mother, I can't give up when she still wants to fight."

Meera's plight has since drawn the attention of Hamidi's Comrades in Charity, a volunteer group formed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Its secretary Hamidi Mookkaiyah Abdullah said the group began collecting funds among its members after learning of Meera's case.

"Most of our contributors are teachers who give RM100 to RM300 every month. Whatever we collect goes straight to those in need," he said, adding that Meera's donation account was briefly frozen due to a large influx of funds but has since been reactivated.

Those wishing to contribute may donate to Mariamma Govindan, Maybank 103024287389 or to Persatuan Kebajikan Rakan-Rakan Hamidi CIMB Bank 8011004760.

For enquiries, contact Hamidi via WhatsApp at +6019-277 3856.



Meera needs to be in New Delhi at least two weeks before the operation for conditioning and nutritional support, as she is severely underweight. — PIC COURTESY OF MARIAMMA GOVINDAN

Year One pupil hospitalised after canteen assault

SHAH ALAM: A Year One pupil at a primary school in Section 32 here has been hospitalised after allegedly being beaten by two Year Three boys during recess on Monday.

Shah Alam district police chief ACP Mohd Iqbal Ibrahim said the seven-year-old victim was attacked at the school canteen and his mother lodged a police report later that evening.

"The victim, a local boy, was admitted to Shah Alam Hospital and is currently in stable condition. Investigations are ongoing to determine the extent of his injuries," he said in a statement.

The case is being investigated under Section

323 of the Penal Code for voluntarily causing hurt.

Members of the public with information are urged to contact investigating officer Insp Nor Sabryna Mohamma Taha at 014-513 0450.

In a separate incident, police detained a 14-year-old boy for allegedly sexually assaulting a 15-year-old girl during recess at a school in Sabak Bernam last Monday.

Sabak Bernam district police chief Supt Md Yusoff Ahmad said the suspect was arrested the same day at Jalan Parit in Sungai Besar and has been remanded for four days from Monday.

The case is being investigated under Section 14(a) of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017.

Meanwhile in Klang, an eight-year-old pupil enrolled in the Special Education Integrated Programme at Sekolah Kebangsaan Meru died early yesterday, reportedly due to Influenza A infection.

North Klang police chief ACP S. Vijaya Rao said the boy was confirmed dead at about 4.30am and that all his family members had also tested positive for the same virus.

"The Health Ministry has implemented preventive measures, including medical checks on close contacts and monitoring the area to control the spread of infection," he said, adding that the case has been classified as sudden death. — Bernama



Sustenance from potted bounty

➤ Shelter getting by from sale of herbal and medicinal plants at self-run nursery

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: In the quiet lanes of Bukit Beruntung, rows of plants stretch towards the sun - *maha vilvam* (*Aegle marmelos*), *tulsi* (holy basil), *ajwain* and curry leaves swaying gently in the morning breeze.

What began as a few pots behind his home has blossomed into a thriving nursery that now sustains Yayasan Seribu Harapan Malaysia (YSHM), the charity Dr M. Muneeswaran founded 15 years ago.

"I used to cater food to support the home. But after (a medical procedure), the doctor advised me to stop. That's when I started a nursery."

Today, the garden he built feeds not only the body but the soul. It pays the bills, keeps 38 children clothed and schooled, and teaches them the value of patience and care.

"We grow many of the plants ourselves, and I teach the children how to look after them," he said, adding that the home now cultivates more than 50 types of herbal and medicinal plants.

"These herbs are not just for sale, they also help with our health."

Customers drop by daily to buy plants, while Muneeswaran travels around Malaysia every week to sell them.

"That's how we keep the home running," he said.

But behind the flourishing garden lies a story of heartbreak, one that began with the loss of his son.

"I started this home because of my son. He passed away and in his memory, I started what was then called Saravanan Caring Home."

"Later, the government officially registered it as Yayasan Seribu Harapan Malaysia."

From that grief, grew compassion.

What began as a father's tribute has become

a haven for abandoned, orphaned and underprivileged children - a home built on discipline, education and unconditional love.

The youngest resident at the shelter is just three years old, while the oldest is 71.

"Today, we have about 38 children under our care, and more than 200 have completed their studies and moved on," Muneeswaran said, adding that education remains the heartbeat of the home.

"Some have earned certificates, diplomas and even degrees. Some of our children have graduated from Sunway University, MSU and government universities and polytechnics."

"So far, 40 have graduated. Some are now teachers, accountants and engineers."

As Deepavali approaches, the home is buzzing with excitement.

The children are busy cleaning, painting and preparing *murukku* and sweets for the festival.

"Yesterday, we took them shopping for new clothes. I like to take them shopping myself so they can choose what they like," he said, adding that he spends about RM7,000 on Deepavali clothes and accessories.

"I just want to give them the best. Deepavali comes only once a year, they deserve to feel special."

Every year, we follow full Hindu traditions - starting at 6am with an oil bath, followed by prayers, breakfast and fireworks at night," he said.

Sponsors provide food during the three-day celebration so the kitchen can close and everyone can enjoy the festivities together.

Now 60, Muneeswaran dreams of building a permanent home for the residents.

"By 65, I hope to build a single-storey home for elderly men, elderly women and children," he said.

To fund that dream, he turns again to his plants and to the kindness of Malaysians.

"If 100,000 people buy one plant for RM30, we can raise RM3 million."

"I believe when you do good, God helps you. There are so many kind-hearted Malaysians and with their help, we can make it happen."

Individuals keen to render assistance to Yayasan Seribu Harapan Malaysia may do so via inquiries to yshm.org@gmail.com.

Brickfields comes alive with festive feel

KUALA LUMPUR: With Deepavali being celebrated on Monday, the atmosphere in Brickfields is turning lively, with crowds thronging "Little India" to shop for festive items.

A Bernama check found rows of shops offering traditional attire, accessories and Indian sweets buzzing with customers choosing *sarees*, *kurtas* and home decorations in preparation for the Festival of Lights.

Textile trader R. Pushpa, 53, said sales have picked up since last weekend, with many visitors looking for matching outfits for the whole family.

"Business was slow last week. But now more people are coming, especially in the evenings and on weekends," she said.

Pushpa, who has been operating in the area for more than five years, said sales this year have been more encouraging compared with last year, with shoppers appearing more enthusiastic about buying new clothes.

Meanwhile, Indian sweets seller M. Krishnan, 52, said popular sweets such as *laddu*, *jalebi* and *palkova* are in high demand.

"Orders are increasing every day. We've had to restock frequently because many customers

are already placing advance orders for family and friends," he said, adding that the aroma of freshly made sweets each morning continues to draw customers.

Shopper A. Suguna, 29, a nurse from Subang Jaya, made her way to Brickfields after work to buy clothes and sweets for her family in Seremban.

"I come here every year because there's a wide selection and the atmosphere feels festive. This year, I want to make sure everything is ready before heading home for the holidays."

Suguna said the vibrant sights and sounds of Brickfields have heightened her excitement for her trip home to celebrate Deepavali.

Flower vendor A. Sivananthan, 54, said sales have started to pick up and expects this weekend to be the busiest period for traders.

"This whole area, especially the flower stalls, will be packed and we usually sell out completely," he said.

Jewellery and accessory shops were also bustling with visitors, with colourful lights and oil lamps placed in front of business premises, adding to the festive mood. - Bernama



The flower vendors section is one of the most popular among visitors to Little India.

- AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

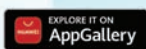
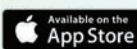


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Tuanku Zara watching a boy with disability display his skills.

Royal support for autism awareness walk

■ P. CHANDRA SAGARAN
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IPOH: Some 700 people, including children with autism and other disabilities, participated in the Program Naungan Kasih Sentuhan Autisme Perak 2025 fun walk flagged off by Raja Permaisuri Perak Tuanku Zara Salim at Taman DR Seenivasagam here on Sept 27.

The children were accompanied by their parents in the 600-metre walk organised by the Pertubuhan Wanita Prihatin Perak with the strategic partnership of the Perak Education Department and Yayasan Perak.

The participants hailed from the Kinta Utara, Kinta Selatan, Kuala Kangsar and Perak Tengah districts.

Tuanku Zara joined in the VIP walk where she stopped at three points to observe autistic children exercising various skills such as cup setting, lego formation and weaving.

Talks and a forum on disabilities and autism were also held, together with exhibition booths and competitions.

This event helped to meet the target of setting up three multisensory rooms under the Education Department, costing between RM30,000 and RM60,000 each, in the Kinta district.

These were sponsored by corporate firms.

The three dedicated rooms are a Snoezelen Multisensory Room at SK Sungai Rokam, and integrated multisensory rooms at SK Coronation Park and SK Sri Sentosa.

In her speech, organising chairperson Norzita Rabaai hoped that the rooms would be operational by the end of the year.

"These rooms shall provide conducive environments to develop sensory faculties, emotions and learning, so that the children would be brought up in safe, peaceful and loving surroundings.

"The rooms are designed to regulate the childrens' emotions, improve their focus, develop their potential and build their abilities," she added.

Meanwhile Perak Education Department director Safuan Raba'ai said there is need for at least one multisensory room in every district.

Free screening for school pupils on World Sight Day

■ P. CHANDRA SAGARAN
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

IPOH: In conjunction with World Sight Day, a total of 120 pupils of SJK (T) Kg Simee had their eyes screened for any defects at the school hall on Oct 9.

The programme was organised by Persatuan Kebajikan Amal Makmur Negeri Perak with the cooperation of the Perak State Education Department.

Professional staff of Vista Eye Specialist Centre were on hand to conduct the screenings.

The advisor of Eye Screening Programme for Students in Perak, Datuk Dr Jasvinder Singh, an ophthalmologist, stressed on the need for screening to detect any problems.

He said students are not aware that they have sight defects, contributing to their poor academic results.

"They are intelligent but due to poor eyesight these students fail to excel.

"Then there are gadgets like iPads and handphones which cause these youngsters to suffer from problems of far-sightedness," he added.

Jasvinder said the event was aimed at promoting awareness on eye health among schoolchildren, highlighting the importance of regular vision screening and preventive eye care in line with this year's theme for World Sight Day, which is "Love Your Eyes at Work and School".

"It was a meaningful collaboration between the education, health and community welfare sectors, working together to safeguard the vision and future of our young generation," he said.

K. Nachemuthu, the project manager for the programme, said pupils who are screened would be referred to the hospital depending on the results of their tests.

► Many children in Malaysia unaware they have eye defects, cautions ophthalmologist



Ahmad Maswan (centre) watching a pupil undergoing eye screening.

Meanwhile, the department's principal assistant director for special education, Ahmad Maswan Ahmad Fuaad, who represented the State Education Department director at the event, said students are often labelled as "lazy" or "not focussed".

"This is not the case as their problem is due to poor eyesight and as such they

cannot concentrate on their studies," he said.

Ahmad Maswan praised the association for organising the programme and hoped that more schools would be included in the future.

Since 2022, some 20,000 students from 100 schools across Perak have been screened under the programme.

Hindu association serves needy for Deepavali

GEORGE TOWN: Some 150 hardcore poor families received aid and goodies in conjunction with Deepavali in a project organised by the Penang Hindu Association (PHA) in collaboration with Klinik Derma Sivasanta, the welfare arm of the Temple of Fine Arts.

This is the 26th year that the Deepavali Charity Event was held since it started.

The recipients hailing from the island and mainland, as well as from Kulim in Kedah, were presented with packages filled with 35 grocery items worth RM180 each. Every family also received a goody-bag with snacks and sweets.

Additionally, a token amount of RM50 in cash was given to each family to buy festival related items. Children attending the event each received RM5.

PHA president Datuk P. Murugiah said many of the B40 families had earlier raised the issue of not having proper housing for their families.

In response, Deputy Chief Minister II Jagdeep Singh Deo, who officiated at the event, said the matter is being looked into and some 170,000 affordable homes have been built.

He advised those who need affordable homes to follow the SOP in applying for the housing units in order for the state government to assist.

PHA welcomes the state's proactive action. "As we regularly give a lending ear to the needy, the number of poor families asking for assistance to own affordable homes is increasing," Murugiah said.

"A number of the families have five children



Murugiah (2nd left) and Jagdeep (3rd left) handing grocery bags to some of the recipients.

to take care of and find it difficult to cope with the constant rise in cost of living and house rentals.

"Some have even resorted to borrowing money from loan sharks to settle their rents. This raises concern that if left unchecked many may end up in the streets as homeless."

PHA has appealed to the state authority to expedite the fulfilment of its target to prepare 200,000 units or more by 2030.

"PHA also hopes that other state

governments and the federal government emulate the public housing programme (PPR) that is being successfully carried out in Penang to build more PPR housing units in and around Penang to meet the increasing demand."

Murugiah expressed gratitude to sponsors and donors who came forward to contribute for the beneficiaries during this festive period.

"Next year, we hope to touch even more lives because we believe in the power of giving back and sharing God's blessings," he said.



India denies extension for drug firms

► Move driven by recent deaths linked to local cough syrup

NEW DELHI: Four sources, who asked to remain anonymous, said India has refused the requests of drugmakers to extend a year-end deadline for them to upgrade manufacturing facilities to international standards, amid public anger over the recent deaths of at least 24 children who consumed locally-produced cough syrup.

New Delhi had in 2023 ordered pharmaceutical companies to ensure their plants meet World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended standards, which would require them to invest in protocols to prevent cross-contamination and enable batch-testing of samples, among other measures.

The mandate was established after India-made cough syrups were linked to the deaths of more than 140 children in Africa and Central Asia, severely denting India's image as a "pharmacy of the world".

While major pharmaceutical companies met a June 2024 deadline, smaller firms were granted a 12-month reprieve on their separate

December 2024 target. However, some in India's pharmaceutical lobby have been pushing for more time, adding that businesses would be forced into bankruptcy by the costs.

The sources said news that Sresan Pharmaceutical Manufacturer, which made the Coldrif syrup that was linked to the latest deaths, had not upgraded its facilities was a key factor in convincing government officials to ignore those appeals.

The sources also said the decision was made in October after tests confirmed a high level of toxicity in certain Coldrif syrups, adding that drugmakers were informed of the decision at a conference on Thursday.

One of the sources said once the upgrades are completed, India plans to phase out a controversial rule introduced in 2023 that mandates additional testing of cough syrups at government-designated laboratories before export.

All India Drugs Control Officers' Confederation spokesperson Udaya Bhaskar said if India had adhered to its original deadline, the latest deaths could have been avoided.

All the recent deaths were linked to a batch of Coldrif syrup made in May.

He said he supported scrapping additional testing for exports once all

labs were certified to WHO standards, adding that: "It is not the government's job to test every batch. That responsibility lies with the manufacturer. The government's duty is to ensure compliance."

Government tests found the syrup manufactured by Sresan contained 48.6% diethylene glycol (DEG), nearly 500 times the limit set by India and WHO.

DEG is sometimes "fraudulently or unintentionally" used in place of pricier pharmaceutical-grade solvents such as glycerine and propylene glycol, according to an Oct 13 presentation on medical contamination by the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC), which sets national drug standards.

The commission in October started requiring manufacturers to test oral liquids for the presence of DEG and another comparable substance, ethylene glycol, before sale.

While the IPC did not name specific companies, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation said in October that recent inspections revealed some firms failed to test every batch of medicinal ingredients as required by law.

Authorities have since revoked Sresan's manufacturing licence, banned its products and arrested its

founder S. Ranganathan on suspicion of manslaughter.

Sresan's corporate office in a residential building in the southern city of Chennai and its manufacturing site, which is based in a ramshackle structure, were both closed during visits by Reuters.

However, the closure of Sresan's facilities comes too late for Mayank Suryavanshi. The three-year-old from the Parasia region of Madhya Pradesh state developed a fever on Sept 22, for which a local doctor prescribed Coldrif.

Mayank took doses manufactured by Sresan, but his condition deteriorated. He died of acute kidney failure on Oct 9.

"We never imagined a simple medicine could turn life-threatening," said his father, Nilesh Suryavanshi, who works as a day labourer.

"My child should be the last. The government must ensure no other parent suffers like this."

India's US\$50 billion (RM211 billion) pharmaceutical industry is composed of about 3,000 companies that operate more than 10,000 factories.

Government data shows about two dozen firms are responsible for the majority of drugs manufactured in the country. Much of the remaining 40% is produced by small

and medium enterprises, many of which fear the costs of upgrading their facilities would render them economically unviable.

SME Pharma Industries Confederation secretary Jagdeep Singh said about half of the manufacturing units in the pharmaceutical hub state of Himachal Pradesh would shut down if an extension was not forthcoming.

"I can guarantee there would be shortages, unemployment and massive national losses," he said, adding that some firms have discontinued products as customers refuse to bear the upgrade costs.

In Parasia, the local community continues to bear the costs of the drug-safety lapses. Regional drug inspectors have been visiting pharmacies to collect random samples of cough syrups for testing.

According to six local pharmacists, at least four pharmacies that sold Coldrif were temporarily shut for failing to produce documentation related to the sale of the cough syrup.

Community health workers have also been deployed on door-to-door visits to urge residents to surrender remaining bottles of Coldrif.

Local physician Praveen Soni, who prescribed Coldrif to several of the children who died, has been arrested. - Reuters

Two S. Koreans detained in Cambodia return home

SEOUL: Police said two South Koreans detained in a crime crackdown by Cambodian authorities returned home yesterday, a day after Phnom Penh announced plans to deport 59 Koreans accused of working in cyberscam operations.

South Korea sent a team to Cambodia on Wednesday to discuss cases of fake jobs and scam centres involved in kidnapping dozens of its nationals.

Seoul said 63 South Koreans were detained by authorities in Cambodia and vowed to bring them home.

Police did not provide any further details on what the individuals had been doing in Cambodia.

They also said another two nationals returned to South Korea from Cambodia earlier this week, without clarifying whether the four had been deported by authorities.

Seoul National Security Adviser Wi Sung-lac said the 63 citizens included

both "voluntary and involuntary participants" in scam operations.

An official from the South Korean foreign ministry said the government was not yet able to share details on the return of its nationals Cambodia said it would deport.

Seoul has said about 1,000 South Koreans were estimated to be among a total of about 200,000 people working in scam operations in Cambodia.

Some are forced under threat of violence to execute "pig butchering" scams, cryptocurrency investment schemes that build trust with victims over time before stealing their funds.

Experts said the multi-billion dollar illicit industry has ballooned in Cambodia in recent years, with thousands of people perpetrating online scams, some willingly and others forced by the organised criminal groups running the fraud networks. - AFP



FANCY FLIGHT... The Black Eagles, an aerobatic team of T-50 jets belonging to South Korea's Air Force, fly in formation during the Seoul International Aerospace and Defence Exhibition at a military airport in Seongnam. - AFP/PIC

New Zealand reimposes sanctions on Iran

WELLINGTON: New Zealand Foreign Minister Winston Peters said in a statement yesterday the country is reimposing sanctions on Iran due to concerns about non-compliance with its nuclear obligations.

He said the reimposition of United Nations sanctions is a result of Iran not complying with the terms of the internationally recognised Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which was signed in 2015, and will take effect on Oct 18.

The announcement comes after Britain, France and Germany also reimposed UN sanctions, citing

Iranian breaches, and after Australia in August accused Iran of directing two antisemitic arson attacks in the cities of Sydney and Melbourne and gave Tehran's ambassador seven days to leave the country.

The sanctions introduce a range of restrictions, including an asset freeze and travel bans for sanctioned persons, import and export bans on certain nuclear and military goods and a duty on New Zealanders to exercise vigilance in dealings with Iran.

"This reimposition of UN sanctions reflects the international community's deep concerns about

Iran's non-compliance with its nuclear obligations and unjustifiable levels of uranium enrichment activity.

"New Zealand has consistently supported diplomatic efforts to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons from any source. We encourage Iran to re-engage in negotiations and resume full cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency."

Peters said New Zealand would also be introducing a compulsory registration scheme for New Zealanders who intend to do business with Iran. - Reuters

Date set for Japan PM vote

TOKYO: A senior member of the Japan lower house scheduling committee board said yesterday parliament has agreed to hold a vote to select the next prime minister on Oct 21.

While the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), led by its new leader Sanae Takaichi, proposed the date, opposition parties objected to the schedule, citing ongoing coalition talks.

The LDP has approached the

right-leaning opposition Japan Innovation Party in a bid to secure a majority vote and expand its coalition, which would enable Takaichi to become Japan's first female prime minister.

A number of diplomatic events await the new prime minister toward the end of the month, from international summits in Malaysia and South Korea to United States President Donald Trump's expected visit to Japan. - Reuters

EU reaches agreement on defence programme

BRUSSELS: The European Union (EU) Council has said it has reached an agreement for a programme boosting its defence industry, with an initial 1.5 billion euros (RM7.4 billion) to ramp up production and supply chains.

It added that the development puts the bloc on track to improve its defence readiness, and also aims to "support defence industrial cooperation with Ukraine".

The budget for the European Defence Industry Programme (EDIP), provided as grants, covers the period 2025-2027, according to the agreement struck with the European Parliament.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen welcomed the news as an important step towards the EU being "defence-ready by 2030".

Negotiations on the EDIP had long been dogged by the question of whether to give a preference to European-made military equipment, weapons and ammunition.

Certain EU countries wanted to use the programme to finance the purchase of material from outside the bloc, notably from the United States.

The compromise reached would limit the value of components made outside the EU or its partner countries such as Norway, to 35% of the total investment. – AFP

French PM survives two confidence votes

PARIS: French Prime Minister Sebastian Lecornu survived two confidence motions on Thursday, just days after appointing his new government and making a key political concession to stay in power.

The votes followed Lecornu's decision on Tuesday to back suspending a divisive 2023 pension reform, in a bid to keep his Cabinet afloat long enough to pass a much-needed austerity budget by year's end.

The leftist Socialist party PS threatened to vote to oust the premier if he did not move to freeze the reform that would raise the retirement age from 62 to 64.

Without PS support, two separate motions brought on Thursday by the hard-left France Unbowed and far-right National Rally fell short of the votes needed to topple Lecornu. – AFP

US strikes suspected drug vessel in Caribbean

WASHINGTON: A United States official said the military carried out a strike on Thursday against a suspected drug vessel in the Caribbean, and in what is believed to be the first such case, there were survivors among the crew.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, did not offer additional details about the incident, which has not been previously reported, except to say that it was not clear that the strike had been designed to leave survivors.

The development raises new questions, including whether the US military rendered aid to the survivors and whether they are now in US military custody, possibly as prisoners of war.

The Pentagon, which has labelled those it has targeted in the strikes as narcoterrorists, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Prior to the operation, military strikes against suspected drug boats off Venezuela killed at least 27 people, raising alarm among

► Presence of survivors among crew makes case first of its kind, says official

legal experts and Democratic lawmakers, who questioned whether the actions adhere to the laws of war.

Videos presented by the Trump administration of previous attacks showed vessels being completely destroyed, and there have been no prior accounts of survivors.

The administration argues the US is already engaged in a war with narcoterrorist groups from Venezuela, making the strikes legitimate, adding that lethal measures are necessary because traditional efforts to apprehend crew members and seize cargo have historically failed to stem the flow of narcotics into the US.

The strikes come against the backdrop of a US military buildup in the Caribbean that includes guided missile destroyers, F-35 fighter jets, a nuclear submarine

and about 6,500 troops as President Donald Trump escalates a standoff with the Venezuelan government.

Trump on Wednesday disclosed he had authorised the Central Intelligence Agency to conduct covert operations inside Venezuela, adding to speculation in Caracas that the US is attempting to topple Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

In a letter to the United Nations' 15-member Security Council, Venezuela's UN Ambassador Samuel Moncada asked for a determination that the US strikes off its coast are illegal and to issue a statement backing Venezuela's sovereignty.

Less than a week ago, the Pentagon announced its counter-narcotics operations in the region would not be led

by the Miami-based Southern Command, which oversees US military activities in Latin America.

Instead, the Pentagon said a task force was being created that would be led by II Marine Expeditionary Force, a unit capable of rapid overseas operations that is based at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina.

That decision came as a surprise to US military-watchers, since a combatant command such as Southern Command would normally lead any high-profile operations.

US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Thursday the admiral who leads US Southern Command would step down at the end of this year, two years ahead of schedule, in a surprise move.

The top Democrat on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Senator Jack Reed, called Admiral Alvin Holsey's unexpected resignation troubling, given mounting fears of a potential US confrontation with Venezuela. – Reuters



STRANGE STAND-OFF ... A police officer interacting with a costumed protester at an immigration processing and detention centre in Broadview, Illinois. – AFP/IC

Venezuela VP denies alleged Washington talks

CARACAS: Venezuelan Vice-President Delcy Rodriguez on Thursday denied a report that she negotiated with the United States to oust President Nicolas Maduro.

The *Miami Herald* newspaper reported that Rodriguez and her brother National Assembly president Jorge, attempted to present themselves to Washington as a "more acceptable" alternative to the leftist authoritarian Maduro.

Writing on social media, Rodriguez said: "Fake! Another media outlet adding to the filth of psychological warfare against the Venezuelan people. They have no ethics or morals."

The United States charges Maduro, who is accused of stealing elections last year, of heading a drug cartel.

President Donald Trump has deployed warships to the Caribbean as part of what he has described as an anti-drug trafficking operation.

The US forces have struck at least five suspected drug boats in the Caribbean since early September, leaving 27 dead.

In a significant escalation, Trump indicated on Wednesday he had authorised Central Intelligence Agency operations against Venezuela and was considering attacks on land against alleged drug cartels in the country.

According to the *Miami Herald*, the Rodriguez siblings pitched themselves as the "more palatable" version of "chavismo", the socialist ideology of late firebrand president Hugo Chavez and his chosen successor Maduro. – AFP

Kenyan security forces open fire on mourners, 3 killed

NAIROBI: Rights group Vocal Africa said three people were killed at the Kasarani stadium in Nairobi as security forces opened fire to disperse mourners gathered to view the body of opposition leader Raila Odinga on Thursday.

The security forces triggered chaos as they fired on tens of thousands of people after part of the crowd surged towards a VIP area.

Odinga, 80, died at a health clinic in southern India on Wednesday, triggering a huge outpouring of grief across much of his home country.

Affectionately known as "Baba" (father), he was one of Kenya's foremost statesmen, who made five

unsuccessful runs for the presidency, but was seen as a major force for democratic reform.

A crowd initially gathered at the Jomo Kenyatta International Airport on Thursday to greet his casket, forcing the civil aviation authority to temporarily suspend operations, including some flights.

The body was due to be taken to parliament, but with supporters climbing the gates, the authorities re-routed the to the stadium on the outskirts of the capital.

There were rowdy scenes as the crowd awaited the arrival of the casket, until the outbreak of gunfire and teargas led to panicked running.

"Why would police use teargas and ammunition to disperse mourners?" said presidential candidate Martha Karua on social media.

President William Ruto arrived shortly after with members of Odinga's family and senior officials.

They paid their respects over the casket in a side room of the stadium.

Calm was later restored at the stadium, where crowds returned to await a chance to see Odinga lying in state.

State television showed large numbers of people had also gathered in Bondo, the family's ancestral seat in western Kenya, where Odinga is due

to be buried on Sunday.

Michael Omondi, a youth leader for Odinga's party, said he was at the airport "to receive an icon, a giant".

Born on Jan 7, 1945, to a future vice-president, Odinga spent his early political years either in jail or in exile, fighting for democracy during the autocratic rule of president Daniel Arap Moi.

He was prime minister from 2008 to 2013 but never achieved his goal of becoming head of state.

His death leaves a leadership vacuum in the opposition, with no obvious successor as Kenya heads into a potentially volatile election in 2027. – AFP

Drone strike kills Russian journalist

MOSCOW: Russian news agency RIA Novosti on Thursday said a media correspondent was killed in a Ukrainian drone strike in the Moscow-occupied part of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region.

"RIA Novosti military correspondent Ivan Zuev was killed in the Zaporizhzhia region and his colleague Yuri Voitkevich was seriously injured," the agency said.

It added that Zuev died "on assignment, as a result of a strike by a Ukrainian drone".

The agency said Zuev worked there for a number of years and had received several state awards.

Russia's Foreign Ministry has expressed condolences on Zuev's death and wished Voitkevich a speedy recovery.

Two weeks ago, French photojournalist Antoni Lallican was killed on assignment near the front line in the eastern Ukraine Donetsk region.

His Ukrainian colleague Georgiy Ivanchenko was wounded in the same attack. — AFP

Six hurt by Israeli strikes in Lebanon

BEIRUT: Lebanon's health ministry said on Thursday Israeli strikes in the south had wounded six people, while the Israeli military said it had targeted Hezbollah and its allies.

However, Lebanese President Joseph Aoun insisted Israel's strikes targeted "civilian facilities", condemning what he said was a breach of a ceasefire negotiated last year.

"The repeated Israeli aggression comes as part of a systematic policy aimed at destroying productive infrastructure, hindering economic recovery and undermining national stability under false security pretexts."

Israel has repeatedly bombed Lebanon despite a November ceasefire, which followed more than a year of hostilities with the Iran-backed militant group that culminated in two months of open war.

According to an initial toll from the health ministry, the strikes injured one person in Bnaafoul in the Saïda district and wounded five in Ansar, in the Nabatieh district. — AFP

Turkiye deploys experts to help find bodies in Gaza

► Process may take time, as some remains buried in tunnels and under rubble: Hamas

JERUSALEM: Turkiye has deployed dozens of disaster relief specialists to help search for bodies under the mountains of rubble in Gaza, as US President Donald Trump fired a warning at Hamas on Thursday over a spate of recent killings in the territory.

Trump characterised the killings as a breach of the ceasefire deal he spearheaded, under which the Palestinian militant group returned its last 20 surviving hostages to Israel.

Hamas said it has also handed

back all the bodies of deceased captives it could access, but the bodies of 19 more are still unaccounted for and believed to be buried under the ruins alongside an untold number of Palestinians.

The Palestinian militants stressed their "commitment" to the ceasefire deal with Israel, and that they want to return all the remaining bodies of hostages.

Hamas also said the process "may require some time, as some of the corpses were buried in tunnels destroyed by Israeli

bombing, while others remain under the rubble of buildings".

Turkiye has sent staff from its disaster relief agency to help in locating the bodies, but the families of the dead have expressed anger over the failure to deliver the remains of their loved ones.

The main campaign group advocating for the families of hostages demanded on Thursday that Israel "immediately halt the implementation of any further stages of the agreement as long as Hamas continues to violate its obligations regarding the return of all hostages and the remains of the victims".

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu reaffirmed his determination to "secure the

return of all hostages" after his defence minister warned on Wednesday that Israel "will resume fighting" if Hamas failed to do so.

Trump had appeared to call for patience when it came to the return of bodies, insisting Hamas was "actually digging" for the remains, but later expressed frustration on Thursday with the group's conduct since the fighting halted.

"If Hamas continues to kill people in Gaza, which was not the deal, we will have no choice but to go in and kill them," Trump said on his Truth Social platform in an apparent reference to recent shootings of Palestinian civilians.

Hamas has been accused of carrying out summary executions in Gaza since the ceasefire went into effect.

Clashes have also taken place between the group's various security units and armed Palestinian clans, some of which are alleged to have Israeli backing.

The ceasefire deal has so far seen the war cease after two years of agony for the families of hostages and constant bombings and hunger for Gazans.

According to Trump's 20-point plan for Gaza, the next phases of the truce should include the disarmament of Hamas, the offer of amnesty to Hamas leaders who decommission their weapons and establishing the governance of post-war Gaza.

The plan also calls for renewed aid provision, with international organisations awaiting the reopening of southern Gaza's Rafah crossing in the hope it would enable a surge of supplies.

Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar said preparations were being made for the strategic crossing. — AFP



A Palestinian woman stringing out laundered items at a partially destroyed building in Gaza City. — REUTERS/SPIC

Trump to meet Putin over Ukraine war

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed on Thursday to another summit on the war in Ukraine, a surprise move that came as Moscow feared fresh US military support for Kyiv.

Trump said the meeting may happen within the next two weeks in Budapest, after a more than two-hour phone conversation he called "productive". The Kremlin confirmed plans for the meeting, although neither side provided a date for when it would occur.

"My whole life, I've made deals. I think we're going to have this one done, hopefully soon," Trump told reporters at the White House.

The development came as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived at the White House to push for more military support, including US-made long-range Tomahawk missiles.

The White House had seemed to be leaning toward Zelensky.

Yet Trump's conciliatory tone

following the Russia call left in question the near-term likelihood of assistance and reignited European fears of US capitulation to Moscow.

Since taking office in January, Trump has regularly threatened action against Russia, only to delay those steps after talks with Putin. Trump sought a ceasefire ahead of an Alaska summit with Putin in August that produced none.

Three-way talks between Putin, Zelensky and Trump, another goal sought by Washington at the time, never materialised, and there are no further plans for such a meeting.

The Republican president has positioned himself as a peacemaker, brandishing diplomatic achievements, including the recent Gaza ceasefire and hostage deal. He has said he thought the war in Ukraine, which began with Russia's 2022 invasion, would have been easier to end.

"Putin is trying to derail the momentum toward greater pressure on Russia. We'll see what happens

tomorrow, but the chances of moving toward a ceasefire by pushing Russia to get serious seem to have diminished," said former State Department official Dan Fried.

Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said during the call, Putin told Trump that supplying long-range missiles to Ukraine would harm the peace process and damage US-Russia ties.

The Hungarian location selected for the Trump-Putin summit has drawn attention. Putin is wanted for alleged war crimes in some jurisdictions, restricting his travel. Ukraine's relationship with Hungary has grown increasingly tense. Zelensky accused Hungarian drones of crossing into Ukraine last month, prompting Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban to retort that Ukraine was not an independent sovereign state.

The meeting is expected to follow talks between US Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. — Reuters

Yemen rebel chief killed

SANAA: Yemen Houthi rebels said on Thursday an Israeli attack has killed their military chief.

A statement said Major-Gen Mohammed al-Ghamari died in "honourable battle against the Israeli enemy", without giving further details.

His death was announced days into a ceasefire in the two-year Gaza war, during which the Houthis repeatedly attacked Israeli targets and cargo ships in the Red Sea.

The statement said Mohammed died alongside "companions" and his 13-year-old son.

Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz on Thursday said on social media Mohammed "died of his wounds" after a strike in August that killed the Houthi prime minister and half his Cabinet.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Mohammed was "eliminated among a series of terrorist commanders who sought to harm us. We will get to them all", according to a post by his office.

The Israeli military said the Houthi chief played a "key role in building the military capabilities of the Houthi terror regime, particularly in establishing its missile systems and weapons-production infrastructure".

It said he was trained by Lebanon's Hezbollah group and Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps.

Israel also said his death "represents a severe blow to the Houthi terror regime and to its chain of command, which orchestrated hundreds of terror attacks against the State of Israel during the war".

The Houthis have traded attacks with Israeli and American forces during the Gaza war.

Their statement said they had carried out 758 military operations, deploying 1,835 munitions, including drones and missiles, during their campaign.

"The rounds of conflict with the enemy have not ended, and the Zionist enemy will receive its deterrent punishment for the crimes it has committed." — AFP



Malaysia's trade shows resilience, rises to RM257.5b in September

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's trade continued to show resilience in September 2025, growing by 9.8% year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM257.51 billion, reversing the previous month's contraction amid global trade uncertainties.

In a statement yesterday, the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) said export growth remained robust for the third straight month, rising 12.2% y-o-y to RM138.68 billion, while imports rebounded by 7.3% to RM118.82 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of RM19.86 billion.

The ministry said September's export growth was recorded across all sectors, with expansion in the manufacturing sector led by electrical and electronic (E&E) products, which posted their highest value, increasing by nearly RM11 billion.

It said other main contributors included machinery, equipment and parts, as well as optical and scientific equipment.

"Meanwhile, the mining sector rebounded after 13 months of contraction, mainly due to higher exports of metalliferous ores and metal scrap.

"As for the agriculture sector, palm oil and palm oil-based agriculture products recorded the largest increase," it said.

According to MITI, Malaysia recorded an uptick in exports to major trading partners, namely Asean, China, the United States, Taiwan and the European Union.

"Exports continued to expand to free trade agreement partners with significant increases registered for Mexico, India, Australia, New Zealand, Türkiye, the United Kingdom, Pakistan and Canada," it said.

For the period from January to September 2025, trade, exports and imports recorded their highest cumulative value, with trade rising 4.4% to RM2.235 trillion y-o-y, with exports rising 4.8% to RM1.170 trillion and imports up by 4% to RM1.064 trillion, resulting in a trade surplus of RM105.65 billion. — Bernama

Tariff restructure key to stronger power ecosystem

■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: The electricity tariff reform introduced in July this year was a crucial step to strengthen Malaysia's energy ecosystem — supporting a more decentralised model as homes, businesses and industries increasingly generate their own solar power while safeguarding grid stability amid the growing adoption of renewables.

Energy Commission Malaysia CEO Siti Safinah Salleh (pic) said 60% of Malaysia's solar output now comes from the distribution level, such as rooftop and commercial systems, not large-scale solar farms.

"Many people do not know that our system is changing. Decentralised generation, rooftop solar and new industrial demand profiles now require a different approach to cost recovery. That is exactly how I told it to our Cabinet to get that approval (of the tariff change), because our system is changing," she told *SunBiz* at the Asean Energy Business Forum yesterday.

She said Malaysia has now reached phase three of renewable integration, where variable renewable energy such as solar is beginning to reshape the country's system profile.

"Before this, peak electricity demand typically occurred around 3pm, but it has now shifted to just before 9pm due to the surge in daytime solar generation."

According to Siti Safinah, data from the national grid shows a new load curve resembling "two small hills and one larger evening peak", indicating how renewables have changed consumption patterns.

➤ Decentralised generation, rooftop solar and new industrial demand profiles require different approach to cost recovery, says Energy Commission Malaysia CEO

She said the Energy Commission is assessing how to prepare the grid for this new pattern by introducing battery energy storage systems and other flexible technologies to stabilise supply.

"We hope to see a smaller, smoother 'duck curve', not a big one. It's very important that we continue to monitor, forecast and predict how the system behaves, identify operational measures to manage variability, and feed those insights into forward planning."

She added that understanding how new demand segments such as data centres and high-tech industries are shaping electricity consumption is also essential for future planning.

"We also can see that these high-consumption users will soon account for a major share of the national load profile."

Siti Safinah said the commission also needs to account for changing weather patterns in its planning.

"As you know, on the Peninsular Malaysia side, we are not blessed with strong wind resources to develop large-scale wind energy. However, we have much greater solar potential, so our planning is naturally geared toward the solar profile in this region."

She said the commission has set up several task forces that bring

together grid planners, fuel suppliers and distribution operators to coordinate long-term energy planning.

"It is only fair that we change the way we price electricity as the system evolves. Everyone, including regulators, utilities and consumers, needs a mindset change to build a more flexible, resilient grid."

Malaysia's electricity tariff restructuring, which took effect in July under Regulatory Period 4, was the country's first major overhaul of the power pricing framework in more than a decade.

The new structure unbundles energy, capacity and network costs and introduces a monthly automatic fuel adjustment, shifting from uniform, centrally

determined rates to more cost-reflective pricing.

Key changes included an average base tariff of 45.4 sen/kWh and the introduction of new categories (low, medium, and high voltage) for non-domestic users.

A new fuel cost adjustment mechanism called Automatic Fuel Adjustment (AFA), replacing the older Imbalance Cost Pass-Through mechanism.

Under AFA, adjustments in fuel costs and foreign exchange rates are passed monthly.

Domestic users consuming less than 1,000kWh benefit from rebates and stable pricing.

In contrast, high-consumption industrial users such as data centres and heavy manufacturers now face rates that reflect the real cost of supply.



Marine & General ready to face uncertainties after steady Q1 performance

PETALING JAYA: Marine & General Bhd views the prospects for its upstream division as closely tied to exploration and drilling activity while for the downstream division, it anticipates steady operational levels, supported by continued demand for Malaysian-flagged tankers.

Future fleet expansion will be carefully assessed in line with market conditions and the group's long-term strategy to become a leading tanker operator in Malaysia.

Looking ahead, the Marine & General board has cautioned that the industry continues to face uncertainties stemming from evolving regulatory requirements, expected pressure on oil prices due to global supply exceeding demand, the development of green energy alternatives, and ongoing geopolitical conflicts in the Middle East and

Europe that may impact supply and demand dynamics.

The group's performance in the first quarter of FY26 has been encouraging, broadly in line with expectations, providing a steady foundation for the year ahead.

At its 28th AGM yesterday, shareholders were briefed on the group's financial performance.

For the financial year ended April 30, 2025, the group posted consolidated revenue of RM352.1 million, compared to RM348 million in the previous financial year.

The group recorded profit before tax of RM52.3 million and profit after tax of RM66.5 million.

While profit before tax was lower than the RM68.3 million recorded in the previous financial year, the group demonstrated resilience, maintaining profitability amid temporary vessel

downtime and a challenging market environment.

The results also reflect the group's ability to sustain revenue growth while continuing to optimise its fleet and diversify operations.

Speaking at the end of the AGM, Marine & General executive chairman Tan Sri Mohd Azlan Hashim said the group is pleased and encouraged by the positive response from attendees to this year's AGM.

"The company managed to present a clear review of its performance and address questions raised during the session. I sincerely hope that our shareholders will continue to support the board as we nurture the company's recovery and strengthen its long-term growth," he said.

For the group's upstream division, vessel utilisation during the financial year eased to about 70% from 78%

previously, mainly due to temporary downtime for nine vessels undergoing repair, equipment installation, and certification in preparation for new contracts.

Daily charter rates improved over the prior year, although they remain below the peak levels recorded in 2014.

The division expanded its operations to include commercial and technical management of third-party vessels, providing professional fleet management services to investors with smaller fleets without incurring the overhead of setting up full vessel management teams.

In addition, the upstream division continued to uphold its strong safety culture, achieving about 18.9 million man-hours without any lost-time injury (LTI) as at the end of FY25. The last LTI incident occurred in April 2013.

In line with a stable domestic economy, the downstream division recorded fleet utilisation of 83%, compared to 84% in the prior financial year. It operated a fleet of four chemical tankers and two clean petroleum product (CPP) tankers, which includes one vessel on bareboat charter, bringing its fleet to six vessels.

As part of its fleet optimisation strategy, the division disposed of three older vessels over the past two years and, in April 2025, signed a RM55.2 million agreement to acquire a CPP tanker, pending completion in FY26.

This fleet rationalisation has reduced the division's average vessel age from 10.6 years to 9.8 years.

Further, the downstream division maintained its strong safety performance, recording about 4.9 million man-hours without LTI in FY25.

Deepavali Carnival into 23rd year, still going strong

► Long-running bazaar provides vital platform for small businesses and entrepreneurs to tap into lucrative festive season

■ BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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KUALA LUMPUR: The Deepavali Carnival at Bukit Jalil, organised by Agenda Suria Communication, has grown into one of Malaysia's longest-running festive bazaars, providing a vital platform for small businesses and entrepreneurs to tap into the lucrative festive season.

Now in its 23rd year, the carnival has expanded from its humble beginnings with 40 retailers at KL Sentral Kampung in 2002 to hosting 350 vendors this year. The event, which runs until the eve of Deepavali, attracts between 400,000 and 500,000 visitors annually.

Agenda Suria Communication head of marketing Vithya Shaline Jaggarao said the carnival has become a legacy event not just for shoppers but also for local entrepreneurs.

"We are known as one of Malaysia's longest

and largest running festive carnivals. This event marks 23 years of legacy, and we have seen generations grow with us throughout this event," she told *SunBiz*.

The carnival relocated to Bukit Jalil in 2011 after redevelopment at KL Sentral, and has since cemented its reputation as a must-visit destination for festive shopping.

The majority of vendors, about 80% are local SMEs, while 20% are foreign exhibitors, particularly from India.

Vithya explained that the event's objective goes beyond commerce.

"Our main objective is to help local businesses and SMEs uplift their business and provide them a conducive platform to boost visibility and sales. Many of these entrepreneurs have very unique products but lack the right avenue to showcase them," she said.

The bazaar's offerings largely fall under the fashion and lifestyle category, including saris, jewellery, accessories, home décor and gifts. Visitors also travel from neighbouring countries such as Singapore, Vietnam and Japan, many of them repeat buyers.

For jewellery entrepreneur Kaliswari, founder of Hiranya Jewels, the carnival has been a game-changer.

"This is my second year here, and the crowd has been amazing. On the first day itself, I managed to cover all my costs," she said.

Having started her business at 19 with a

small booth at a temple, she now runs a thriving brand both online and offline.

Her products range from invisible necklaces to Victorian sets and jhumkas, marketed as premium quality at affordable prices.

"I came here not just for business but also for exposure. I want customers to feel my product. I can easily sell at double the price, but I choose to keep it reasonable because I want everyone to experience premium quality items," she said.

Kaliswari emphasised that Agenda Suria's carnival provides both credibility and reach.

"Everyone in Malaysia knows Agenda Suria. Joining this event gives small entrepreneurs like us visibility we cannot get elsewhere," she said.

For fashion designer Nithiyakalyani Mohan, founder of Nika Designs, the carnival has become a yearly commitment.

"This is my fourth year with Agenda Suria. It's more than just business, we've built connections with regular customers who come back every year. Some even search for me if they can't find my booth," she said.

Her brand focuses on ethnic wear, particularly cotton-based custom designs. While she continues to run her online store, the bazaar gives her a unique advantage.

"In three or four days here, I can sometimes make more than what I do in a month online. Customers get to touch, feel and try the products, and that makes a big difference," she said.

However, Nitya noted challenges, including manpower shortages and intense competition.

"Bargaining is part of the culture, and competition is high, especially in clothing. But I see it as a way to improve myself. What makes me stand out is that I design the clothes myself, and customers notice the difference," she said.

Like many events, the carnival was affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. In 2023, it was moved temporarily to a convention centre in Subang Jaya due to restrictions.

While purchasing power dipped that year, Vithya said, 2024 saw a strong rebound.

"In 2023, income was lower compared to pre-pandemic years. But last year, it picked up and became normal again," she said, adding that logistics remain the main operational challenge, though the team has largely perfected its template for execution.

As the carnival looks to the future, Vithya said the aim is to modernise while preserving tradition.

Plans include greater digital engagement, cashless payments and even artificial intelligence-driven interactive experiences.

"With strong support from ministries and recognition from the Malaysia Book of Records, we want to take this event to the next level by positioning it as a hub for Asean Indian entrepreneurs," she said.

G Capital appointed as specialist for Kelantan NRW reduction scheme

PETALING JAYA: G Capital Bhd's 51%-owned subsidiary, G Capital Water Solutions Sdn Bhd, has received a letter of award from Senie Associates Sdn Bhd to serve as the nominated non-revenue water (NRW) specialist for the Kelantan NRW Reduction Programme (Phase 2).

The appointment was made under Senie, the consulting engineer appointed by Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB), the national water asset manager.

The programme is federally funded by the Ministry of Energy Transition and Water Transformation, administered by the Water Supply Department and executed in collaboration with Air Kelantan Sdn Bhd, the state water operator.

Under the five-year appointment valued at RM648,000, G Capital Water Solutions will provide comprehensive NRW technical services, including field investigations, flow and pressure measurement, leakage and hydraulic modelling, GIS verification, and baseline and post-replacement auditing.

The company, in a statement, said Budget 2026 has reinforced water infrastructure as a national priority with a RM3 billion allocation specifically for NRW reduction programmes nationwide.

The initiative focuses on replacing more than 820km of ageing, leaking pipelines across Johor, Malacca, Negeri Sembilan, Kelantan, Pahang and Selangor to curb physical water losses that cost utilities billions of dollars each year.

This wave of government-backed investments underscores Malaysia's commitment to achieving a national NRW target of 28.8% by 2030 – creating significant opportunities for qualified water technology and engineering partners such as G Capital.

Kelantan continues to record Malaysia's highest NRW rate at 54.5%, nearly double the national average. The state loses 280-300 million litres of treated water daily, posing both economic and sustainability challenges.

G Capital executive chairman General Tan Sri Affendi Buang said Kelantan represents both Malaysia's biggest water challenge and one of its largest opportunities for improvement.

"Our appointment as NRW specialist under PAAB and Senie demonstrates confidence in G Capital's technical capability and our growing role in the nation's water transformation agenda. This milestone, coming soon after our Perlis appointment, fits into G Capital's long-term strategy of expanding into water infrastructure and sustainability solutions.

"As the government accelerates investment under Budget 2026, G Capital is ready to play a more active role in delivering measurable, long-term impact," he said.



Visitors browsing jewellery and accessories at the Deepavali Carnival in Bukit Jalil ahead of the festival. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

Business Sweden Malaysia, MSIA in pact to boost semiconductor ties

PETALING JAYA: Business Sweden Malaysia and the Malaysia Semiconductor Industry Association (MSIA) exchanged a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to accelerate innovation, sustainability and supply-chain resilience across both nations' semiconductor ecosystems in a significant step towards advancing international semiconductor cooperation.

The MoU exchange ceremony took place during the Sweden-Malaysia Semiconductor Roundtable 2025 in George Town, Penang witnessed by Swedish ambassador to Malaysia Niklas Wiberg, alongside senior executives from Swedish and Malaysian semiconductor, technology and manufacturing companies, including ABB, Axis Communications, Assa Abloy, Innwave Tech, ams Osram, Waftech, Monitor ERP, Nefab, Critical Manufacturing and others

representing both nations' innovation ecosystems.

The landmark MoU represents a strategic milestone in strengthening collaboration between Sweden and Malaysia, two innovation-driven economies committed to shaping the future of the global semiconductor landscape.

Trade Commissioner of Sweden to Malaysia Ludvig Hermansson, said the MoU represents a significant milestone in strengthening the Sweden-Malaysia industrial partnership.

"By deepening our collaboration in the semiconductor sector, we are laying the foundation for future innovation, resilience, and sustainable growth. Malaysia can leverage Sweden's know-how in sustainability and advanced manufacturing to enhance its semiconductor tech ecosystem and create a powerful synergy that will drive progress in one

of the world's most critical industries," he said in a statement.

The MoU aims to align ambitions, interests, and opportunities for mutually beneficial economic cooperation.

It outlines a framework for joint activities and initiatives that support closer partnerships in semiconductor research, development, innovation, manufacturing, design, and professional qualification.

The three key areas of collaboration are ecosystem development, supply chain resilience, and business-driven innovation and technology exchange.

MSIA executive director Andrew Chan said this partnership with Business Sweden marks a pivotal step in strengthening Malaysia's semiconductor ecosystem through international

collaboration.

"By aligning Sweden's innovation-driven expertise with Malaysia's ambitions under the National Semiconductor Strategy, we are paving the way for new opportunities in advanced technology, sustainability, and talent development that will drive the next phase of global semiconductor growth," he said.

The partnership builds on Malaysia's National Semiconductor Strategy under the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, which envisions the nation as a global hub for advanced semiconductor technologies.

Sweden's strengths in Industry 4.0, sustainable manufacturing, and digitalisation complement Malaysia's drive toward higher-value activities and long-term competitiveness.

India's service sector still has a Trump card, but is it enough?

HONG KONG: India's long-vaunted services sector has been boosted in recent years by the exponential growth of Global Capability Centres (GCC), multinational corporations' offshore hubs. However, President Donald Trump's administration is now threatening to dramatically alter the landscape for Indian workers, even as GCCs face several domestic challenges.

By the end of 2024, India had 1,700 GCCs, wholly owned and controlled by their overseas parent companies. GCCs generated over US\$64 billion (RM270 billion) in revenue last year and employed almost 2 million people, accounting for 17.2% of India's service exports, up from 12.5% in 2015, according to FactSet. India has much to offer global corporations, including a low-cost talent pool of 1.5 million engineering graduates a year, as well as urban workers with English language skills and an efficient digital connectivity infrastructure.

GCCs used to primarily be back-office support hubs. Repetitive jobs like customer support and HR operations represented 60% of their activities in 2010, according to GCC Consulting. But they constitute only around 20% today, giving way to more knowledge-intensive R&D, technology and financial services work.

Nearly one-fifth of the world's chip design engineers, including those of Intel, Nvidia, Qualcomm and MediaTek, are located in India. Amazon's largest office in the world in terms of area and headcount is in Hyderabad. And almost 20% of Goldman Sachs's global staff are in Bengaluru and Hyderabad.

In short, India's GCCs have become a significant cog in the

global economic engine.

However, the US has thrown some rather large spanners in the works that could disrupt India's relationships with global corporations. First, the administration introduced a new US\$100,000 application fee for H-1B visas, over 70% of which were given to workers from India last year. This could shut down one of the main talent channels for US technology companies, driving up IT service costs and increasing the offshoring of services, according to technology research provider Forrester.

On the face of it, this should be good for Indian GCCs. Not only could it increase their revenue pool, as it would likely result in more US companies relying on offshore talent, it could also help India retain more of its skilled workers.

But the US could also hike the cost of offshoring via the recently proposed HIRE Act (Halting International Relocation of Employment), which seeks to impose a 25% tax on payments by US businesses to foreign entities for services directly or partially benefiting American consumers.

The act may not have enough support to become law. And even if it does, the additional tax would not meaningfully reduce the cost advantage of GCCs compared to paying for the equivalent services in the US or other Western nations. But the proposal of the HIRE Act sends a signal that Washington is becoming increasingly serious about curbing offshoring by US companies. Several Western nations appear to view the US's growing aversion to overseas talent as an opportunity. Germany's ambassador to India recently highlighted Germany's stable immigration policies and high-end jobs in

a message specifically targeted to "talented Indians".

Domestic obstacles could also upend the growth of Indian GCCs, most notably the limited availability of workers with the right skill set. India's largest staffing company TeamLease recently noted that only 45% of India's engineering graduates each year are meeting industry standards in terms of skill-readiness, a number that's shrinking further as they struggle to keep up with advancements in artificial intelligence.

Collaborations between industry and academia will therefore be essential. While such efforts are being supported by several programmes, this will likely need to be accelerated. India's GCCs will also need to look beyond the top-tier cities for talent. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology's upcoming GCC policy framework has specific targets for GCCs in tier-2 and tier-3 cities such as Kochi, Jaipur and Indore.

Still, meeting all of the government's GCC targets will likely be challenging given not only the talent issues, but also the gaps in physical and digital infrastructure outside of the top-tier cities.

GCCs have the potential to continue boosting India's service exports for years to come. But sustaining this growth will require policy interventions and significant investments. It's a long road ahead. - Reuters

This article is contributed by Manishi Raychaudhuri, founder and CEO of Emmer Capital Partners Ltd, and former head of Asia-Pacific Equity Research at BNP Paribas Securities.

Tariff rollercoaster prompts Chinese exporters to 'give up' on US

SHANGHAI: Amid the chaos of erratic US tariff announcements, Chinese exporters making everything from kitchen appliances to Halloween decorations have responded by selling more goods to buyers in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Africa.

Jacky Ren, whose Gstar Electronics Appliance factory used to generate more than 60% of its revenue from US orders, says he has "given up" on the American market.

Months of tit-for-tat tariff escalations, de-escalations, a brief truce, and the latest threat of a triple-digit tariff increase on Chinese goods from US President Donald Trump in retaliation for Chinese curbs on rare earths exports, have left Ren feeling "extremely exhausted", and he is seeking out new markets to offset lost orders from US customers.

Ren is not alone. Chinese customs data released this week showed exports from the world's second-largest economy have grown 7.1% to 19.95 trillion yuan (RM12 trillion) in the first nine months of this year, despite a significant drop in goods heading to the US.

This growth is expected to help China demonstrate the resilience of its economy in the face of geopolitical and trade upheaval when it announces third-quarter GDP data on Monday.

Still, Chinese exporters aren't exactly happy with the situation, even though they have found new markets.

"In this environment, where global consumption [of our products] is not enough to replace US demand, our order volume and revenue have plummeted by half," said Lou Xiaobo, who makes Halloween decorations in eastern China and is in Brazil on a market

research trip as he looks to sell more to Latin America.

As China's entire export-oriented manufacturing sector has pivoted almost simultaneously, competition has eroded prices, making it more difficult for manufacturers to make ends meet.

"Losing access to the US, which is the largest consumer market, is akin to the rail industry losing the locomotive," Ren said, adding that it's becoming increasingly common for exporters to sell at a loss.

"Every market is highly competitive - all we can do is hold on and wait for an opportunity."

On Wednesday, the bustling opening day of the autumn edition of southern China's Canton Fair in Guangzhou - the world's largest trade show - all 15 companies Reuters spoke with said they had seen no US buyers. Most noted an uptick in attendees from Brazil, Southeast Asia and Europe. All said they were prioritising market diversification.

"The situation's too unstable. (Trump's) like a child - crying one minute, laughing the next. You can't play along with that," said Cherry Yuan, overseas sales manager at Foshan Greenyellow Electric Technology, a maker of mosquito trapping equipment.

Cai Jing, who runs a travel mug company started by her mother and uncle in 1998 that recently started making personal blenders, said export manufacturers have little choice.

It hasn't been the decision of Chinese exporters to abandon the US market, Cai said.

"Sales to the US have dropped a lot, by around half. It's not that we're giving up on the US market. It's that US buyers gave up on us." - Reuters

EDUCATION

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VEVEY: Inside a lab in the picturesque Swiss town of Vevey, a scientist gives tiny clumps of human brain cells the nutrient-rich fluid they need to stay alive.

It is vital these mini-brains remain healthy, because they are serving as rudimentary computer processors – and unlike your laptop, once they die, they cannot be rebooted.

This new field of research, called biocomputing or “wetware”, aims to harness the evolutionarily honed yet still mysterious computing power of the human brain.

During a tour of Swiss start-up FinalSpark's lab, co-founder Fred Jordan told AFP he believes that processors using brain cells will one day replace the chips powering the artificial intelligence (AI) boom.

The supercomputers behind AI tools like ChatGPT currently use silicon semiconductors to simulate the neurons and networks of the human brain.

“Instead of trying to mimic, let's use the real thing,” Jordan said.

Among other potential advantages, biocomputing could help address the skyrocketing energy demands of AI, which have already threatened climate emissions targets and led some tech giants to resort to nuclear power.

“Biological neurons are one million times more energy efficient than artificial neurons,” Jordan said. They can also be endlessly reproduced in the lab, unlike the massively in-demand AI chips made by companies like behemoth Nvidia.

But for now, wetware's computing power is a very long way from competing with the hardware that runs the world.

And another question lingers: could these tiny brains become conscious?

To make its “bioprocessors,” FinalSpark first purchases stem cells. These cells, which were originally human skin cells from anonymous human donors, can become any cell in the body.

FinalSpark's scientists then turn them into neurons, which are collected into millimetre-wide clumps called brain organoids.

They are around the size of the brain of a fruit fly larvae, Jordan said.

Electrodes are attached to the organoids in the lab, which allow the scientists to “spy on their

Human mini-brains power next-gen computers

➤ Swiss scientists turn living cell networks into biocomputers to reduce AI's energy use and unlock how the mind works

internal discussion,” he explained.

The scientists can also stimulate the organoids with a small electric current. Whether they respond with a spike in activity – or not – is roughly the equivalent of the ones or zeroes in traditional computing.

Ten universities around the world are conducting experiments using FinalSpark's organoids – the small company's website even has a live feed of the neurons at work.

Benjamin Ward-Cherrier, a researcher at the University of Bristol, used one of the organoids as the brain of a simple robot that managed to distinguish between different braille letters.

There are many challenges, including encoding the data in a way the organoid might understand – then trying to interpret what the brain cells “spit out,” he told AFP.

“Working with robots is very easy by comparison,” Ward-Cherrier said with a laugh.

“There's also the fact that they are living cells – and that means that they do die,” he added.

Indeed, Ward-Cherrier was halfway through an experiment when the organoid died and his team had to start over. FinalSpark says the organoids live for up to six months.

At Johns Hopkins University in the US,



Human cell clusters are displayed on a screen at Swiss start-up FinalSpark in Vevey, where scientists explore ‘wetware’ biocomputing. – AFPPIX

researcher Lena Smirnova is using similar organoids to study brain conditions such as autism and Alzheimer's disease in the hopes of finding new treatments.

Biocomputing is currently more “pie in the sky,” unlike the “low-hanging fruit” use of the technology for biomedical research – but that could change dramatically over the next 20 years, she told AFP.

All the scientists AFP spoke to dismissed the idea that these tiny balls of cells in petri dishes were at risk of developing anything resembling consciousness.

Jordan acknowledged that “this is at the edge of philosophy,” which is why FinalSpark collaborates with ethicists.

He also pointed out that the organoids – which lack pain receptors – have around 10,000 neurons, compared to a human brain's 100 billion.

However much about our brains, including how they create consciousness, remains a mystery.

Back in the lab, Jordan opens the door of what looks like a big fridge containing 16 brain organoids in a tangle of tubes.

Lines suddenly start spiking on the screen next to the incubator, indicating significant neural activity.

The brain cells have no known way of sensing that their door has been opened, and the scientists have spent years trying to figure why this happens.

AI boom ripples across Europe markets, sterling and Swedish crown to gain most

LONDON: The boom in investment in artificial intelligence (AI) is starting to be felt for the first time in currency markets across Europe, and analysts reckon the Swedish crown and sterling stand to benefit the most. Trading in the almost US\$10 (RM42) trillion-a-day FX markets this year has been driven by broad dollar weakness given tariff-related concerns and US rate cut expectations. But dig deeper and the impact of AI, which has helped drive stocks to record highs, is rippling across to currencies.

According to JPMorgan, the resilience of the Swedish crown, or krona, and sterling in recent months may be partially attributable to tech as Sweden and Britain stand out on measures of AI investment and their currencies are receiving a tailwind from this dynamic, even if only a small one.

By one measure, the UK and Sweden received just over US\$4 billion each last year in private AI investments, ranking third and fourth in a Stanford University AI index of biggest beneficiaries of such investments, behind the US and China.

Sweden's krona is the strongest-performing major European currency against a weak dollar so far this year, having climbed almost 15%. Sterling has rallied 7%. Dissecting the exact impact of AI on currency moves is

hard, analysts say, given other factors at play such as interest rate expectations or fiscal unease, especially with sterling.

“Large AI investments have been announced for both countries,” said Rabobank's head of FX strategy Jane Foley. “The inward investment could certainly have created some demand for sterling and Swedish crown respectively and created some resilience.”

The crown is also up against the euro and other Scandinavian currencies. Sterling, hurt by fiscal worries, is down against the euro and Swiss franc, however.

Investments in Swedish AI companies, which bring higher demand for crowns, would cause a visible spike in the currency, while the impact of such investments on sterling would be less visible because it is already so heavily traded, Foley said. Sterling is the world's fourth most-traded currency, accounting for just over 10% of all trades, while Sweden's crown accounts for less than 2%, according to the Bank for International Settlements.

Britain and the US last month agreed a technology pact, with top US firms led by Microsoft pledging £31 billion (RM177 billion) in UK investments.

AI giant Nvidia plans to provide its data centre platform to Swedish

companies including telecoms gear maker Ericsson, and drug developer AstraZeneca. Microsoft, Facebook's owner Meta, Google's owner Alphabet and Canada's Brookfield Asset Management plan data centres in Sweden given the country's reliable electricity supplies and infrastructure. While it's too soon to say what impact AI will have on economic growth or unemployment, which could potentially add to strains on public finances, the announcements offered a favourable backdrop for the krona and sterling, analysts said.

A report by SEB released earlier this year looking at major Swedish participants in the FX market showed their net overweight position in the crown was close to record highs. Societe Generale head of corporate research for FX and rates Kenneth Broux said US tech investment pledges can diminish pessimism ahead of Britain's November budget, when taxes are expected to rise, lifting sterling's appeal.

Latest CFTC positioning shows investors are neither heavily in favour nor against sterling. Speculators have eroded bullish dollar positions against the pound from August's almost three-year high of US\$3.3 billion to just US\$165 million, reflecting waning conviction that the greenback will rally against sterling. – Reuters

Oracle sees cloud infrastructure revenue hitting US\$166b by 2030

SAN FRANCISCO: Oracle said on Thursday it expects cloud infrastructure revenue to grow to US\$166 billion (RM701 billion) in fiscal 2030, which would make up nearly 75% of its total sales by then.

CEO Clay Magouyrk gave the cloud infrastructure prediction during a meeting with financial analysts, where he said new bookings were coming in from a range of customers, not just OpenAI.

Dough Kehring, Oracle's chief financial officer, said the firm expects US\$225 billion in overall revenue and adjusted profits of US\$21 per share by the firm's fiscal 2030.

Analysts had been expecting US\$198.4 billion in overall sales and adjusted profits of US\$18.92 per share for fiscal 2030, according to LSEG data.

Oracle shares closed up 3% after the cloud computing announcement, but declined about 2% in after-hours trading after the broader revenue and profit forecasts.

Oracle said last month that it has racked up hundreds of billions of dollars worth of infrastructure bookings and is working with ChatGPT creator OpenAI on a US\$500 billion project that will include five new data centres.

For the most recent quarter, Oracle reported cloud revenue jumped 28% to US\$7.2 billion.

Magouyrk said that during a single 30-day period during the previous quarter, Oracle Cloud Infrastructure, the company's cloud unit, had booked US\$65 billion in new commitments, which included a US\$20 billion deal with Meta Platforms. He said that the newest US\$65 billion of bookings came from customers other than OpenAI.

“I know some people are questioning, ‘Hey, is it just OpenAI?’ The reality is, we think OpenAI is a great customer, but we have many customers,” Magouyrk said.

Oracle also sought to address concerns among investors about its gross margins, which were 68.7% in its most recent quarter and which analysts predict will fall slightly in its fiscal 2027, according to LSEG estimates.

Oracle said it expected to have adjusted gross margins of between 30% and 40% for delivering AI cloud computing infrastructure, while other segments such as more conventional cloud software and infrastructure for business customers would have margins of between 65% and 80%.

Oracle said margins would stay steady throughout a contract, citing a sample six-year, US\$60 billion AI cloud deal with about US\$6.4 billion in yearly costs. – Reuters

TOP SHOTS

NATIONAL GRID

1st Runner-Up

NEDA Power (Sg. Tiang) Sdn. Bhd.
Malaysia

Winner



Cenergi West Sdn. Bhd.
Malaysia



ENERGY AWARDS ... Cenergi SEA Bhd, a subsidiary of UEM Lestira Bhd, has secured two prestigious awards under the Renewable Energy - On Grid (National Grid) category at the Asean Energy Awards 2025. Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy Transition and Water Transformation Datuk Fadillah Yusof (left) presented the awards to Cenergi SEA Group CEO Kwok Yew Hoe during a ceremony on the sidelines of the 43rd Asean Ministers on Energy Meeting and the 25th Asean Energy Business Forum at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre on Thursday.



FUELLING SAVINGS ... CIMB Bank and Petronas Dagangan Bhd have collaborated to launch the CIMB Petronas Visa Debit Card that offers savings via cashback on fuel and car-related expenses. Marking the launch on Thursday are, from left, Petronas Dagangan loyalty, customer lifecycle management and partnership senior manager M Razak A Hamid and marketing strategy and communication general manager Cheok Yen Kwan; and CIMB head of consumer banking Malaysia Daniel Cheong and head of consumer marcomm and activation Suraiya Abdul Samad.



INNOVATION ROUNDTABLE ... In conjunction with Malaysia's Asean chairmanship, Sirim Bhd on Wednesday hosted the Asean Technopreneurship Innovation Roundtable and Workshop at its headquarters in Shah Alam. The session, chaired by Sirim acting president and group CEO Nik Sazali Nik Hussin, brought together key regional leaders to address productivity challenges faced by MSMEs and to strengthen Asean's position as a global innovation hub. From left: Cambodian embassy commercial attache Vith Panhnh; Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation technology transfer and R&D commercialisation division secretary Boniface Anak Edwin Manung; Nik Sazali; Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry senior director of bilateral economic and trade relations Dr Rashidi Said; Singapore High Commission regional director enterprise Eugene Tan; Thai embassy minister counsellor (commercial) Worawan Wanwil; Vietnamese embassy first secretary Ngo Quang Hung; and Timor Leste embassy education attache Hernani Viterbo Soares.



NEW LEASE OF LIFE ... AmanahRaya Real Estate Investment Trust (AmanahRaya REIT) has entered into a tenancy agreement with Urban Collection Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Oriental Interest Bhd, for the lease and operation of the former Holiday Villa Alor Setar, a 21-storey hospitality asset located within the City Plaza development in Alor Setar, Kedah. At the signing ceremony on Wednesday are, from left, Pacific Trustees Bhd CEO Mohd Radzuan Ahmad Tajuddin, AmanahRaya-Kenedix REIT Manager Sdn Bhd managing director Datuk Mohd Iskandar Dzulkarnain Ramli, Alor Setar Mayor Datuk Abdul Gafar Yahya, Urban Collection CEO Khoh Why Way and AmanahRaya-Kenedix REIT Manager chairman Datuk Mohd Radzif Mohd Yunus.



GROUNDBREAKING MILESTONE ... Paragon Urban Sdn Bhd, a member company of Joland Group, marked another significant milestone with the groundbreaking ceremony of Paragon Signature Suites Johor Bahru, which has an estimated gross development value of RM291 million, and the signing ceremony for its homestay partnership with Aurum Stay Sdn Bhd. Joland Group executive director Datuk Seri Godwin Tan Pei Poh (left) and Aurum Stay director Ng Qi Lun at the signing ceremony in Johor Bahru on Thursday.



PRIVATE CREDIT FUND ... Tradeview Capital, a boutique fund management company licensed by the Securities Commission Malaysia and Funding Societies Malaysia, Southeast Asia's largest unified SME digital finance platform, on Thursday launched the Tradeview Funding Societies Income Fund, a wholesale private credit fund designed to strengthen Malaysia's economy by channelling capital to SMEs while offering investors stable, low-volatility income. From left: Funding Societies group CEO and co-founder Kelvin Teo, Funding Societies Malaysia group COO and co-founder Wong Kah Meng, Funding Societies Malaysia country head Chai Kien Poon, Tradeview Capital chief investment officer Nixon Wong and founder and CEO Ng Zhu Hann.



MARVELOUS MOTIF ... Teacher Mohd Bakri Talib (centre) showing a *kolam* that he created after mastering the vibrant South Indian art form. – **PIC COURTESY OF MOHD BAKRI TALIB**



WELCOMING WAVE ... Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming poses for a group photo at the World Environment Health Day 2025 officiation ceremony at the Bangi Avenue Convention Centre. – **ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN**



UNCONVENTIONAL CLASS ... National service trainees undergoing firearms training at the Lapang Sasar Camp in Sungai Besi, Kuala Lumpur. – **BERNAMAPIC**



PEOPLE FRIENDLY ... Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, accompanied by Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh, greeting visitors at a state-level National Sports Day event in Ipoh, Perak. – **BERNAMAPIC**



FLEET SUPPORT ... A massive assembly of boats cruising on the Kelantan River in solidarity with Palestine.



BULL RUSH ... Jockeys competing in the 154th annual buffalo race festival in Chonburi province, Thailand. – **REUTERSPIC**



PEACE PARADE ... Palestinian children celebrate outside Deir al-Balaah's Shuhada al-Aqsa Hospital in the central Gaza Strip following news of a ceasefire deal. – **AFPPIC**



BLOOMING BOUNTY ... A farmer harvests cockscomb flowers in a field in Srinagar, Kashmir. – **AFPPIC**



as part of the Kelantan Solidarity Flotilla for Gaza on Oct 10. – **BERNAMAPIC**



RUBBLE RUMMAGE ... Residents looking for items in a collapsed house in Manay, in the province of Davao Oriental, after two powerful quakes struck off the southern Philippines on Oct 10. – **AFPPIC**



FAITHFUL CALM ... A Buddhist monk using foam sheet to move through floodwaters in front of a temple in Pathong Thani, Thailand. – **REUTERSPIC**



DISPLAY OF DISSENT ... A protester uses a slingshot during clashes with Malagasy security forces amid a strike calling for constitutional reforms and the resignation of President Andry Rajoelina in Antananarivo, Madagascar. – **AFPPIC**



When schools become crime scenes

SOMETHING is deeply wrong with the world our children are growing up in. And the scariest part is they are beginning to mirror it.

It began with the horror in Malacca: four teenage boys allegedly raped a 15-year-old schoolmate in a classroom after school hours. Two of them reportedly recorded the assault on their phones. The school has since expelled the students involved, following nationwide outrage and a promise to review school safety and discipline.

Before we could even process that, another shocking incident took place: this in Bandar Utama, where a 14-year-old boy fatally stabbed a 16-year-old senior. Police now believe he may have been influenced by violent video games and social media content.

And just this Thursday in Baling, Kedah, appeared yet another case – three students were expelled after a 15-year-old girl was found to have had sexual encounters with several boys, some of which were filmed and circulated.

Three tragedies. Three different schools. One terrifying pattern.

The children we are raising and the world they are inheriting feel unrecognisable. What was once innocent curiosity has curdled into cruelty. What was once discipline has been replaced by digital chaos.

I'm scared – not as a journalist but as a mother. I look at my 10-year-old son and my seven-year-old autistic daughter and wonder: Is this world still safe for them? Will they grow up knowing right from wrong or will that, too, become blurred in a world where even violence can go viral?

This isn't just about bad kids or bad parenting; it is about a generation being shaped inside an overstimulated and desensitised ecosystem – a world where morality feels optional, where empathy is drowned out by noise and where humiliation

POTTU ON POINT
BY HASHINI KAVISHTRI



and harm are just another kind of content.

Social media didn't invent cruelty but it has made cruelty performative. Video games didn't create killers but they have made violence feel thrillingly consequence-free.

Our children are learning lessons no school ever intended to teach – that human pain is a spectacle, that consent is negotiable and that power and popularity come from dominance, not decency.

In the Malacca case, the assault took place in a classroom – a space meant for learning. The boys not only committed the act, they recorded it. That says everything about how far the line between private sin and public entertainment has eroded.

The 14-year-old in Bandar Utama picked up a knife and ended a life, perhaps after watching too many virtual victories where death comes with a "restart" button. And in Baling, what should have been an awkward stage of adolescence turned into exploitation – filming, sharing and circulating – a generation so addicted to exposure that intimacy has become performance.

These are not isolated incidents; they are warning lights, flashing red, about how we are failing to form our children's moral core.

We talk about devices and discipline, algorithms and access but beneath all that is a deeper void of values, grounding and connection. We are raising children who can code before they can cope and who can go viral before they can verbalise their emotions.

The Education Ministry says the students will be expelled but expulsion only removes them from a building, not from the world that shaped them.

We need something deeper than punishment; we need intervention – in homes, in classrooms and in national priorities that put character, compassion and conscience on equal footing with grades and gadgets.



The frontpage headline of theSun on Thursday shows the terrifying consequences of our children growing up in a world of violence.

And we – the parents – must stop outsourcing morality. We need to talk, listen and set boundaries even when it makes us unpopular. We must stop treating children like fragile glass that must never be told "no". Because every "no" we avoid now may one day echo in a police report.

I think of my children often when I read these stories. My son, growing up in a world that confuses toughness with cruelty. My daughter, vulnerable in a world that mocks difference. I hold them closer and wonder: How do I raise them to stay human in a world that feels less and less so?

If the world has changed – and it has – then we must change too, not in surrender

but in resistance.

We can't save every child but we can start by saving our own from the emptiness of a world that scrolls faster than it feels. Because if schools have become crime scenes, then maybe it is time for homes to become sanctuaries again.

And that begins with us – turning off the noise, looking up from the screens and teaching our children what the world seems to have forgotten: that being human is still the most important lesson of all.

Hashini Kavishtri Kannan is the assistant news editor at theSun. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

We are walking wounded: Time to take mental health seriously

LAST Friday, Oct 10, was World Mental Health Day. I wrote on my Instagram, "We are walking wounded".

I hesitated before posting it as the phrase felt too blunt, almost confrontational. But over the past two years, I have asked hundreds of people what they think when they hear these words, and nine out of 10 quietly agreed.

If I say, "We are the walking wounded", what do you feel? Many nod in recognition, some look startled while others go silent – eyes glazing over – as if those words touch something they have long kept hidden.

I think, deep down, many of us know it is true. We Malaysians still tend to think of "mental health" as something distant, something that happens to other people. We associate it with a serious illness: depression, panic attacks, breakdowns. We don't see it in the quiet exhaustion of our daily lives.

We don't think of the tiredness that never really goes away – the stress that sits in our chest like a stone and the loneliness that lingers even when we are surrounded by people.

We say "I'm fine" because that is what's expected but most of us are not fine. We are functioning – yes – but we are also fraying. And we have mistaken coping for healing.

LIFE, UNSCRIPTED
BY NARLANA T. KRESHPAN



Beyond illness

Mental health is not just about illness; it is also about how we live, relate and recover. It is about our capacity to connect, rest and be honest with ourselves. Yet, we have reduced it to a crisis – to a breakdown, hospitalisation or medication.

We were never taught emotional literacy in school. We learned how to solve equations and memorise facts but not how to handle disappointment, grief or anger. We were told to be strong, to "move on" and "not to think too much". And so, we grow up believing that vulnerability is a weakness and that seeking help is shameful.

Counselling or therapy

This is why I believe it is time for Malaysia to take mental health seriously – not only as a crisis to manage but also as an area for prevention.

Counselling or therapy should be part of ordinary life, not something reserved for the "unstable". Imagine if every school had counsellors whom students could actually talk to without fear of being labelled or judged; if teachers were trained to notice early signs of distress and not just to push for grades; if parents had access to support to better communicate with their children, rather than only reacting when things go wrong; and if couples

"Mental health is not just about illness; it is also about how we live, relate and recover. It is about our capacity to connect, rest and be honest with ourselves. Yet, we have reduced it to a crisis – to a breakdown, hospitalisation or medication."

went for pre-marital counselling, not because something is broken, but because they want to build something strong.

Counselling is not a luxury, and it is not something "Western". And it is certainly not a sign of weakness; it is preventive healthcare for the mind and heart. Just as we go for medical check-ups, dental cleanings and fitness tests – why not emotional check-ins? If we can care for our bodies, why not for our inner worlds?

We cannot "just pray" for anxiety, panic attacks and depression to go away. They are actually signs of deeper root causes but nobody wants to go there. When will people realise that many "mental" issues stem from suppressed emotions?

National priority

To policymakers, educators and community leaders: it is time to make mental health infrastructure a national priority. Counselling must be woven into our education system, workplaces and healthcare networks. Schools and universities need trained counsellors who are accessible, approachable and equipped to support real-life struggles. We need affordable community counselling centres in every district, not just in big cities or private clinics.

Mental health awareness campaigns are important but awareness alone is not enough. We need systems that make

help available before there is a crisis.

Corporates need to let employees choose the therapists they want, not just people on panels nor the therapists that insurance companies deem "fit" to help that person. If an employee has found a therapist they like and feel comfortable with, let them make that choice.

Heads of companies, especially government departments, need to set examples by having therapy sessions and talking about it.

Making it okay to say "I'm not okay"

Most of all, we need to make it safe to say, "I'm not coping". This phrase should not invite shame, judgement or fear; it should invite care, understanding and support. When people can't speak of their pain, it festers. That quiet suffering is what keeps us wounded as individuals, families and a nation.

Perhaps this World Mental Health Day can be a turning point – a moment when we stop seeing counselling as a last resort and start seeing it as an act of self-care and community health.

If we can make it normal to talk, listen and seek help, there may be fewer suicides, road rage, bullying and even less illnesses. Let's start healing those invisible wounds.

Narlana T. Kreshpan is a somatic psychotherapist and life and executive coach. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com



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WEDNESDAY

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FRIDAY

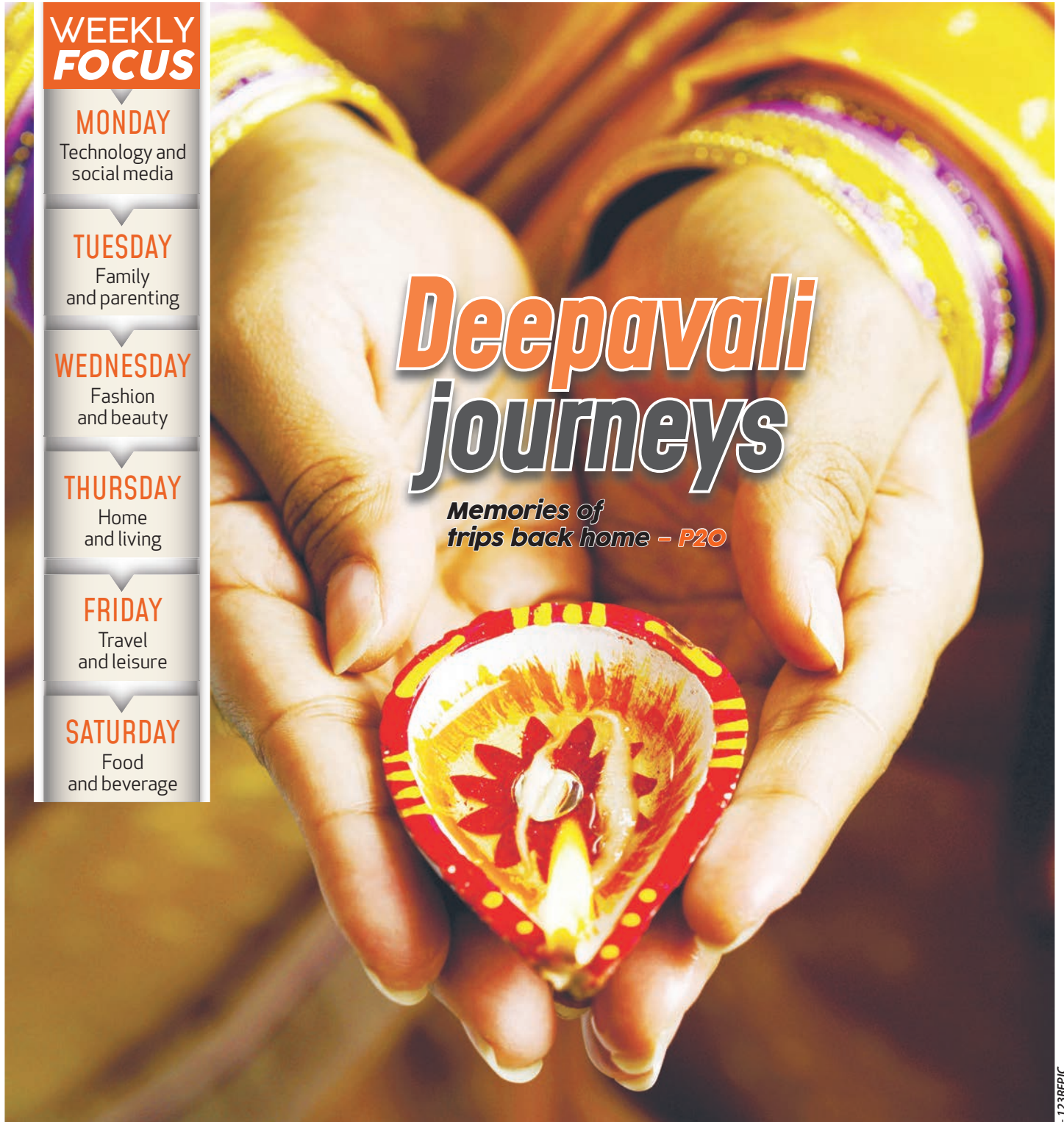
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SATURDAY

Food
and beverage

Deepavali journeys

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- 123RF/PIIC

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Mother Bhumi in Tokyo
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James Gunn delivers in
new Peacemaker season



Presanna with her husband and pet dog.

THE heart of Deepavali lies not just in the lights that brighten our homes, but in the memories and journeys that lead us there. It is found in crowded kitchens, familiar laughter and long roads filled with anticipation.

This year, three Malaysians – Sathiya, Presanna and Arvin – shared what returning home for the Festival of Lights means to them: stories of family, tradition and the joy of togetherness.

Where light meets renewal

Deepavali mornings begin in stillness and reflection. As the first rays of light break through, families rise early for the *Ganga Snanam*, the traditional oil bath believed to wash away the old and welcome renewal.

"It's said that the Ganga flows unseen through every home," shared Sathiyakumari Poongawanam, 34, a civil servant from Putrajaya.

The ritual is followed by the hum of kitchens coming alive – the aroma of curry, the glow of *nei vilakku* (oil lamps) and the laughter that fills every corner.

"The house would smell of my mother's chicken curry. By the time the lamps were lit, the whole neighbourhood would come alive with greetings and laughter," Sathiya recalled.

Traditions that bind generations

Deepavali traditions often begin in the kitchen, where recipes and rituals are passed down like heirlooms. For Presanna Nair, 31, a conference producer from Kulim, Kedah, the festival does not officially start until the *murukku* hits the oil.

"When I was younger, my mum, aunts and grandmother would plan a day just for making *murukku*. We'd sit together for hours, shaping and frying them in batches. Till today, I will make sure to go home for that – it's our tradition," she said.

Now, even as life evolves, those traditions adapt.

"After getting married, my husband and I take turns celebrating in each other's hometowns. I do



Sathiya during Deepavali.



Arvin and his family.

Deepavali journeys: Stories of reunion, celebration

► Malaysians fondly reminisce about festive experiences from long emotional trips to making *murukku* with family

miss being home in Kedah sometimes, but sharing our customs with my in-laws has become just as meaningful," she added.

Togetherness beyond home

The meaning of Deepavali extends beyond family walls, it is also about community and giving back. In Sungai Siput, Arvin Raj, 31, remembers one Deepavali that captured that spirit perfectly.

"All our relatives gathered at our ancestral temple. We cleaned it together and shared lunch with the local community. That sense of connection is what Deepavali is really about," he recalled.

It is this collective warmth, the laughter of relatives, the aroma of home cooking, the spirit of togetherness that keep Deepavali's light alive year after year.

"Even though my grandparents are gone, their love still lights up our hearts every Deepavali," Sathiya reflected.

Journey that brings it all together

Every tradition, every

gathering begins with one thing: the journey home. Across the highways and *kampung* roads, Malaysians travel miles to return to the people who make the festival whole.

"No matter how far I go, that drive back feels emotional. It's like returning to a place where my heart feels at ease," said Sathiya.

The journey itself becomes part of the celebration even when it comes with festive traffic.

"Once, my trip home took twice as long. But the moment you step through the door and see your family, it's all worth it," said Presanna.

And sometimes, the mishaps make the memories sweeter.

"We once forgot our Deepavali clothes and had to turn back. But that's what makes *balik kampung* stories so special, they're part of the joy," Arvin admitted.

Across every story – whether it is Sathiya's drive home to warmth, Presanna's laughter in the kitchen or Arvin's day of giving – one truth shines through: Deepavali is as much about the journey as it is the destination. Every mile travelled, every dish prepared, every shared smile becomes part of what makes the festival whole.

Presanna's family *murukku*-making session.

This article is contributed by RedBus

Project challenges public to become #FoodHeroes, protect planet

THE Lost Food Project (TLFP) has launched its "I'm a #FoodHero..." social media challenge, running until Oct 26, inviting the public to take small, creative steps to reduce food waste and protect the planet – one meal at a time.

The #FoodHero challenge encourages everyone to share short, fun and practical videos on Instagram Reels, TikTok or Facebook Reels, starting with the line "I'm a #FoodHero..." and ending with their own food-saving tip, trick or quick recipe.

From turning leftovers into delicious meals to freezing herbs or composting scraps, the campaign aims to show how simple actions can make a big impact.

Adding a comedic twist to the cause, Malaysian comedian Kavin Jay has joined the challenge with his own hilarious take on being a #FoodHero – proving that sustainability does not have to be serious to be impactful.

Joining him is model and sustainability advocate Natalie Prabha, who will be sharing her own creative spin on the challenge and inspiring more people to take part.

"Food waste is something we can all help reduce, starting from our own kitchens. The #FoodHero challenge is about inspiring individuals everywhere to get creative and have fun while doing something good for people and the planet," said TLFP vice president Sarah Grasset.

The campaign is inspired by TLFP's long-standing community of Food Heroes – from businesses to charities and volunteers – who have supported its mission for more than a decade.

The term "Food Hero", coined by TLFP as part of its brand identity, reflects the collective spirit of those who work together to feed the hungry, not the landfill.

Whether rescuing surplus bread, sorting vegetables or finding creative ways to use up every crumb at home, these Food Heroes embody the belief that small individual actions can create a powerful collective impact.

So far in 2025, TLFP has rescued over 6.1 million meals worth of rescued good food, preventing more than 5.3 million kilograms of greenhouse gas emissions.



Comfort dishes meet a fine dining experience.

Comfort-driven 'luxury'

► Malaysia leads Asia Pacific in sustainable, heritage-inspired dining trends

■ BY ASHIQIN AHMAD

ABOUT 68% of diners in Malaysia are now choosing local Asian cuisine and dishes over international fare at hotels due to preference for comfort food, according to Marriott's Future of Food 2026 study.

Malaysians are rediscovering their roots through food, with nearly three out of four diners (74%) in Malaysia preferring quick, casual dining experiences over formal settings, the highest rate across all Asia Pacific markets and significantly above the regional average of 59%.

About 42% of Marriott International's properties in Asia Pacific reported a rise in demand for comfort food, compared to just 29% regionally.

The study, which explores emerging dining trends across Asia Pacific, drew insights from

more than 30 chefs, mixologists and industry experts, highlighting comfort-driven dining, sensory storytelling, local provenance and sustainability as defining forces for the future of hospitality.

Marriott International vice president of food and beverage, Asia Pacific (excluding China) Petr Raba said across Asia Pacific, comfort food is emerging as the new luxury.

"In Malaysia, that evolution is especially powerful, where every ingredient tells a story and every recipe reflects a legacy. Flavours of the Forgotten celebrates that dialogue between heritage and innovation, and reminds us that the most meaningful meals are those rooted in culture and conscience," he said at the Malaysian launch of Future of Food 2026 this week.

The event brought together chefs, producers and sustainability advocates to explore how cultural



Fresh local produce to ensure familiar flavours.

reconnection, heritage ingredients and responsible sourcing are reshaping the future of dining.

Curated by executive chef Nor Azizi, the experience showcased indigenous Malaysian ingredients, such as *ulam raja*, *daun kaduk*, *daun pegaga* and *kerdas*, presented through a refined yet approachable fine-casual menu.

The dishes were developed in collaboration with BoomGrow, Malaysia's pioneering urban farm collectively known for its focus on sustainable agriculture and zero-waste practices.

Adding to the experience was a Sustainable Marketplace,

highlighting Marriott Bonvoy's local partners who are driving innovation in responsible dining.

The showcase demonstrated how sustainability and creativity can coexist, offering guests a glimpse into the future of food that values both comfort and conscience.

Through its showcase Flavours of the Forgotten, Malaysia joined the regional conversation on the evolving dining landscape, where sustainability, sensory storytelling and local provenance are not just trends but a movement shaping how people eat and celebrate culture across Asia Pacific.

TASTY RECIPES

MACKEREL & PINEAPPLE CURRY

Ingredients:

1 can of Ayam Brand mackerel in tomato sauce 425g
1 can of Ayam Brand pineapple chunks 425g
1 onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, minced
180g Ayam Brand fish curry paste

200ml Ayam Brand coconut milk
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
Fresh cilantro for garnish
Salt to taste

Instructions:

1. Saute aromatics
Heat vegetable oil in a pan over medium heat. Add chopped onion and garlic, cooking until translucent.
2. Add spices
Stir in curry powder and turmeric powder, cooking for another minute.
3. Combine ingredients:
Add the pineapple



sauce and gently add the sardines along with the sauce to the pan. Simmer for five minutes.
4. Garnish and serve
Season with salt to taste and garnish with fresh cilantro. Serve with steamed rice or roti.

chunks and cook for 10 minutes. Pour in the coconut milk and bring to a simmer.

3. Add sardines
Open the can of Ayam Brand sardines in tomato





MERCY Diebiru-Ojo's ambitions are straightforward – increase Nigerian yam and cassava yields by 500%, fight hunger and raise her country's position on the agricultural value chain from a mere grower to a processor.

The first steps, at least, are already underway for the 44-year-old agronomist, who was awarded this year's prestigious Africa Food Prize for her research on yams and cassava, major food staples in Africa.

Traditionally, farmers in Nigeria – which produces 70% of the world's yams – replant chunks of yams and cassava from the previous year's harvest, to grow this year's crop.

Gradually, the plants lose their resistance to diseases – a serious problem for food security in a country where 30 million people are not getting enough to eat, according to the United Nations' World Food Programme.

Diebiru-Ojo's research involves growing the plants hydroponically in greenhouses, where they are protected from disease.

Then, as they sprout, a portion is cut and planted in potted mineral-rich soil in the greenhouse.

Only later is it replanted in the fields outside.

"So your materials are going to grow very vigorously in terms of vegetative growth... even the root formation and all of that," Diebiru-Ojo said in an interview on the sprawling campus of the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), in the southwestern city of Ibadan.

The result – 30 tonnes of yams and cassava per hectare, compared to the typical five.

Diebiru-Ojo worked with US agro-research firm Sahtechno, which developed what it calls "semi-autotrophic hydroponics" (SAH) some two decades ago, to adapt the technique to Nigerian agriculture.

Her techniques, if widely adapted, could be welcome news for the country's farmers.

Huge potential

Despite being the world's top cassava producer, "when it comes to the yield, actual yield potentials and all of that, we are still way behind," Diebiru-Ojo said.

As is the case in many African countries, skilled farmers, with generations of knowledge, face a host

Nigerian agronomist dreams of cassava 'revolution'

➤ Promise of increased yields could help fight hunger in Africa



Diebiru-Ojo poses for a photograph next to cassava crops in a greenhouse.

of challenges.

They must rely on seasonal rains for irrigation, soils are declining in health, financing costs are high and governments have limited budgets for extension services.

Despite producing roughly 20% of the world's cassava each year, Africa's most populous country still imports some US\$600 million (RM2.5 billion) in cassava products, according to the Central Bank of Nigeria.

Yams are also a prized ingredient in Nigerian cuisine – fried, boiled, mashed or turned into flour.

But there is also a huge – if largely unrealised – potential for their use in bioplastics and biofuels, as well as cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and textiles, thanks to their starch.

Moving up the so-called "value chain" – switching from producing



Cassava crops grow in a greenhouse on the campus of the IITA in Ibadan. – PICS FROM AFP

raw materials to transforming them into finished products – is a key step in any country's economic development, economists say.

Diebiru-Ojo, who was named an Africa Food Prize Laureate last month alongside Kenya's Mary Abukutsa-Onyango, is quick to talk of a "revolution of the cassava sector" in Nigeria.

It is an ambition shared by the government – at least rhetorically – in a country where critics say a focus on oil has long sidelined investments in agriculture.

Cassava a 'strategic asset'

"Cassava is one of the most strategic assets in our agricultural portfolio," Vice President Kashim Shettima said in July.

He specifically mentioned IITA's research, and the need to do more processing and food transformation locally.

The promise of increased yields also comes at a time when rural farms are under pressure from various armed groups – jihadists in the northeast, armed gangs in the northwest and farmer-herder conflicts in the Middle Belt.

The country's myriad conflicts are adding to existing pressures on hunger and food inflation.

But with better techniques, even in "a very small space, maybe just a garden behind your house, you can produce a lot," Diebiru-Ojo said.

Take-off will require help from the private sector to market the seeds and train farmers on SAH.

Already, IITA collaborates with public institutions and private companies in 15 countries on the continent.

The objective is "helping a food-secure Africa, not only Nigeria," Diebiru-Ojo said.

An added bonus, she said, would be for her win to serve as an "inspiration to a whole lot of others coming, especially for the women in agriculture". – AFP

Protein powders found with high levels of lead: Report

MORE than a dozen protein powders tested by US non-profit organisation Consumer Reports had troubling levels of lead, according to its investigation.

Of the 23 protein powders tested, more than two-thirds contained more lead in a single serving than the safe daily intake limit (0.5 micrograms), the association recently said.

The average levels of lead in these products also appeared to be worsening compared to previous years.

Levels of heavy metals in plant-based products were on average nine times higher than those found in dairy proteins, such as whey, and twice as high as quantities found in

beef-based ones, Consumer Reports found.

Tunde Akinleye, food and safety researcher for the group who led the testing project, said there is "more to lose than you're gaining" and warned regular users to consider reducing their consumption.

"We advise against daily use for most protein powders, since many have high levels of heavy metals and none are necessary to hit your protein goals," Akinleye said.

Protein-rich foods and supplements have seen significant growth in the wellness industry because of their ability to keep consumers full and are also used by athletes looking to increase muscle mass. – AFP



Many athletes use protein-rich foods and supplements, hoping to increase muscle mass. – 123RF/PC



This Deepavali, prioritise safety on the road. Let's make the journey as joyful and stress-free as the celebrations.
— 123RF/PIC

Road safety tips for safe Deepavali travel with family

Plan journey in advance

WITH over 38 million vehicles now registered in Malaysia, the roads are busier than ever. During this festive season, there is a surge in travel as families head home to celebrate together.

While the excitement of reuniting with loved ones is in full swing, it is important to remember that road safety is more crucial than ever.

The increased volume of vehicles means the risk of accidents rises, making it essential for every driver to stay alert and make smart decisions behind the wheel.

Whether you are travelling long distances or just making a quick trip to visit family, taking a few simple precautions can help ensure that everyone reaches their destination safely.

Here are some essential road safety tips to keep you and your family safe during your travels:

Tip 1: Plan ahead

Check the weather forecast and road conditions before starting your journey, especially with festive traffic and possible rain.

Plan your route in advance and have alternative routes ready in case of traffic jams or road closures.

Tip 2: Vehicle maintenance

Check the engine, brakes, tires, lights and fluid levels to avoid unexpected breakdowns. If needed, schedule a service before your journey to ensure your car is in tip-top condition.

Tip 3: Prioritise safety

Take simple protective measures for yourself and your loved ones.

For motorcyclists and cyclists, wear a helmet. It offers up to 70% protection against serious head injuries. Always ensure that everyone in the vehicle, including passengers, is properly buckled up before the journey begins, it can reduce the chance of severe injury by at least 40%.

Child safety seats provide vital protection, reducing injury risks by up to 70% for infants, 54% for children aged 1-4, and 59% for

children aged 4-7.

Tip 4: Rest and recharge

Get a good night's sleep for several nights before starting your long journey to avoid fatigue. Take regular breaks during your trip to stretch, stay alert and recharge.

Tip 5: Pack an emergency kit

Prepare an emergency kit with essentials like a first aid kit, flashlight, basic tools and drinking water for unforeseen situations.

Tip 6: Stay connected

Share your travel plans and estimated arrival time with loved ones. Keep your phone fully charged, and do not forget a car charger or power bank to stay connected.

Tip 7: Avoid distractions

In the rush of festive travel, it's easy to get distracted. Stay focused on the road and avoid texting, calling, or using your phone while driving.

This article is contributed by Zurich Malaysia, which offers Zurich Roadside Assistance to help navigate unexpected situations on the road.



Vibrant comforting meals to share with families.

Feast of flavours this Festival of Lights

CELEBRATE the Festival of Lights with a spread that glows as brightly as the season itself at Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur. From buffets at Lemon Garden to gift boxes from Lemon Garden 2Go, each creation blends the richness of Indian culinary tradition with the signature artistry of Shangri-La hospitality.

From today to Monday, Lemon Garden comes alive with the aromas of spice and celebration. The buffet is a vibrant tapestry of festive favourites, beginning with the lamb shank dum *biryani*, tender shank slow-cooked to perfection and nestled in saffron-scented rice that bursts with flavour in every bite.

The culinary journey continues with the deep, aromatic gravy of lamb *rogan josh*, layered with warming spices that gently linger on the palate. For those who love a fiery kick, chicken *vindaloo* delivers a bold balance of chilli and vinegar while

prawn *shashlik* tempts with smoky charred edges and succulent, spice-marinated flesh. The indulgent baby lobster and assorted seafood *biryani* is a true crowd-pleaser, featuring seafood layered in saffron-scented rice that is fragrant with a medley of spices.

Also served are freshly baked *naans* and the dessert selection offers a sweet finale to the festive feast. Creamy *rasmalai*, syrupy golden *gulab jamun*, nutty *mava burfi*, melt-in-the-mouth *boondi ladoo* and the comforting *gajar halwa* complete the experience with timeless indulgence, each lovingly prepared for the occasion.

The Deepavali feast is priced at RM198 nett for lunch, while dinner is available at RM258 nett today and Sunday, and RM198 nett next Monday, a celebration that promises an unforgettable feast of flavours and tradition.



An enchanting collection of handcrafted sweets curated for gifting or savouring at home.



Inteam's upcoming concert promises to be a heartfelt reunion and a spiritual celebration.

Inteam to hold Feb concert to celebrate 25 years of music

FOR 25 years, Inteam's songs have been the soundtrack of reflection and faith for many Malaysians and the beloved *nasyid* group returns to the stage for a concert that bridges nostalgia and unity.

Titled "25 Tahun Inteam: Nur Kasih Lebih Dari Hiburan", the concert will take place on Feb 1 next year at Axiata Arena Bukit Jalil and is expected to draw 9,500 fans from across the country.

Organised by Icon Entertainment, the event aims to highlight the lasting impact of spiritual music in Malaysian entertainment.

Formed in 2000, Inteam has become one of the country's most enduring *nasyid* groups, known for songs such as *Nur Kasih*, *Dia*, *Kerana Cinta dan Kasih Kekasih*.

Over the years, the group's heartfelt messages of faith and compassion have inspired listeners across generations.

According to Icon Entertainment founder Iman Tang, the concert represents more than just a musical milestone.

"This show celebrates Inteam's journey and the loyal fans who have supported them for 25 years. It's a reminder that spiritual music still holds a special place in our culture," he said.

Iman added that the group's sincerity and consistent message of hope continue to resonate today.

Fans can also look forward to the debut of Inteam's new single *Satukan Kami di Syurga*, which will be performed live during the concert.

Group member Muhammad Hazamin Harun was recently honoured with an Anugerah Tokoh from the International Islamic University Malaysia, further cementing the group's influence in the country's cultural and educational landscape.

Beyond the music, the concert offers fans an opportunity to win lucky draw prizes, including six *umrah* packages worth RM8,999 each.

Additional prizes include travel vouchers, Modenas scooters and a smartphone as a token of appreciation for the group's long-time supporters.

Tickets range from RM168 to RM488, with sales opening on Oct 24 at 11am.



With a career spanning a quarter of a century, the concert is a reminder that the group's message of faith and compassion remains timeless.

Mother Bhumi enters Tokyo film fest main competition



The movie follows a woman who works in the paddy fields by day and is a traditional healer by night. - PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @MOTHER.BHUMI

➤ Multilingual movie shot in Kedah stars Fan Bingbing

MALAYSIAN film *Mother Bhumi*, directed by acclaimed filmmaker Chong Keat Aun, has made history by being one of the 15 films selected for the main competition at the 2025 Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF).

Starring international actress Datuk Fan Bingbing, *Mother Bhumi* is set to make its world premiere on Oct 27, the opening day of the 38th edition of TIFF, which runs until Nov 5 in Tokyo, Japan.

Chong described the selection of the film, which was shot in Bendang Siam, Kedah, as a great honour and recognition of Malaysia's local stories and cultural heritage.

"It has been a long time since a Malaysian film was chosen for the main competition at this prestigious festival," he said.

Chong, who won the Best New Director award at the 57th Golden Horse Film Festival in Taipei, added that the film is expected to compete in six categories -

Best Film, Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Actor, Best Actress and Best Cinematography.

He said the multilingual film, which reflects the linguistic diversity of Malaysian communities, is the result of a collaboration among Malaysia, Hong Kong, Italy and Saudi Arabia. It highlights stories of local communities, including the Siamese ethnic group in Malaysia.

"This film is entirely about local stories... stories of Malaysians. What's even more interesting is that Fan plays a local woman. Usually, when foreign actors are cast, they portray outsiders," he said.

Mother Bhumi, which also received eight nominations at the 2025 Golden Horse Awards, tells the tale of a woman who works in the paddy fields by day and serves as a traditional healer by night, set against the backdrop of the late 1990s.

The film also stars Natalie Hsu, Bai Run-yin and Pearly Chua. - Bernama

Walid, Mencari Ramlee represent Malaysia in India

TWO films *Walid* and *Mencari Ramlee* represented Malaysia at the India-Asean Film Festival 2025, which ends today in Chennai, India, as part of the Asean-India Year of Tourism celebrations.

The Consulate General of Malaysia in Chennai said in a statement that *Walid* was screened on Thursday, followed by *Mencari Ramlee* yesterday.

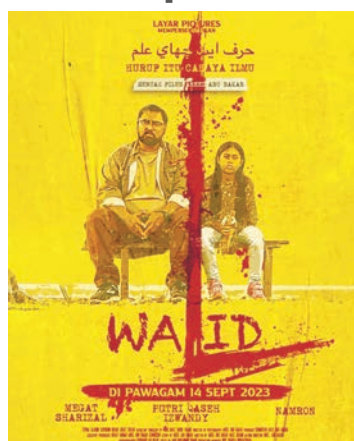
"The India-Asean Film Festival aims to strengthen cultural cooperation and people-to-people connectivity between Asean member states and India through cinema - a powerful medium for storytelling and cross-cultural understanding," it said.

Consul General of Malaysia in Chennai K. Saravana Kumar said the India-Asean Film Festival is not only a tribute to the creativity of filmmakers but also a reaffirmation of the shared commitment of Asean and India to deepen cultural and tourism linkages.

"In Malaysia's capacity as chair of Asean 2025, we are privileged to spearhead this cultural initiative in celebration of the Asean-India Year of Tourism," he was quoted as saying in the statement.

The India-Asean Film Festival 2025 is hosted by the Consulate General of Malaysia in Chennai, under Malaysia's chairmanship of Asean 2025, in collaboration with India's External Affairs Ministry, India Tourism and Avichi College of Arts and Science.

Other films in the line-up include India's *12th Fail* and *Ponniyin Selvan*, Thailand's *Time to Fly* and Singapore's *Ah Boys to Men*,



Walid. - PICS FROM IMDB



Mencari Ramlee.

showcasing the vibrancy and diversity of Asean and Indian cinema.

The inaugural ceremony was held at Avichi College in Chennai and featured cultural performances, addresses by Asean representatives and the screening of *Walid*.

Approximately 200 guests attended the film festival, including *Mencari Ramlee* director Megat Sharizal and Layar Pictures executive associate Haslina Nor Mohamed,

as well as members of the diplomatic community, officials, students and industry stakeholders.

"The India-Asean Film Festival 2025 underscores Malaysia's continued commitment to promoting Asean unity, fostering cultural diplomacy and advancing regional cooperation with India under the Asean-India partnership framework," the statement added. - Bernama

TV SHOW REVIEW

BY AMEEN HAZIZI

Peacemaker returns with heart, chaos, hilarious mayhem

➤ Second season more of character study

FRESH off the success of *Superman*, James Gunn returns to familiar ground with a sharp and surprisingly introspective second season of *Peacemaker*. What began in 2022 as a crude, chaotic spin-off has now evolved into a character study that asks tough questions of its lead while still delivering the outrageous humour and unhinged violence fans expect.

Old crew new chaos

John Cena once again anchors the series as Chris Smith, the helmeted antihero with the unaddressed trauma and a big heart. Jennifer Holland reprises her role as the no-nonsense Agent Emilia Harcourt, Steve Agee brings neurotic charm as John Economos, Danielle Brooks as Smith's best friend Leota Adebayo, and Freddie Stroma returns as *Peacemaker*'s other best friend, the delightfully unhinged Vigilante.

The new season also bulks up its roster. Frank Grillo steps in as General Rick Flagg Sr, reprising the role from *Superman* and the animated *Creature Commandos*. Tim Meadows adds offbeat humour as Agent Fleury, a crude Argus officer cursed with "bird blindness". Sol Rodriguez steps into the role of Sasha Bordeaux, an Argus agent, who in the comics operated as Bruce Wayne's bodyguard. Michael Rooker, a Gunn regular, appears as Red St Wild, a hunter who becomes the nemesis of Eagly, Smith's pet eagle.

Plot

If the first season was about saving the world, this season comes across as more of a character study for Smith as the stakes are more personal this time around. The season opens with Smith at rock bottom, haunted by guilt and rejection. His world turns upside down when he crosses into a



Cena once again anchors the series as Smith.

parallel universe where life is perfect: his family is intact, he is adored by the public and his love is finally reciprocated.

The central conflict is whether he should abandon his best friends for this seemingly perfect fantasy. Standing in his way is General Rick Flagg Sr, now head of Argus. Officially, he wants Smith contained for meddling with interdimensional tech following the events of *Superman*, but privately his mission is revenge for his son, Rick Flagg Jr, killed by Smith in 2021's *The Suicide Squad*.

Meanwhile, the supporting cast get their own arcs. Harcourt struggles with being blacklisted by the government from securing a job. Economos finds his loyalty pulled between friendship and duty.



Cena and Holland admiring the Top Trio.

Adebayo strikes out with her own security agency. Vigilante dives into animal trivia, although he is hilariously terrible at it.

Cena finds heart beneath helmet

The standout of this season is Cena, who delivers his most layered performance yet. He fully inhabits the self-deprecating and wounded *Peacemaker*, bringing real emotion to his longing and trauma. It is a

nuanced and surprisingly vulnerable take on the character that cements his place among the best wrestler-turned-actors, standing shoulder to shoulder with Dave Bautista and Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson.

Retcons

One of the boldest choices this season makes is how it rewrites canon. Fans questioned how Gunn

would reconcile *Peacemaker*'s Snyder-era *Justice League* cameo with his new DC Universe. His solution: a sly retcon in the opening season recap.

Spoilers: in the original ending of the first season, the silhouettes of Henry Cavill's *Superman* and Gal Gadot's *Wonder Woman* appeared alongside Jason Momoa's *Aquaman* and Ezra Miller's *Flash*.

In this season, that scene is retconned with the Justice Gang. Debuting in this year's *Superman*, the team is led by Nathan Fillion as Green Lantern, Isabela Merced as *Hawkgirl* and Edi Gathegi as Mr Terrific. David Corenswet's *Superman* and Milly Alcock's *Supergirl* are teased in shadow. It is a cheeky acknowledgement of the shift without derailing the story.

Redemption, retcons and rock music

At its core, the show remains classic Gunn: outrageous gore, foul jokes and a pounding soundtrack wrapped around surprising tenderness. Chris Smith is another of Gunn's "lovable losers", shaped by abuse, defined by contradictions and expressed through his music taste. He is violent yet vulnerable, loyal yet self-destructive, a man scarred by his neo-Nazi father but still yearning for love.

While *Superman* positioned the new DC Universe (DCU) as family-friendly, *Peacemaker* proudly takes the opposite route. It is loud, violent and unapologetically adult, yet beneath the chaos lies a story about identity, love and the struggle between fantasy and reality. Gunn once again proves that no matter how flawed his heroes are, there is always heart beneath the madness. With its surprising cameos and bold twists, this season stands out as one to remember and marks a strong addition for Gunn's vision of the DCU.



Peacemaker's second season has bulked up its roster with more characters. - PICS FROM HBO MAX



BEST known for her acclaimed TV roles in *Grey's Anatomy* and *Killing Eve*, Sandra Oh says she finds herself "amazed" by the magic of the stage as she readies for her operatic debut in New York.

In *La Fille du Regiment*, Italian composer Gaetano Donizetti's comic opera, the Canadian-American actress plays the Duchess of Krakenthorp, who reluctantly marries off her son. The role is spoken rather than sung – and in French.

"She's very stern and she's very angry, and I find it very, very difficult to keep that face when the most beautiful music is happening right in front of me," Oh says with a laugh during an interview after a dress rehearsal recently.

Her first foray on the Metropolitan Opera stage was the result of a happy accident: the storied institution's general manager offered her the role after seeing her perform Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* in the open-air theatre in Central Park this summer.

"To move into a stage this grand, and to move into the heights of what opera is, and really it's to be in rehearsal with some of the greatest artistes... is something that's very, very rare," she reflects.

Sandra Oh trades small screen for grand stage of Met Opera

► Actress plays duchess in *La Fille du Regiment*

"I wanted to try that experience. And I do try and do that in my life and in my career, to just try things that are new, things that mostly scare me," added the 54-year-old.

What surprised her most was the "crazy" pace of the production, at odds with the "slow or gentle" way audiences experience opera: "You have sets that are moving all the time, people who are just coming, and you have people who are telling you exactly where to be all the time. And



Oh makes her operatic debut as the Duchess of Krakenthorp in New York. – PICS FROM AFP



Oh rehearses for Donizetti's comic opera *La Fille du Regiment* at the Metropolitan Opera.

while it is divine, it's bananas."

'I'm in my comedy phase'

There's little doubt that the presence of a bona fide small screen star at the Met will attract a larger audience than usual – a boon for an institution struggling financially since the Covid pandemic and eager to modernise its programming.

Oh's entrance on stage – in a purple gown, her hair adorned with feathers and waving a fan – drew cheers and excited shouts from New York schoolchildren invited to the dress rehearsal.

The winner of two Golden Globes, among other awards, for her roles as a talented surgeon in *Grey's Anatomy* and an intelligence agent obsessed with an assassin in *Killing Eve* is delighted by the prospect of these youngsters and her fans to "see the opera and to experience what storytelling is in a grand scale, what music is and to see the top artistes in the world."

On the wide stage, the actress herself more than holds her own. Far from the subtlety required before a camera, her powerful voice and exaggerated gestures fill the space –

and draw peals of laughter.

"In a special stage this big, you do have to be very conscious of all your gestures," she sums up, noting that on screen, it's the quality of an actor's expressions that the lens captures. "As an actor, you should be able to do all of it."

As it happens, Oh is also set to appear in US theatres, alongside Keanu Reeves, Seth Rogen and Keke Palmer in the comedy *Good Fortune*.

"I'm in my comedy phase, and everything is like, feel good, it's a comedy. And, you know, bring a bit of joy," she concludes. – AFP

Springsteen film strips away myth to depict person behind music

US rock star Bruce Springsteen made a surprise appearance on the London Film Festival red carpet on Wednesday, lending his support to the cast and makers of a new biographical movie about his life.

Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere stars *The Bear* actor Jeremy Allen White as the multiple Grammy winner. But instead of focusing on his high-flying career, it offers a raw portrayal of the person behind the music.

Directed and co-written by Scott Cooper, the film is based on the book of the same name by Warren Zanes. It follows a young Springsteen, on the cusp of hitting the big time, struggling with his inner demons and childhood trauma while writing the stark 1982 album *Nebraska*.

White said the drama, which also delves into Springsteen's fraught relationship with his father, played by Stephen Graham, shows a difficult but decisive period in the rocker's life.

"I think at the core of it so much is about that longing for familial connection and the relationship

between him and his father. I think he made decisions during this period in his life that allowed him to live the life that he wanted to live," said White.

The film features *Succession* star Jeremy Strong as Springsteen's supportive, longtime manager Jon Landau.

"It's a film obviously about Bruce and about the making of *Nebraska*, but it's about repairing trauma through art and confronting depression and mental health issues. I think it's an incredibly courageous story to tell about someone as mythologised as Bruce, to tell the story of Bruce, the man," Strong said.

The movie marks the first time the musician's life has been depicted on the big screen. Springsteen, 76, was closely involved in the production.

"Very early on, he listened to me singing his songs. He said, 'you sing very well. You sound like me, not just like me. You're making the songs your own and I want the whole process to feel that way,'" White recalled.



"Without that sort of blessing, I don't think I would have been able to do what I did. He's been very

generous in every way. He gave me the guitar I learned to play on. I still have it," White said.

The film begins its global cinematic rollout on Oct 22. – Reuters

Springsteen attends the premiere of *Springsteen: Deliver Me from Nowhere* at the London Film Festival recently. – REUTERS/PIC



McIlroy dumps driver, Lowry leads in Delhi

RORY MCILROY left the driver out of his bag as he made his debut in India with a 3-under 69, but it was his Ryder Cup partner Shane Lowry who led after a superb 64 in the first round at the DP World India Championship in Delhi.

Lowry got up-and-down at the par-five 18th hole, despite a stray dog delaying his final putt, to complete a flawless 8-under round which included five straight birdies from the 11th.

The Irishman led a packed leaderboard by one stroke from Keita Nakajima of Japan who, like Lowry, rolled in eight birdies but dropped a shot at the sixth in his 7-under 65.

Lowry missed the cut last week in Spain on his return to action after the Ryder Cup but it was McIlroy's first outing since inspiring the European team to glory in New York, albeit on a vastly different course to Bethpage Black.

The stunning Lodhi course at the historic Delhi Golf Club is a par-72 layout that is short by modern standards, at less than 7000 yards, but is studded with the ruins of ancient tombs dating back to the Mughal Empire. Its narrow fairways are bordered by treacherous dense vegetation on a course that is a throwback to a bygone golfing era, rewarding accuracy rather than distance.

"I feel like this type of golf course suits me," said Lowry, the 2019 British Open champion. I spend half the year moaning about golf courses that are too wide. So when I get to somewhere like here, I need to take advantage and I did that today.

"Hopefully I can keep doing that for the rest of the week."

McIlroy, one of golf's longest hitters, said Delhi Golf Club was not the place to unleash 350-yard drives with his "big dog" after finishing as one of 11 players lying five shots off Lowry's lead.

"Dog was out of the bag," said the five-time major champion of his driver. "Probably asleep in the locker. I'm never going to hit driver (here). I just don't see any hole out there to hit it more than say 260, 270 off the tee," added the Northern Irishman.

McIlroy had six birdies but also three bogeys, falling foul of the thick rough on more than one occasion.

"You just have to get the ball in the fairway," he said.

"The rough is unpredictable. You get a lot of fliers."

In third place on his own was South Africa's Casey Jarvis after a 6-under 66, ahead of a three-way tie for fourth on 5-under 67 and 10 players locked on 68.

The inaugural US\$4 million (RM17m) tournament has attracted a stellar field including Tommy Fleetwood, who was one of those to card 68, his Ryder Cup teammate Viktor Hovland who shot 71 and European team captain Luke Donald with another 68.

US PGA Tour stars have travelled for the former European Tour, including 2023 British Open champion Brian Harman and Ryder Cup rookie Ben Griffin who both also had 68s. - AFP

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- Good communication, presentation, problem-solving and organisational skills.
- Passionate in client servicing.
- Possess own transport and willing to travel.
- Able to start work immediately.

Office based in Petaling Jaya (Five-day week)

MEDIA SALES - Representative/Agent (Freelance)

Requirement

- Minimum one year sales experience in classified ad, print and digital advertising.
- Those without sales experience but with media advertising knowledge may also apply.
- Attractive commission package and incentives.
- Able to start immediately.
- Central, Northern, Southern, East Coast and Sabah/Sarawak.

Send in your CV with your photo via email to : thesun.hr2@gmail.com

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FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358698-H)
NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNTUK DILELONG
SEPERTI SEDIA ADA
TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG : Northern Region (Alor Setar, Butterworth & Ipoh)
23-10-2025 (Khamis) Pukul 11:00pagi
TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG
(Pukul 9:00pagi - 4:00petang)
PERTANYAAN (Tel): Butterworth 04-3567972, Alor Setar 04-787 7972, Ipoh 05-5259971
FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) Mr. Chew Wook Kok, b) Mr. Steven Lim Peng Seng (02097), c) Pn Hasniza Binti Abu Samah (01038)
Alamat : 352, Permatang Tok Jaya Maklom Sg Dua 13800 Butterworth.
Lot 138-A, Batu 5 Jalan Lenggong 05400 Alor Setar
PT51683, Jalan Jelapang, Kws Perindustrian Trm Meru 30020 Ipoh

SILA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : <http://www.focalpark.com.my>

Item	Reg No	Jenis & Model	Tahun
AM1	ALB1825	HONDA ACCORD VT-L 2.0	2018
AM2	AHH4294	NISSAN SENTRA Comfort (A) 1.6i (Impul)	2010
AM3	WWK7219	NISSAN X-TRAIL LUXURY (A) 2.0i	2004
AM4	AGH8852	PERODUA MYVI 1.3D3EZ (A)	2013
AM5	WSH1488	PERODUA MYVI 1.3	2009
AM6	ALD4829	PROTON PERSONA CVT 1.6	2018
AM7	WC6428L	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2015
AM8	AKH8995	PROTON SAGA 1.3 CVT	2016
AM9	AKW8646	PROTON ERIGA 1.4 AT EXECUTIVE PLUS	2017
AM10	AEL3591	PROTON WIRA 1.3GL	2001
AM11	AJW472	PERODUA MYVI 1.3	2014
AM12	WWB1802	PROTON PERSONA 1.6	2011
AM13	AGV172	SUZUKI - S CROSS CVT	2014
AM14	WNB3001	TOYOTA WOS 1.5	2005
AM15	PMQ1221	FORD RANGER DCB XLAT (A) 4WD 2.300i	2017
AM16	VAH8432	MAZDA CX3 SKYACTIV 2.0 2WD	2017
AM17	PPL5411	MITSUBISHI TRITON 2.5	2019

(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perolehan akan dilelong semula pada 30-10-2025)

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PERISTYHARAN JUALAN
DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI SUNGAI PETANI
PERMOHONAN UNTUK PERLAKSANAAN NO: KB-38-840-08/2025

Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 256 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965
Dan
Dalam perkara mengenai Gadsen Perserahan No: 9470/2006 (bertarik : 10/04/2006) ke atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipanggil di bawah Geran 110840, Lot 3347, Mukim Bandar Kulim, Daerah Kulim, Kedah
Dan
Dalam perkara mengenai Aturan 83 Kaedah - Kaedah Mahkamah, 2012

ANTARA
OCBC BANK (Malaysia) Berhad (No. Pendaftaran Perniagaan: 295400-W)
DAN
PLANTIF

Amnussulan a/p Palaiwandrin (No. Kad Pengenalan: 800703075777)
Kamala a/p Thanimalal (No. Kad Pengenalan : 570529025588)
Kalshewri a/p Palaiwandrin (No. Kad Pengenalan : 820428075550)

DEFENDAN
Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia di SUNGAI PETANI mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Partitih bertarikh 28 November 2023 dan 3 September 2025, adalah dengan ini disyorkan bahawa Timbalan Pendafar/Penolong Kanan Pendafar Pusat Operasi e-Lelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA LELONG AWAM
Pada Hari Selasa, 28 Oktober 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 tanggungan, bebanan serta mengenal pasti dengan tepat hartanah tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari <https://lelong.hakmilik.gov.my/bidderweb>

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:
No. Hakmilik : Geran 110840
No. Lot : Lot 3347
Mukim / Daerah / Negeri : Bandar Kulim / Kulim / Kedah
Pegangan : Hakmilik Kekal

Pemilik Berdaftar
No. Bangunan : 1044.0000000000 kaki persegi
Keluasan Tanah : 97.0000000000 meter persegi

Syarat Nyata
Seksyen Kepentingan : Amnussulan a/p Palaiwandrin, Kamala a/p Thanimalal, Kalshewri a/p Palaiwandrin
Bebanan / Lain-Lain : Tiada
Kawasan Rizab : Tiada
Kaveat : Tiada

LOKASI DAN PERIHAL HARTANAH :
Hartanah tersebut adalah Rumah Teres 2 Tingkat yang beralamat pos di 188, Lorong Jati 1D1, Taman Jati, 09000, Kulim, Kedah

HARGA RIZAB :
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "seperti sedia ada" terbitkan kepada satu harga rizab sebanyak RM 270,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: DUA RATUS TUJUH PULUH RIBU SAMA-JAM) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang diumumkan. Pembida yang berminat hendaklah mendepositkan 10% daripada harga rizab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama OCBC BANK (MALAYSIA) BERHAD 1 HARI BEKERAJIAN sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Bagi harga belian hendaklah dibayar oleh pembida yang berjaya kepada OCBC BANK (MALAYSIA) BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (120) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk buti-butir selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan-

Firma Guaman: SEE RAMSUN & TAN
Alamat : 8 DAWY ROAD, 10050, PG, MY
No. Telefon : 04-2265811
No. Fax : 04-2265888
No. Rujukan : LCS/LTK/196/23

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DEWAN BANDARAYA KUALA LUMPUR

FEDERAL TERRITORY (PLANNING ACT) 1982 (AKTA267)
FEDERAL TERRITORY (PLANNING) (APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION) (FEDERAL TERRITORY OF KUALA LUMPUR) RULES 2025

RULE 3

NOTICE TO OBTAIN VIEWS

The Mayor has received an application for the proposed development of 2 blocks comprising a total of 1,095 units, consisting of 657 units of 30-storey Residential apartments and 438 units of 32-storey Perumahan Penjawat Awam (PPAM) residences, with resident facilities, with a density of 600 persons per acre (ppa) on Lot 80140 (formerly Lot PT 50001), Jalan 27/56, Setiawangsa, Mukim Ulu Kelang, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

(Ref: DBKL.JPRB.10278/84/8)

Pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3, Federal Territory (Planning) (Application For Planning Permission) (Federal Territory Of Kuala Lumpur) Rules 2025, the Mayor grants the registered land owners in the surrounding area a chance to submit their views towards this application.

If any registered land owners in the surrounding area decides to do so, they are required to submit in writing their views towards this application addressed to the Pengarah, Jabatan Perancangan Bandaraya, Tingkat 9, Menara DBKL 1, Jalan Raja Laut, 50350 Kuala Lumpur and through email: jprb@dbkl.gov.my.

These views must be submitted within 2 weeks from the date this notice is published, clearly stating the owner's name, owner's lot number, postal address and DBKL reference number.

Date: 18th OCTOBER 2025

DATUK BANDAR KUALA LUMPUR

Hamilton says rumours linking Horner to Ferrari are 'distracting'

LEWIS HAMILTON said rumours linking former Red Bull boss Christian Horner with Ferrari were "distracting" for the Formula One team and he did not know where they came from.

Ferrari have yet to win in 18 rounds of the 24 race season and despite team principal Fred Vasseur being handed a contract extension in July, the talk about the Frenchman's future has failed to die down.

The latest speculation, in Italy

and England, suggested Ferrari had held exploratory talks with Horner – one of the sport's most successful bosses of all time but sacked abruptly in July.

Horner and Ferrari have not commented, although Aston Martin boss Andy Cowell said at this month's Singapore Grand Prix that Horner had been in touch with team owners across the paddock.

"I don't know where the rumours have come from, so I can't really shed much light on that. It's a little

distracting for us as a team," Hamilton told reporters at the US Grand Prix yesterday.

"The team have made it clear where they stand in terms of re-signing Fred. Fred, I, and the whole team are working really hard on the future. These things aren't helpful," added the seven-times world champion. Everyone back in the factory is working incredibly hard, focused, and these sorts of rumours can sometimes be distracting."

Vasseur was instrumental in

signing Hamilton, 40, from Mercedes but the sport's most successful driver has yet to stand on the podium in Ferrari red since he joined in January.

Asked again whether he knew if there was any truth to the reports and whether he thought it was a good idea for Horner to become principal, Hamilton replied: "I don't, and I'm not going to entertain rumours." It was not clear which part of the question the "I don't" referred to. – Reuters

BRIEFS

Heat hazard in Austin

FORMULA ONE'S governing body declared a heat hazard for the second race in a row at the US Grand Prix in Austin yesterday. Race director Rui Marques said in a statement sent to teams that an official forecast predicted the heat index would be more than 31°C at some time during today's sprint or Sunday Grand Prix. The regulation was invoked for the first time at this month's Singapore Grand Prix due to the temperatures and high humidity. The regulation was brought in after drivers suffered exhaustion in the 2023 Qatar Grand Prix and means drivers can either wear a cooling vest, which circulates cold liquid through tubes to maintain body temperature, or add extra ballast to their cars. "I haven't used the vest. I'm also not intending to use it because I feel like this needs to be a driver choice," Red Bull's four-times world champion Max Verstappen said in Singapore.

Sainz stands by criticism of TV coverage

SPANIARD Carlos Sainz yesterday stood by his criticism of the television coverage of this month's Singapore Grand Prix, and added he was unimpressed by the "viral" global over-reaction to his comments. He said he had not wished to cause any offence by observing there had been too much focus on celebrities and girlfriends at the expense of the racing on Oct 5. "My comments were a bit blown out of proportion," he said before this weekend's United States Grand Prix in Austin. "The fact that I mentioned the girlfriends, or the WAGs (wives and girlfriends), or whatever you like to call them, brought a bit of spice to the comment and it went more viral worldwide. In Singapore the broadcaster didn't do a good job. I mean there are other races where they do an incredible job and show us things, incredible things and track action, but for Singapore it was not good," the 31-year-old added. "I hope they didn't take it personally or take it too hard, because it was just a simple critique of Singapore, which was not good enough," he added.

Novak has no plans to retire

NOVAK DJOKOVIC has no plans to retire from tennis with the 24-times Grand Slam winner citing NBA great LeBron James, former NFL player Tom Brady and veteran footballer Cristiano Ronaldo as his inspiration to keep playing. The 38-year-old's last Grand Slam win came in 2023, but the Serbian shows no signs of slowing down having reached the semis of all four majors this year and is currently ranked number five in the world. "Longevity is one of my biggest motivations. I really want to see how far I can go," Djokovic said at the Joy Forum in Riyadh. "If you see across all the global sports, LeBron James, he's still going strong, he's 40, Cristiano Ronaldo, and Tom Brady played till he was 40-something years old. I mean, it's unbelievable. They're inspiring me as well. So I want to keep going and that's the motivations I have."



■ BY SCOTT HUNT

LANDO NORRIS will face "consequences" after McLaren held him responsible for the first-lap collision with Oscar Piastri in Singapore.

The title protagonists banged wheels at turn two as Norris barged ahead of Piastri into third, with the Australian complaining bitterly on the team radio.

During the race, McLaren opted not to intervene and the FIA found no fault with Norris' move but, two weeks on, the team have decided the British driver was to blame and that action will be taken.

Both drivers and the team refused to specify what that action would be but it is understood there will be sporting consequences as the title battle takes another remarkable turn.

"Lando has taken responsibility for that," Piastri said. "I think it's quite clear for us as a team that how lap one unfolded wasn't how we want to go racing."

"I don't think you can really say what would have been fair to do in the race, but ultimately the responsibility has been put on Lando afterwards."

"I would say I'm not expecting it to be redressed

on track any time or every time, but ultimately we know how we're expected to go racing and if we don't, there's consequences for that."

Norris accepted the team's decision to blame him for the incident.

He also suggested that the unspecified consequences dealt out to him would be noticeable.

"The team held me accountable for what happened, which I think is fair," Norris said. "Then we made progress from there on and understanding what the repercussions were for myself."

"There was contact between two McLaren cars. Zak (Brown, CEO) and Andrea (Stella, team principal) don't want that to happen. And I think as teammates, we don't want that to happen."

"Of course, that's the reason for why I was held accountable. There are consequences."

He added to *Sky Sports*: "There are and will be repercussions for me until the end of the season."

Piastri was asked to move aside for Norris in Monza in September after his teammate allowed him to pit first before suffering a slow stop.

McLaren also stepped in last season, with Norris asked to let Piastri through to win the Hungarian

Grand Prix following the pit stops.

This would appear to be the latest intervention by McLaren into the title scrap as they strive to keep things even among their drivers.

Piastri leads Norris by 22 points with six rounds remaining ahead of this weekend's United States Grand Prix but the Australian has finished behind his rival in each of the last three races.

Norris denied suggestions that McLaren are overcomplicating the battle between their drivers and is convinced the approach is best for the team.

"I think if I was on the outside, I would probably have a similar opinion and outlook on these kind of things."

"But internally, it's pretty simple," Norris added.

"I think sometimes the repercussions are not positive. But at the same time, it's clear that the interest for Andrea is preserving the positive teamwork that we have."

"The teamwork that's allowed us to go from being last on the grid a few years ago to being the best performing team and also just having two drivers that challenge each other more than any other team on the grid." – The Independent

Djokovic admits Sinner beating

■ BY JAMIE BRAIDWOOD

NOVAK DJOKOVIC admitted Jannik Sinner "kicked my a**" after a heavy defeat to the world No. 2 in the semifinals of the Six Kings Slam exhibition in Saudi Arabia.

Sinner had won his last six competitive matches against the 24-time grand slam champion, including straight-sets victories in the semifinals of Roland Garros and Wimbledon this season.

The 38-year-old Djokovic said Sinner and world No. 1 Carlos

Alcaraz were "too good" over best-of-five sets following his semifinal defeat to Alcaraz at last month's US Open.

But Djokovic fared no better over the shorter format in Riyadh, as Sinner produced a masterclass of serving to thrash the Serbian 6-4, 6-2 and set up another final against Alcaraz.

Djokovic has accepted that Alcaraz and Sinner, who have won the last eight grand slam titles between them, are a level above what he can produce at the age of

38 but said that he would keep trying to find a way to beat them.

"Excuse my language, but it's never nice when somebody kicks your a** like this on the court," Djokovic told the crowd with a laugh, during a rare on-court interview involving the losing player.

"But it's definitely amazing that I'm still being able to play at a high level, being top-10, top-5. It's a good good feeling."

"I'm trying my best. I have the body that I have, I'm grateful for everything that the God has granted

me in my life. It's been an incredible journey, an amazing career, there's so much to celebrate, but I would like it if somebody can trade a younger body with me. That would be nice, just for a year so I can try to keep winning against these guys."

"Jokes aside, I still have the drive. Obviously I know that it's becoming much more difficult for me to get a win against Jannik and Carlos particularly. I'm gonna still keep on challenging them and until it happens, let's see." – The Independent

INJURY-HIT Barcelona expect to have Lamine Yamal back fit to face Girona in La Liga today (10.15pm Malaysian time), in a welcome boost as the Catalans aim to bounce back from a damaging defeat with the *Clasico* in their sights.

Hansi Flick's side were hammered 4-1 by Sevilla before the international break and must regroup before facing Real Madrid on Oct 26.

Midfielder Pedri Gonzalez said Barca's performance in Seville was the team's worst under Flick, and since then Robert Lewandowski and Dani Olmo have suffered injuries to deepen their plight.

However Yamal and Fermin Lopez returned to training this week and are expected to be fit to face Girona, while Raphinha is also nearing a return.

Teenage star Yamal missed the thrashing by Sevilla and then Spain's World Cup qualifiers with the recurrence of a groin problem but should feature against Girona in a derby clash.

Yamal's expected return is a

Yamal's back!

Wounded Barca take on Girona ahead of Real clash

welcome boost for Barca ahead of a busy period, with a Champions League match against Olympiacos following on Wednesday (12.45am) ahead of the *Clasico*.

Joan Garcia, Gavi and Marc-Andre ter Stegen are longer-term absentees and Flick's options remain thin, without much room for rotation.

The coach was careful not to further reduce the morale of his players after their collapse at Sevilla.

"It's one match and we lost it, and we have to keep going on," said the coach, praising his team's second half display after an especially poor first period.

It was Barcelona's first defeat of the season, leaving them two points behind leaders Real Madrid.

But definitely not their first bad performance.

Barca drew 1-1 at Rayo Vallecano in August after which Flick blasted the team and suggested they had got too big for their boots after winning a domestic treble last season.

"Ego kills success," warned the German coach, hoping to refocus his players' minds.

It seemed to work as even without teenage star Yamal as they secured several wins but then after he got hurt again against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League, came their heavy defeat at the Ramon Sanchez-Pizjuan.

Barca started last season superbly but then collapsed in November and December, allowing Atletico Madrid to overtake them at the top of the table.

Flick will be keen for his team to avoid a similar backslide this season

and hosting Girona, 18th, in a derby is a good opportunity for his team to get back to winning ways.

The game will take place at the Olympic stadium on the city's Montjuic Hill, with Barca's rebuilt Nou Camp home not yet ready to open amid a series of delays.

"I'm really looking forward to going back to Nou Camp, with all our fans," said midfielder Frenkie de Jong, after renewing his contract until 2029 on Wednesday.

"I don't know the date, but we can't wait."

Real Madrid face Getafe on Monday (3am), hoping in-form striker Kylian Mbappe has recovered from an ankle problem.

Villarreal, third, host Real Betis while Atletico Madrid welcome Osasuna. - AFP

Roma test for in-form Inter Milan

INTER MILAN have two tests of their Serie A title credentials coming up over the next two weeks as they head to Roma tomorrow (2.45am), a week before a key clash with Napoli.

Cristian Chivu has led Inter to five straight wins in all competitions.

But their trip to the capital will pitch them against spiky opposition who jointly lead Italy's top flight with champions Napoli.

Roma have conceded only twice in their opening six league matches.

They sit level on 15 points with Napoli at the top of the table.

Inter are three points behind that pair, with three consecutive league wins over Sassuolo, Cagliari and Cremonese putting them in fourth, ahead of Juventus - who are at high-flying Como tomorrow (6.30pm) - on goal difference.

Chivu has one major absence, with Marcus Thuram still out with the hamstring injury he picked up against Slavia Prague last month.

But he has handy back up in fellow Frenchman Ange-Yoan Bonny.

Bonny played a key role in Inter's recent win over Cremonese before the international break.

And captain Lautaro Martinez is fresh from another goalscoring outing with Argentina, his brace against Puerto Rico taking his tally for club and country this season to eight.

Thuram is pushing to be available for next weekend's clash at Napoli.

The match will determine whether Inter are realistic contenders for the *Scudetto*.

That is not something that would have been considered a given once Inter chose Chivu, whose only previous senior managerial experience was in the final months of last season with Parma, to replace Simone Inzaghi.

The former Romania defender was a surprised choice to take over Inter and will face a test of his coaching mettle against Gian Piero Gasperini and then Antonio Conte next week.

Roma have ridden their luck to keep pace with Napoli, as goalkeeper Milar Svrilar has stepped up several times already this season and allowed Gasperini's new team to get away with some below-par displays.

Napoli meanwhile have what should be a straight-forward task at Torino just before Inter take on Roma, with Italian pair Matteo Politano and Alessandro Buongiorno set to return from injury.

Nestled between Inter and the leading pair are AC Milan, two points from the summit ahead of Monday fixture with struggling Fiorentina who are yet to win in Serie A this season and have Italy striker Moise Kean sidelined with injury.

Milan will be without Christian Pulisic and Adrien Rabiot, with France midfielder Rabiot risking a month-long absence with a calf injury. - AFP

Bayern, Dortmund in top form for Der Klassiker

LEAGUE leaders Bayern Munich host second-placed Borussia Dortmund tomorrow (12.30am), with both sides unbeaten after opening the season in top form.

Bayern have won 10 from 10 in all competitions, scoring 36 goals and conceding seven.

Star striker Harry Kane is on arguably his career-best form.

The 32-year-old, who scored a brace in Wednesday's 5-0 thumping of Latvia on England duty, has 18 goals and three assists in those 10 matches for Bayern.

Bayern have stormed to the top of both the Bundesliga and Champions League tables. Dortmund, meanwhile, are quietly putting together a strong start of their own.

Dortmund are unbeaten in nine games in all competitions and sit four points behind Bayern in second.

A double winner at Bayern before getting the sack half a year later, Niko Kovac, now Dortmund manager, said his side must be brave in Munich.

"It'll be difficult if we play too cautiously," Kovac said yesterday.

"Just defending won't work. We respect each other but we need to take the initiative.

"If we play like we did last year in Munich, we'll have a good chance, but we need to be brave.

"We do see what kind of form Bayern are on. It's unusual for a team to perform so well."

In the match nicknamed *Der Klassiker* in a bid to echo La Liga's *El Clasico*, the fixture has often been decisive in shaping the Bundesliga title race.



Bayern Munich keeper Manuel Neuer in action during last season's match against Dortmund. - REUTERS/PIC

More often than not, it has signalled the end of Dortmund's title ambitions.

Dortmund have lost eight of their past 10 matches against Bayern in Munich.

But Dortmund are on their best run versus the Bavarians since Jurgen Klopp's tenure.

Dortmund have won one and drawn two of their past three games against Bayern, including a 2-0 win at the Allianz Arena in 2024.

Now running the show at Red Bull, parent company of rivals RB Leipzig, Klopp himself will not be tuning in. Speaking from the Spanish island of Mallorca, where he spends much of his time, former Liverpool manager Klopp told Germany's RTL yesterday he would "probably not have time" to watch.

"If I didn't have to work, I'd definitely watch the game." - AFP

SIDENETTING

Leverkusen went in 'wrong direction' under Ten Hag

BAYER LEVERKUSEN sporting director Simon Rolfes said yesterday that it was clear from early on that the club were going in the "wrong direction" under former coach Erik Ten Hag. Ex-Manchester United boss Ten Hag was sacked last month after just two Bundesliga matches - the shortest managerial stint before a firing in the league's history. Speaking with AFP and other media, Rolfes insisted that the "hard" decision to sack the Dutchman was the right call. "If you have the feeling that you're going in the wrong direction, you shouldn't wait until you get there," he said. "If it's not a good fit, it's better to split." Rolfes said the club wanted "to be fast with this decision," adding that "most of the time you wait too long,

waiting for bad results." Since Ten Hag left, the club have been unbeaten, with three wins and three draws in all competitions, while they have climbed up to fifth in the Bundesliga.

Juve under investigation

SERIE A club Juventus said yesterday it was under investigation by the European governing body Uefa for possible breaches of its financial rules. The Turin-based club made the announcement in its financial statements to be presented at its annual shareholders' meeting on Nov 7. Juventus said that Uefa had informed the club on Sept 18 that proceedings had been opened to investigate possible breaches of the governing body's football earnings rule between 2022 and 2025, with a verdict expected next year. The club said this could result in "a possible economic sanction... and possible

sporting restrictions." Controlled by the Agnelli family for a century, Juventus posted a €58 million (RM290m) loss in the fiscal year ended June 30. The club posted its last annual net profit in the 2016/17 season.

Relocating WC matches unlikely: Officials

SENIOR figures behind the 2026 World Cup dismissed concerns that US president Donald Trump could move matches from cities he does not deem "safe." Republican president Trump said last month that he would consider moving games from Democrat-controlled San Francisco and Seattle if they did not cooperate with his immigration and crime initiatives. He raised the issue again this week, this time targeting Boston and its Democratic Mayor Michelle Wu, suggesting he could appeal

directly to Fifa boss Gianni Infantino. John Kristick, who led Canada, Mexico and the United States' successful bid to jointly host the 2026 finals, emphasised that planning has been underway for nearly a decade and remains unaffected by political rhetoric. "From what I'm seeing, there's been zero distraction in terms of the preparedness," Kristick, co-head of global events at Playfly Sports Consultin said. "Tickets are already being sold. Hospitality packages have been sold for almost a year now." New York and New Jersey, responsible for eight games, including the final, have maintained their focus, said NYNJ Host Committee CEO Alex Lasry, with daily fan festivals planned across the country's biggest metropolitan region. "We've spoken to Fifa, we're working with the White House Task Force, I don't think there's any worry about the games being moved."

■ BY LAWRENCE OSTLERE

ENGLAND have only two more camps before Thomas Tuchel names his squad for the 2026 World Cup, and plenty is still up in the air.

England's 5-0 win over Latvia secured their place at the tournament, and they will reconvene in November for their final two qualifiers against Serbia at Wembley and Albania in Tirana.

Tuchel won't see his squad again until some friendlies in March, after which he will have just a few weeks to finalise his group to take to USA, Canada and Mexico in June.

The manager has made clear that he wants to build a squad with clearly defined roles, and two players for every position on the pitch, plus three flexible and versatile additions to round out the 26.

But there remain major questions over the full-back positions, the composition of midfield and the plethora of wingers and No. 10s to whittle down – with some big names almost certain

who will be essential to any success at the World Cup.

Jude Bellingham: The Real Madrid man will surely win back his place in the England squad, with Tuchel admitting that England are a better team with Bellingham than without him. England need their best players firing to have any chance of winning the World Cup, and Bellingham is undoubtedly one of them.

Bukayo Saka: The Arsenal winger is another key part of Tuchel's starting XI.

Harry Kane: It is easy to forget that plenty of pundits and fans wanted Kane dropped for the Euro 2024 final. The big question about England's captain is whether he can translate his sensational club form into dominating a major tournament.

Almost there

Dean Henderson: The Crystal Palace goalkeeper looks set to be England's back-up, so long as he maintains his place and his form at Selhurst Park.

the Villa midfielder looks poised to earn a place in the squad as an option at No. 10.

Eberechi Eze: Tuchel has spoken in glowing terms about Eze as a player who offers something different, creatively, from players like Bellingham and Rogers. His ability to play wide, as a No. 10 and as an attacking No. 8 will be a useful asset in the squad.

Cole Palmer: It seems incredible not to list Palmer on the plane already, but the sheer intensity of competition for places in the No. 10 slot makes his position uncertain.

Anthony Gordon: The Newcastle winger seems to be in pole position to start on the left wing, and has regularly featured there for Tuchel so far.

Noni Madueke: Madueke is Saka's deputy at Arsenal and could fill the same role for England, having performed well in September's thrashing of Serbia.

Ollie Watkins: Despite a sluggish start to the Premier League season, Watkins remains Kane's most likely deputy.

about Shaw and a consistent run of form and fitness at Manchester United could possibly see him brought back into the fold as a leftback option.

Adam Wharton: The Crystal Palace midfielder was something of a surprise inclusion by Gareth Southgate at Euro 2024 but has since established himself as one of the best midfielders in the Premier League. Yet Tuchel didn't select him for the recent camp before injury struck, and Wharton is running out of games to impress in an England shirt before the World Cup.

Ruben Loftus-Cheek: Tuchel gave the AC Milan midfielder a surprise recall to the squad, but there is a lot of competition for midfield places.

Morgan Gibbs-White: Another player given minutes by Tuchel who may find himself edged out by the sheer number of options in central roles.

Phil Foden: Foden is another in the Palmer bracket where it seems bizarre that he wouldn't be at a major tournament for England, and yet the City midfielder has barely featured under Tuchel so far and appears to have work to do for

Who's on the plane and who's not?

Tuchel has plenty of big decisions to make before naming World Cup squad



JORDAN PICKFORD



EBERECHI EZE



MARCUS RASHFORD

to miss out. So who will Tuchel select in his 26-man squad?

On the plane

Jordan Pickford: The Everton keeper was Gareth Southgate's No. 1 and has maintained top spot under Thomas Tuchel.

John Stones: Tuchel named the Manchester City centreback as one of his "captains" and, if he is fit, Stones will start every World Cup game at the heart of England's defence.

Marc Guehi: The Crystal Palace captain lined up alongside Stones at last year's Euros and remains his most likely partner next summer.

Ezri Konsa: The Aston Villa centreback appears to have cemented his place as one of Tuchel's most reliable options, having played more minutes under the German manager than any other defender.

Elliot Anderson: Tuchel has made clear that Anderson is the leading candidate to play in England's holding role position.

Declan Rice: Another of Tuchel's "captains"

Reece James: Tuchel adores the Chelsea captain and there is no doubt James will be at the World Cup but his fitness in itself is such an uncertainty that he doesn't make the 'on-the-plane' list, yet.

Tino Livramento: The Newcastle fullback is injured right now but seems to be in Tuchel's good books and his ability to play both sides adds to his appeal.

Dan Burn: Burn is a popular and well-respected squad player who adds something different with his towering physical presence. He seems to be Tuchel's fourth choice at centreback.

Myles Lewis-Skelly: Tuchel loves the Arsenal full-back, although doubts remain over his minutes for the Gunners this season, with Riccardo Calafiori currently preferred by Mikel Arteta.

Jordan Henderson: Henderson is another player who has been namechecked as one of the "captains" by Tuchel and it seems likely he will be in the squad as the back-up to Anderson in the No. 6 role.

Morgan Rogers: Tuchel has turned to Rogers in Bellingham's absence over recent weeks, and

Work to do

James Trafford: Ousted from the City team by Gianluigi Donnarumma, but still likely to go as England's third-choice keeper to gain tournament experience.

Djed Spence: Much like Livramento, Tuchel has called up Spence and likes that the Tottenham defender has experience playing both full-back roles. As of now they are both in the frame but it may be that only one of the two goes to the World Cup.

Jarell Quansah: The Leverkusen defender has been picked by Tuchel for World Cup qualifiers and could take one of the fringe spots in the squad.

Trent Alexander-Arnold: Tuchel has been frank about his preference for James and Livramento in the pecking order at right-back, hinting at concerns about Alexander-Arnold's defensive concentration. He needs a strong debut season at Real Madrid to regain his England place.

Luke Shaw: Tuchel has been complimentary

exactly the same reasons.

Jarrod Bowen: The West Ham captain seems to be third choice on the right wing behind Saka and Madueke, but his League form is excellent and he has a chance of squeezing onto the plane.

Jack Grealish: His sensational start to the season wasn't enough to win back a place in the squad, so it is hard to see how Grealish leaps the queue with Gordon, Rashford and perhaps Eze all seemingly ahead of him in the fight to start on the left wing.

Marcus Rashford: Goals and assists for Barcelona have pushed Rashford's cause and Tuchel seems to like him, although the manager has also had cautionary words about wasting his talent. Rashford's versatility, able to cover both wing and striker should Kane need it, might help his selection cause. Right now, he is not in our predicted World Cup squad, but that could change after November's internationals.

The Independent

NSFC banking on home advantage

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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AMID budget constraints, Negeri Sembilan FC (NSFC) is placing its hopes on the "Paroi Magic" – the electrifying home atmosphere at Stadium Tuanku Abdul Rahman – to stay competitive in the Malaysian Super League (MSL) this season.

NSFC chief executive officer Faliq Firdaus Muhammad Rom acknowledged that while the team isn't expecting to win every game, home fixtures in Paroi have become their stronghold.

"We're banking on the Paroi spirit, just like how Liverpool rely on Anfield during Champions League nights. When we play at home, it feels different. Even the players feel it," Faliq Firdaus

told *theSun* in an exclusive interview.

Stressing that the club is still in "recovery phase", Faliq Firdaus said that despite the high expectations early in the season, management has now shifted focus towards rebuilding with realistic goals, acknowledging that not all problems can be solved overnight.

"If I had RM30 million now, consistency would never be an issue as we could sign top talent and offer big bonuses. But with a tight budget, we have to build piece by piece."

He said that even club head coach Nidzam Jamil acknowledge that the players are extra motivated when playing on home soil.

Despite all the constraints, the club's off-pitch efforts are earning praise, especially for their ability to fill the sta-

dium consistently, a feat even bigger clubs struggle to achieve.

"We involve everyone, from school-children to state assemblymen. We're creating new fans, not just followers. This club isn't just about football. It's about unity."

He said that upcoming matches will feature new initiatives, including free travel vouchers sponsored by partners, giveaways like motorcycle helmets, and prize packages such as resort stays, all aimed at enhancing fan engagement and loyalty.

As of now, Negeri Sembilan FC sits sixth in the Malaysian Super League table with eight points, with both of their league victories coming at their home ground, Stadium Tuanku Abdul Rahman in Paroi.

National pride

Goh says BAM sending top guns to SEA Games restore country's dignity

THE decision to send the big guns to the 2025 SEA Games in Thailand is made as a matter of national pride, said Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) secretary-general Datuk Kenny Goh.

Goh, also the national deputy chef de mission (CDM), said the decision was made by the coaches following an in-depth discussion.

In the previous edition in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, Malaysia sent their backup squad and suffered a harrowing experience, returning home with just two silver and four bronze medals.

"It so happens that there are no major tournaments this year. So, we felt that this is the most opportune time for us to make a decision that benefits the country... as this involves restoring the country's dignity (in badminton in the region)."

"So, we felt the time was right for us to send our strongest squad," he said during a visit to the diving training venue with CDM Nurul Huda Abdullah here yesterday.

Goh also said that the Dec 9-20 SEA Games-bound shuttlers, should they qualify, would have no problems competing in the Badminton World Federation (BWF) World Tour Finals in Hangzhou, China, from Dec 17-20.

He added that this was because badminton events would begin earlier on Dec 7, two days before the official opening ceremony of

the biennial Games, and be completed on Dec 15.

"I feel that we do have sufficient time to make any necessary logistics planning for Hangzhou," he said.

According to the BWF World Tour Finals format, only the top eight singles players and pairs in the BWF World Tour rankings qualify for the Finals, limited to a maximum of two representatives from each country per category.

Based on the 2025 BWF World Tour Finals ranking, four Malaysian pairs listed for the Thailand SEA Games are in the top eight positions: Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik (men's doubles, second position); Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun (men's doubles, fourth); Pearly Tan-M.Thinaah (women's doubles, first); and Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei (mixed doubles, sixth).

Besides the four pairs, Malaysia will also be banking on Leong Jun Hao and Justin Hoh (men's singles); K. Letshanaa and Wong Ling Ching (women's singles); Go Pei Kee-Teoh Mei Xing (women's doubles); and Hoo Pang Ron-Cheng Su Yin (mixed doubles) in this year's edition of the biennial Games.

All those listed will also compete in their respective team events, and will be aided by Eugene Ewe and Aidil Sholeh Ali Sadikin in the men's team event and by Siti Zulaikha Muhammad Azmi and Eng Ler Qi in the women's team event. – Bernama

Yusof Hafizi rides to a silver at World Championships

MOHAMMAD YUSOF Hafizi Shaharuddin came close to creating a huge sensation before settling for silver in the 2025 UCI Para Cycling Track World Championships in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, yesterday.

The 28-year-old, competing in the men's 1km time trial of the MC1 category, clocked 1:15.432s to finish just 0.25s behind gold medalist Ricardo Ten Argiles (1:15.182s). Ivan Ermakov of Independent Neutral Athletes took the bronze medal in 1:17.657s. (MC1 in para cycling is for athletes with the most severe impairment who compete on a standard bicycle.)

Mohammad Yusof, who has suffered from a nerve problem since birth that results in the entire left side of his body being weak, had earlier broken the national record en route to the finals with a time of 1:14.117s.

"This success has paved the

way for him to compete in and enjoy better success at the Asean Para Games in Korat, Thailand, and the Asian Para Games in Nagoya, Japan, in 2026," said national para cycling coach Sallehudin Mohd Noh.

Mohammad Yusof still has a chance to go one better when he competes in the 200m sprint on the third day of the Oct 16-19 championships.

Meanwhile, in the tandem team sprint event (MB/WB), the national combinations of Mohd Khairul Hazwan Wahab-Muhammad Khairul Adha Rasol and Nur Suraiya Muhammad Zamri-Farina Shawati Mohd Adnan finished fourth after clocking 52.729s to lose to team Great Britain (50.406s).

For the MC5 1km time trial event, national rider Zulhairie Ahmad Tarmizi ended up in 10th spot after clocking 1:08.571s in the qualifying round. – Bernama



Mohammad Yusof Hafizi. – Majlis Sukan Negara/Facebook

Arif Aiman miss out on AFC Player of the Year award

THE dreams of millions of Malaysians to see national and Johor Darul Ta'zim (JDT) winger Arif Aiman Mohd Hanapi (pic) be crowned Asia's Player of the Year were dashed when the coveted title went to Saudi Arabia's Salem Al-Dawsari.

Still, it was a momentous achievement for Arif Aiman to be among the three players nominated for the award at the 2025 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Awards Night at the King Fahad Culture Centre in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

The other player nominated was Qatari superstar Akram Afiff.

Despite not winning the top gong, Arif Aiman can stand tall for becoming the first Malaysian ever nominated for the AFC Player of the Year award.

Last season, the 23-year-old Arif Aiman scored five goals to help JDT advance to the round of 16 of the AFC Champions League Elite competition.

He also guided the Southern Tigers to a clean sweep of all four trophies in the Malaysia League (M-League) for three consecutive seasons, besides being a key component in the Harimau Malaya squad in the ongoing Asian Cup Qualifiers.

Meanwhile, at the AFC Awards Night, the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) also won the AFC President's Recognition Award for Grassroots Football Silver Category, which was handed over to FAM honorary president Tan Sri Hamidin Mohd Amin. – Bernama



SHORTS

Shooters aiming for four gold medals

THE national shooting squad is fielding a line-up of ace shooters to hunt for excellent success at the 2025 SEA Games in Thailand this December.

Team manager for the 2025 SEA Games shooting squad, Major (Rtd) Jasni Shaari, said the team's main hopes for success are being placed on Johnathan Wong, Nur Suryani Mohamed Taibi, and Alia Sazana Azahari, all of whom have extensive experience competing on the international stage, including the Olympic Games and World Championships.

He said a total of 29 shooters will carry the nation's challenge in three main events involving pistol, rifle, and shotgun in Thailand.

"Undeniably, Vietnam and Indonesia are strong, but they are also apprehensive of us. We have our ace shooters: Johnathan, Nur Suryani, and Alia, all experienced in international shooting."

"So we anticipate many medals, and we can get up to four gold medals," he said

when met by reporters during the visit of the 2025 SEA Games Chef-de-Mission (CDM) Nurul Huda Abdullah at the shooting squad's training venue at Gymnasium 3 of the National Sports Council (MSN), Bukit Jalil, yesterday.

Meanwhile, Alia Sazana is only targeting a gold medal in the 25-meter (m) pistol event, thus hoping to redeem her disappointment of bringing home a silver from the 2021 edition in Hanoi, Vietnam.

"In my heart and my mind is 100 per cent gold, but at the end of the day, we don't know, but I will fight until the very end, I will not give up," said the 33-year-old shooter who will be making her fourth appearance at the SEA Games.

Sepak takraw squad ready with plan B: Ahmad Jais

THE national sepak takraw squad is ready with a plan B should several key players for the quadrant event not recover in time to compete at the 2025 SEA Games in Thailand.

National squad head coach, Ahmad Jais Baharun, informed that players such as Mohamad Azlan Alias, Farhan Adam and Norfaizul Abd Razak are currently undergoing treatment at the National Sports Institute (ISN), which is putting some pressure on the team's final preparations.

"If we look at the current situation, several of our players are undergoing

treatment and some have not fully recovered yet. That is what puts some pressure on our players, especially."

"We are still continuing our preparation training to strengthen the players in terms of attack and defence. It's just that for the final preparation, we hope the players remain focused and that no injuries occur to them," he told reporters during a visit by the 2025 SEA Games Chef-de-Mission, Nurul Huda Abdullah, to the sepak takraw squad's training venue yesterday.

Xin Yee-Carmen sent packing

NATIONAL women's doubles pair Ong Xin Yee-Carmen Ting's journey in the Denmark Open came to an end at the hands of South Korea's Kim Hye Jeong-Kong Hye Young in the second round in Odense on Thursday.

Despite having a great start, Xin Yee-Carmen ran out of steam as they fell 21-19, 10-21, 7-21 to the third seeds in 57 minutes during the Super 750 tournament at the Jyske Bank Arena.

Meanwhile, reigning mixed doubles world champions Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei cruise into the semifinal after defeating professional duo Goh Soon Huat-Shevon Lai Jamie in an all-Malaysian quarterfinal clash yesterday.

Professional men's doubles pair Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub-Tan Wee Kiong lost fifth seeds Liang Wei Keng-Wang Chang of China 19-21, 18-21.



the Sun Sports

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SCAN ME

FAM suspends sec-gen Noor Azman

THE Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) has suspended its Secretary-General, Datuk Noor Azman Rahman, with immediate effect, regarding the disciplinary decision related to the documentation issue involving the eligibility of seven national heritage players.

FAM Deputy president FAM Datuk S. Sivasundaram said they have also established an independent body to investigate the issue that has recently rocked Malaysian football.

He said the decision to suspend Noor Azman was made to ensure transparency and allow the independent body to conduct a thorough probe without interference.

"We are appointing an independent commit-

tee just to investigate. We don't want the secretary-general to be around, so as to ensure a transparent investigation.

"The secretary-general is the head of the secretariat and has taken responsibility. So for the independent committee to investigate, he has to be away for some time until the investigation is completed," he told a press conference yesterday.

Also present were Harimau Malaya chief executive officer Rob Friend and FAM legal council, Serge Vittoz, an international sports lawyer from Geneva and London based law firm, Charles Russell Speechlys.

Meanwhile, Sivasundaram said the new independent committee, which will not comprise

any FAM officials, will be tasked to identify what went wrong in the documentation and submission process that led to Fifa's sanction against the seven heritage players and the national body.

He said they are still awaiting the next stage of the appeal process which was submitted to Fifa on Tuesday.

"FAM maintains that these players were lawfully naturalised in accordance with Malaysian law," he said.

In a statement, Fifa said FAM had submitted falsified documents to confirm the eligibility of the players, allowing them to compete in the third-round match of the 2027 Asian Cup Qualifiers against Vietnam on June 10.

As a result, FAM and the seven heritage players was fined. The players was also suspended for 12 months from all football-related activities, effective from the date of notification of the decision.

In a previous statement, FAM explained that it had identified a technical error in the submission process involving the seven players' documents, which was made by an administrative staff member.

FAM had also stated that it did not rule out the possibility of taking the matter to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) if the appeal at the Fifa level fails to yield a positive outcome. - Bernama

Showdown at Anfield

Liverpool seek mojo against United as Postecoglou hunts first win

LIVERPOOL will be desperate to recapture their spark against bitter rivals Manchester United this weekend but Ruben Amorim's men will harbour hopes of pinching a rare win at Anfield.

The champions have lost just one of their past 14 Premier League meetings against United but have suffered three straight defeats in all competitions, with Arsenal now top of the pile.

Nottingham Forest boss Ange Postecoglou survived the international break but remains under intense pressure after failing to record a win in his first seven matches.

When Liverpool started this season with five straight Premier League wins, it appeared they were on track for a record 21st English top-flight title - which would take them one clear of United.

But problems they had

papered over with a flurry of late goals finally caught up with them in defeats to Crystal Palace and Chelsea, either side of a Champions League loss at Galatasaray.

Liverpool, one point behind leaders Arsenal, trolled United on social media this week, reminding them of the 7-0 drubbing they dished out in March 2023.

Mohamed Salah scored twice that day and has an eye-catching record against United, netting in 10 of the past 11 matches between the clubs in all competitions.

But the Egypt forward will go into the fixture searching for form while new signings Florian Wirtz and Alexander Isak are struggling to make an impact. Arne Slot's men are also shaky at the back.

United, without a win at Anfield since 2016, have come away with cred-



FROM LEFT: Liverpool's Florian Wirtz, Mohamed Salah and Alexander Isak. - REUTERS/PIC

itable draws from their past two visits.

Amorim's men, wallowing in mid-table, will not scare Liverpool but they will likely have chances to exploit chinks in the home side's armour.

Postecoglou does not appear to be over-concerned about his position at Nottingham Forest despite a winless start to his reign at the City Ground.

The club, just one place above the relegation zone, host Chelsea in the early kickoff today (7.30pm Malaysian time).

It is a rapid fall from grace for Forest, who finished seventh last season under the now-departed Nuno Espirito Santo to secure European football.

But it continues a troubling pattern for Postecoglou, who endured a nightmare League campaign last season with Tottenham, which cost him his job

despite Europa League glory.

The Australian said he relished a challenge after his team's 2-0 defeat at Newcastle on Oct 5, just days after home fans at the City Ground called for his sacking.

"I've fought for things my whole life, so it's just another fight that I love to be in the middle of," said the 60-year-old.

Time will tell whether the international break will help Postecoglou or has merely delayed the inevitable, with former Burnley and Everton manager Sean Dyche reportedly in the frame to replace him.

Antoine Semenyo is arguably the most in-form player in the Premier League, the main man in a Bournemouth team who are flying high.

The London-born Ghana winger

has scored six times and provided three assists in the League for Andoni Iraola's side, who are fourth in the table after their best start to a Premier League campaign.

Semenyo has been involved in nearly 82% of his team's goals - by far the highest proportion for any player in the league.

"He is incredible," said teammate Justin Kluivert. "He shows it every game now. He is just world-class."

Iraola's Bournemouth are riding high despite selling around £200-million (RM1.16b) worth of talent in the summer transfer window.

Now they a tough challenge against a Crystal Palace team determined to prove a point after the end of their 19-match unbeaten run across all competitions. - AFP



PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES & STANDINGS

10pm Malaysian time unless stated

TODAY

Nottm Forest vs Chelsea (7.30pm)

Brighton vs Newcastle

Burnley vs Leeds

Crystal Palace vs Bournemouth

Man City vs Everton

Sunderland vs Wolves

TOMORROW

Fulham vs Arsenal (12.30am)

Tottenham vs Aston Villa (9pm)

Liverpool vs Man Utd (11.30pm)

TUESDAY

West Ham vs Brentford (3am)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	7	5	1	1	14	3	16
Liverpool	7	5	0	2	13	9	15
Tottenham	7	4	2	1	13	5	14
Bournemouth	7	4	2	1	11	8	14
Man City	7	4	1	2	15	6	13
Crystal Palace	7	3	3	1	9	5	12
Chelsea	7	3	2	2	13	9	11
Everton	7	3	2	2	9	7	11
Sunderland	7	3	2	2	7	6	11
Man Utd	7	3	1	3	9	11	10
Newcastle	7	2	3	2	6	5	9
Brighton	7	2	3	2	10	9	9
Aston Villa	7	2	3	2	6	7	9
Fulham	7	2	2	3	8	11	8
Leeds	7	2	2	3	7	11	8
Brentford	7	2	1	4	9	12	7
Nottm Forest	7	1	2	4	5	12	5
Burnley	7	1	1	5	7	15	4
West Ham	7	1	1	5	6	16	4
Wolves	7	0	2	5	5	14	2